

to be an unparalleled strategist, adviser, and manager, and their counsel is invaluable as we confront the multitude of national security issues before us.

General Caine testified before the Armed Services Committee last week and represented himself well. He has had a distinguished career in the Air Force and the Air National Guard as an F-16 pilot with thousands of flight hours and multiple combat deployments. He has also served in senior leadership roles at the Pentagon, the White House, and overseas, including in the special operations and intelligence communities. If confirmed, General Caine would be the first career National Guard officer to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I appreciate General Caine's record of service and thank him for stepping forward to lead once again. However, we must be clear about the unprecedented circumstances that led to General Caine's nomination. Two months ago, President Trump abruptly dismissed Gen. CQ Brown, who was not even halfway into his tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of Defense Hegseth also dismissed several other senior officers, including ADM Lisa Franchetti, the Chief of Naval Operations; Gen. James Slife, the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff; Gen. Jennifer Short, the senior military adviser to the Secretary; and all three Judge Advocates General for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Last week, President Trump dismissed Gen. Timothy Haugh, the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command and Director of the National Security Agency, at the urging of Laura Loomer, a fringe conspiracy theorist. And on Monday, we learned that Secretary Hegseth had dismissed VADM Shoshana Chatfield, the U.S. Military Representative to NATO.

To this day, no credible explanation has been given for the dismissal of a single one of these officers.

We cannot pretend that this is normal or acceptable behavior by the Commander in Chief and Defense Secretary. One by one, they are purging officers, threatening others, and undermining the fundamental principles of our military.

I will speak more about this later, but I am deeply concerned that these officers were dismissed for political reasons. I have long warned about the dangers of firing military servicemembers as a political loyalty test, and I will continue to sound the alarm about this behavior. I must say that the silence from my Republican friends on this issue is very troubling. Even as Republicans vote to confirm General Caine, I hope they recognize the dangerous message that President Trump and Secretary Hegseth are sending throughout the ranks: Don't speak your mind or give your best military advice, or you may face consequences. I urge my Republican colleagues to join me in demanding an explanation from the President and Defense Secretary.

I would take a moment to salute Gen. CQ Brown, who served this Nation honorably for more than four decades and led the Joint Chiefs with dedication and skill. He and each of the officers who were dismissed had outstanding careers in the military and represented our Nation with great courage, honor, and distinction. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

We are fortunate that General Caine understands the fraught situation within which he has been nominated to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. During his hearing, General Caine repeatedly agreed that the military must remain apolitical. When he was asked how he would guard against politicization of the military, General Caine said, "It starts with being a good example from the top and making sure that we are nonpartisan and apolitical and speaking the truth to power every day."

I was also relieved by General Caine's response to my question about President Trump's claim that that he once said he "loved" President Trump and would "kill" for him while donning a "Make America Great Again" hat. During the hearing, General Caine categorically denied that this incident happened and stated, "I've never worn any political merchandise or said anything to that effect."

As the Nation's seniormost military officer, it will be his responsibility to understand the needs of America's servicemembers and to be their greatest advocate. If confirmed, he will be the most visible military officer in the Nation. It will be critical for him to represent the force with total professionalism and trustworthiness. In my conversations with General Caine and after speaking with those who know him best, I have found him to be an honest, smart, and principled military officer. He understands the momentous national security challenges we face and has pledged to represent our servicemembers with professionalism and discipline.

Ultimately, I am optimistic that General Caine will provide his best military advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense, even if that advice not what they would want to hear. The Senate Armed Services Committee approved his nomination by a wide, bipartisan margin, and I intend to vote in favor of General Caine now.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 75, the fol-

lowing named officer for appointment to the permanent grade indicated in the Regular Air Force under the United States Constitution, article II, section 2, clause 2: to be Major General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Dan Sullivan, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of the following named officer for appointment to the permanent grade indicated in the Regular Air Force under the United States Constitution, article II, section 2, clause 2: to be Major General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 59, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 210 Leg.]

YEAS—59

Banks	Grassley	Moody
Barrasso	Hagerty	Moreno
Britt	Hassan	Murkowski
Budd	Hickenlooper	Reed
Capito	Hoeven	Ricketts
Cassidy	Husted	Risch
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Cornyn	Johnson	Rounds
Cortez Masto	Justice	Schiff
Cotton	Kaine	Schmitt
Cramer	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Crapo	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cruz	Kim	Sheehy
Curtis	King	Slotkin
Durbin	Lankford	Sullivan
Ernst	Lee	Thune
Fetterman	Lummis	Warner
Fischer	Marshall	Wicker
Gillibrand	McConnell	Young
Graham	McCormick	

NAYS—25

Alsobrooks	Blumenthal	Booker
Baldwin	Blunt Rochester	Cantwell

Duckworth	Murphy	Van Hollen
Gallego	Murray	Warnock
Hirono	Ossoff	Warren
Klobuchar	Padilla	Welch
Lujan	Schatz	Whitehouse
Markey	Schumer	
Merkley	Smith	

NOT VOTING—16

Bennet	Heinrich	Shaheen
Blackburn	Moran	Tillis
Boozman	Mullin	Tuberville
Coons	Paul	Wyden
Daines	Peters	
Hawley	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 59, the nays are 25.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment to the permanent grade indicated in the Regular Air Force under the United States Constitution, article II, section 2, clause 2: to be Major General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

VOTE ON CAINE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Caine nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 211 Ex.]

YEAS—59

Banks	Budd	Collins
Barrasso	Capito	Cornyn
Britt	Cassidy	Cortez Masto

Cotton	Hyde-Smith
Cramer	Johnson
Crapo	Justice
Cruz	Kaine
Curtis	Kelly
Ernst	Kennedy
Fetterman	Kim
Fischer	King
Gillibrand	Lankford
Graham	Lee
Grassley	Lummis
Hagerty	Marshall
Hassan	McConnell
Heinrich	McCormick
Hickenlooper	Moody
Hoeven	Moreno
Husted	Murkowski

NAYS—26

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Schatz
Baldwin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Blumenthal	Lujan	Smith
Blunt Rochester	Markey	Van Hollen
Booker	Merkley	Warnock
Cantwell	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Welch
Durbin	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gallego	Padilla	

NOT VOTING—15

Bennet	Hawley	Sanders
Blackburn	Moran	Shaheen
Boozman	Mullin	Tillis
Coons	Paul	Tuberville
Daines	Peters	Wyden

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 74, the following named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Dan Sullivan, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 212 Ex.]

YEAS—60

Banks	Grassley	McCormick
Barrasso	Hagerty	Moody
Britt	Hassan	Moreno
Budd	Heinrich	Murkowski
Capito	Hickenlooper	Reed
Cassidy	Hoeven	Ricketts
Collins	Husted	Risch
Cornyn	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Cortez Masto	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	Justice	Schiff
Cramer	Kaine	Schmitt
Crapo	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Curtis	Kim	Sheehy
Durbin	King	Slotkin
Ernst	Lankford	Sullivan
Fetterman	Lee	Thune
Fischer	Lummis	Warner
Gillibrand	Marshall	Wicker
Graham	McConnell	Young

NAYS—25

Alsobrooks	Klobuchar	Schumer
Baldwin	Lujan	Smith
Blumenthal	Markey	Van Hollen
Blunt Rochester	Merkley	Warnock
Booker	Murphy	Warren
Cantwell	Murray	Welch
Duckworth	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gallego	Padilla	
Hirono	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—15

Bennet	Hawley	Sanders
Blackburn	Moran	Shaheen
Boozman	Mullin	Tillis
Coons	Paul	Tuberville
Daines	Peters	Wyden

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 60, the nays are 25. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while