

my colleagues—have only gotten worse since Hegseth was confirmed.

Globalists and the media, some Republicans, are working overtime to try to get Pete Hegseth. The media is breathlessly rushing to put a microphone in front of every single disgruntled former Pentagon employee who has been fired by this Secretary. You know, it doesn't matter what you are fired for; all that matters to the media and the RINOs is that they have something to say bad about the Secretary of Defense. It is clear as day that these efforts to embarrass Hegseth are nothing more than desperate attempts to salvage reputations and distract from the successes he is already having in the Pentagon.

The truth is, Hegseth inherited a complete, absolute mess at the DOD. The Pentagon has failed audits 7 years in a row. You know, if a business did that, they would go under. But in our government, that is just par for the course.

And thanks to the Biden administration's horrible withdrawal from Afghanistan, countries who hate us like China, Iran, and Venezuela have been emboldened. Instead of working to deter World War III, however, Joe Biden's Pentagon was more focused on social justice.

In 2024, the Biden Defense Department requested more than \$114 million for DEI initiatives, 114 million. Meanwhile, recruitment was at a historic low and falling. Military readiness was slipping, and the world saw a weakened United States.

Pete Hegseth made it clear that he is here to reverse course and that changes that he has made are already visible to the positive. Secretary Hegseth has already eliminated more than 200 diversity and inclusion positions and cut more than 580 million in wasteful grants and contracts—580 million.

Secretary Hegseth has made it clear that he is focused on warfighting, readiness—mission-focused, not political correctness or appeasing the woke mob. He has restored merit-based promotions, refocused leadership training on battlefield effectiveness, terminated taxpayer-funded abortions for military personnel, and reinstalled discipline as a cornerstone of the United States of America military.

This isn't just talk either. The Department is actively removing woke DEI materials from service academies and replacing them with warfighting-centric curriculums.

He also cut through bloated procurement delays and brought transparency to the defense budget. What a novel concept is actually knowing what your budget is.

You know, just 4 months in, DOD has achieved 100 percent operational control of the border. This was after the Biden administration said for 4 years, hey, there was nothing they could do to secure the border. Well, what a joke.

Under Secretary Hegseth's leadership, the Department has moved to re-

duce acquisition timelines, fast track critical update systems, and is making sure the United States is ready to compete and win wars in the 21st century. And construction on the historic Golden Dome, by the way, is well underway.

But it is not just about equipment; Pete has doubled down on his support for the warfighter by improving access to mental health services and other resources that boost morale and readiness. It was much needed.

He reinstated the servicemembers who were wrongfully removed over their personal decision to not take the COVID-19 vaccine—many of them. He has reinstated quite a few. The fact that President Biden and Secretary Austin dismissed these servicemembers was absolutely dead wrong, and I am glad that President Trump's administration has taken quick action to right this wrong.

You know, when I met with Pete during his confirmation process, I told him plainly: Don't go to Washington to make friends, but go there and fight for the warfighter. So far, he has kept his promise.

I can't speak for everyone, but I know the folks I have talked to back in my State of Alabama are very appreciative. We need a Secretary of Defense who is focused on one thing and one thing only, defending America, and that is what Pete Hegseth is doing. And he will tell you this: There is no second place in war. We have to be ready at all times.

You know, under the Biden administration, 13 American troops lost their lives because of poor planning in Afghanistan. We all know that. We have seen it. We saw it pretty much live.

Under President Trump and Hegseth, we have executed successful strikes against terrorist Houthis that have resulted in critical shipping lanes being reopened. We have to get our shipping lanes open because it is costing this country millions and millions of dollars, and world leaders across the country are begging for this to happen.

Pete Hegseth didn't sign up to be liked by the DC cocktail circuit. You know, he committed to making the military great again, and that is exactly what he is doing.

The swamp doesn't like people it can't control, but America loves its leaders who tell the truth and fight for what matters. Pete Hegseth is one of those leaders. So let's be clear: Pete is not the problem. A lot of the media think Pete Hegseth is a problem. He is not the problem; he is the solution to the problem we have had.

And while the swamp keeps losing its ever-loving mind because we have leaders who are actually putting America first again, Secretary Hegseth will keep marching forward, focused on the only thing that matters: making our military the strongest, fiercest, and most respected fighting force in the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF FRANK BISIGNANO

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to reject Frank Bisignano's nomination to be the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

The first 100 days of Donald Trump's second term have been filled with chaos and cruelty that have reached into every corner of American life. Perhaps no development has been as alarming to the elderly and other concerned Americans as the attacks of the Trump administration on Social Security.

Social Security has long been considered the third rail of American politics. It is simply too important to American workers who spent their lives paying into the program out of every paycheck for politicians to idly propose major changes that would harm the earned benefits of Americans. Yet Donald Trump and his billionaire allies have decided that they are simply immune to the concerns of American citizens. They are about to find out just how wrong they are.

Over the past several months, the Trump administration has attacked nearly every aspect of Social Security. First, it was Americans' sensitive private information protected by Social Security. Then it was scheduling field offices for closure across the country. Then it was eliminating phone service for many Social Security claims.

Worst of all, there is a widespread view among Donald Trump's top lieutenants, from Elon Musk to Howard Lutnick, that Social Security is just chock-full of fraudsters. The whiplash caused by day after day of all the disruption and chaos has resulted in bedlam at Social Security, and, in my view, it has put the earned benefits of millions of Americans in jeopardy.

Mr. President, I wish I could stand in the Senate today and say the cavalry is coming; the chaos will soon be over. But I am afraid that is not the case.

If Frank Bisignano is confirmed, he is going to bring more of the chaos, lies, and callous disregard for Americans who count on Social Security that the Trump administration has brought to the Agency through DOGE. That was front and center when the nominee came before the Finance Committee in March.

That was front and center when the nominee came before the Finance Committee in March. Just before the hearing, I received a very valuable statement from a whistleblower, a former senior official at Social Security. The whistleblower stated that Mr. Bisignano had been deeply involved in the DOGE chaos at Social Security. The whistleblower said:

I am concerned that the President's nominee to be Commissioner of Social Security, Frank Bisignano, will not temper the crisis but rather bolster it.

The allegations presented by the whistleblower center around Elon Musk's DOGE and their attempts to access Social Security databases that

hold reams of personal, sensitive information of every single American. These databases represent the Fort Knox of Americans' personal lives—bank account numbers, home addresses, work history, salaries, medical records. Trump's DOGE cronies wanted unfettered access to the databases. They are still fighting for that as we speak, after they have been blocked in court.

According to the whistleblower, Mr. Bisignano personally appointed his Wall Street friend Michael Russo to be the leader of the DOGE team at Social Security. According to the Washington Post, which independently verified the whistleblower's account:

After Russo had trouble persuading the career staff to expedite the hiring of a DOGE software engineer named Akash Bobba, "Mr. Bisignano personally intervened . . . to instruct Social Security Administration staff to onboard Mr. Bobba and give him immediate access" to the agency's private data systems. Bisignano did not address what role he may have had in helping Mr. Bobba gain access. Bobba and Russo did not respond to requests for comment.

That is a direct quote from the Washington Post newspaper.

My view is this is a remarkable statement that ought to alarm all Americans.

I asked Mr. Bisignano about his affiliations with DOGE before, during, and after his hearing. Each time, he disavowed the whistleblower's allegations. I viewed that moment as an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to come together, as we have done so often on a bipartisan basis, and get to the bottom of this before the Finance Committee reported the nominee to the full Senate. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues didn't see it that way.

I started by asking the chairman of the Finance Committee for a bipartisan meeting with this whistleblower to evaluate their claims and seek additional evidence to determine if the nominee lied to members of the committee. The majority refused to hold that meeting or postpone the committee vote unless we agreed to hand over any information received from the whistleblower directly to the nominee and the Trump administration.

I just want to be clear on this point. This is a violation of Whistleblowing 101. That is because it allows the government to identify the individual blowing the whistle through a process of elimination. It jeopardizes the whistleblower's anonymity and safety, and I am going to have no part of that as the cochair of the Whistleblower Caucus with my friend CHUCK GRASLEY. There is a long bipartisan tradition in the Senate of treating whistleblowers with great respect and deep care.

I am here to warn America now about a dangerous erosion of congressional oversight that will have a chilling effect on public servants who are thinking about coming forward and blowing the whistle when government Agencies are acting against the interests of the Americans they serve.

Mr. President, I fear that the events I have just described are going to cause public servants who want to do the right thing to put away their whistles. That is bad for good government, it is bad for congressional oversight of laws we delegated to the executive branch through our constitutional authority, and it is bad for Americans who expect their government to be responsive and transparent.

The double whammy of disrespect for Social Security and the Americans who count on its earned benefits, along with the culture of secrecy and lies that exist throughout the Trump administration, is a bad omen for what is ahead for Social Security.

Even if the Republican Party decides to pretend none of this is happening, Americans from Portland, OR, to Portland, ME—all of them—are speaking out, literally, this weekend.

All Americans should be concerned that a nominee for a position of public trust like Commissioner of Social Security is accused of lying about his actions at the Agency, and that efforts to bring this important information to light are now being thwarted.

If Mr. Bisignano can get away with lying before he is even in place as Commissioner, who knows what else he will be able to get away with once he is in office? He could lie by denying any American who paid their Social Security taxes the benefits they have earned, claiming some phony pretense. He could lie about how sensitive personal information is being mishandled or, worse, exploited for commercial use.

I will close with this. I am going to have a lot more to say about the nominee and the Trump administration's disastrous record on Social Security. Today, I urge my colleagues to vote no on the cloture vote coming up to bring sanity back to Social Security and, in my view, safeguard the Senate's long and bipartisan tradition as a safe haven for government whistleblowers who want to speak truth to power.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the confirmation of Mr. Frank Bisignano, who is nominated to be the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

The Social Security Administration has the significant responsibility of overseeing the Social Security Program, which provides monthly benefits to millions of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and their families. The Social Security Administration also oversees the Supplemental Security Income Program and issues Social Security numbers and cards, among other critical workloads.

I am confident that Mr. Bisignano has the experience needed to lead this important Agency. He has more than 30 years of executive leadership experience in banks and financial institu-

tions. He currently serves as the chairman of the board and the chief executive officer of Fiserv, Incorporated, a leader in payments and financial technology.

During his nomination hearing, Mr. Bisignano committed to improving customer service at the Social Security Administration, including by bringing down wait times for the Agency's national 800 number and for claims decisions; ensuring that individuals can interact with the Social Security Administration in the way they prefer, whether in person, by phone, or online; and improving the Social Security Administration's payment accuracy.

During Mr. Bisignano's nomination hearing, concerns were raised regarding his alleged connections to DOGE's work at the Social Security Administration. These allegations were raised in an anonymous letter dated March 24, 2025, the day before the nomination hearing.

The allegations focused on the frequency and details of communications between the nominee and Social Security Administration officials. Mr. Bisignano addressed these allegations during the hearing and responded in writing as part of the questions for the record. He has stated clearly that he does not currently have a role at the Social Security Administration and was not part of the decision-making process led by the Acting Commissioner, Lee Dudek, about Social Security operations, personnel, or management.

The Social Security Administration needs steady, Senate-confirmed leadership. Mr. Bisignano would bring his decades-long focus on customer service and operational excellence to the Social Security Administration.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Mr. Bisignano to serve as the next Commissioner of Social Security.

Mr. WYDEN. To respond to my colleague, who I have worked together with so often in such a positive way, this is an area where we just have a very significant difference of opinion.

The whistleblower was a senior official who worked for years at Social Security. I believe the information given was credible, documented now by the Washington Post reporter who surveyed some of the resources and the individuals who could confirm it.

What I want to do, because I have worked with my colleague so often, is to have a bipartisan process to resolve the matter. What the majority said was, if we were going to have a bipartisan process, we would take the information that the whistleblower gave and we would give it to the administration and anybody else. And it would breach the essence of Whistleblowing 101—what we have worked on for so long.

So I want it understood that I still wish we were doing this in a bipartisan way, as I have done for so long as the cochair of the Whistleblower Caucus.

That would resolve it, and it would be done with the tradition of protecting whistleblowers, as we have done so often over the years and especially in the Finance Committee.

What I think is unfortunate is this is breaking the tradition that the Finance Committee has always done in terms of protecting whistleblowers, doing it in a fair way, and working together. I think we will regret it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, briefly to respond, we worked very closely with our colleagues across the aisle to try to vet this anonymous letter and get the information necessary to evaluate it. We are still willing to look at it.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, at this point, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Bisignano nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent that the rollcall vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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 bill 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. 60, Frank Bisignano, of New Jersey, to be Commissioner of Social Security Administration for the term expiring January 19, 2031.

John Thune, Katie Boyd Britt, Dan Sullivan, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo, Tommy Tuberville, Jim Justice, John Boozman, Roger Marshall, John Kennedy, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Rick Scott of Florida, Ted Budd, James Lankford, Mike Rounds, John Barrasso, Bernie Moreno.

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 Frank Bisignano, of New Jersey, to be Commissioner of Social Security Administration for the term expiring January 19, 2031, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 230 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Banks	Grassley	Mullin
Barrasso	Hagerty	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Hoeben	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Peters
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Coons	Klobuchar	Smith
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Markey	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Fetterman	Murphy	Warren
Gallego	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Britt	Moran	Slotkin
Graham	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

REMEMBERING ELAINE WYNN

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Elaine P. Wynn, who passed away on April 14, 2025.

Elaine was the driving force behind Wynn Resorts and a champion for Nevada. She will be greatly missed and will always be remembered for her influential business and philanthropic work that actually shaped the Southern Nevada community we know today.

Elaine was born in New York and grew up in Miami Beach, but it was Las Vegas where she found her longtime home, and it is Las Vegas that will carry on her legacy.

In 1967, Elaine moved to Las Vegas to be at the center of the gaming and entertainment industry and immediately jumped into the casino business. She cofounded both Mirage Resorts and Wynn Resorts and was instrumental in developing and designing the Mirage, Bellagio, Wynn, Encore, and other world-renowned resorts. She also wove the art, culture, and celebration of the human spirit into all the resorts she helped develop.

Elaine understood that Las Vegas was not just a destination; it was an experience and still is. Her influence on these resorts helped transform the city into the world's premier entertainment and hospitality destination. Let me just say that it was not lost on somebody who was born and raised there and watched as she transformed the Las Vegas Strip.

You know, while building her resort business, Elaine was committed to the

Las Vegas community, particularly through her advocacy for education, arts, and employee well-being. She was always giving back to her city.

Elaine's work to improve children's lives through education included leadership roles at the local, State, and national levels. Elaine chaired the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Foundation from 1985 to 1991. She cochaired Nevada's Blue Ribbon Education Reform Task Force in 2011, and she served on the Nevada State Board of Education from 2012 to 2020, including as president in 2015 and 2017. She also served on the national board of Communities in Schools—an organization dedicated to encouraging children to stay in school—and was the founding chairman of Communities in Schools of Nevada.

Now, let me just say, as somebody who grew up in that community and just so respected Elaine Wynn, I was working in local government at the time and got a call from Elaine Wynn.

Now, when you get a call from Elaine Wynn, it is: Oh, my gosh, it is Ms. Wynn on the phone. I have to take this call.

I got this call to show up—well, not even show up, just be invited—would I be willing to be invited to come to talk to her about Communities in Schools, about education in Nevada. This is how passionate she felt about education.

Oh, my gosh. I am excited. I am honored. I am willing to go there and talk to her.

So I walk in a room with other people. Elaine Wynn is there. But here is the thing: Not only was she—she has always been gracious and warm and welcoming, but she talked about Communities in Schools and introduced us to the staff who were running Communities in Schools in Southern Nevada.

I am bringing this up because the woman who ran Communities in Schools for Elaine Wynn is now one of our Congress Members, SUSIE LEE. She represents now a Las Vegas district in Congress. This is how far-reaching Elaine's networking connections are to Nevada and the people she impacted in such a positive way.

Elaine Wynn Elementary School is located in Las Vegas. It was named in dedication to her in 1991 because of her commitment to education in the State.

She also was a patron of the arts and just truly believed in arts' culture, humanity, and what it can be bring to community. President Obama named her a trustee of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2010, and she served as cochair of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from 2015 until her passing. She was one of the visionaries for arts in the community and helped establish and build the Las Vegas Museum of Art.

The ripples of her philanthropy extend further through the Elaine P. Wynn & Family Foundation, where Elaine was personally and actively involved. She will be remembered for her philanthropic spirit as well as her business ventures.