

Texas as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. CORNYN. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 1596) was passed as follows:

S. 1596

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On June 17, 2024, 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray was brutally murdered in Houston, Texas.

(2) Two illegal aliens who were allegedly members of the Tren de Aragua gang have been charged with her murder.

(3) On March 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Order 14229 (90 Fed. Reg. 11585; relating to honoring Jocelyn Nungaray) renaming the area known as the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge to “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”.

(4) Ms. Nungaray loved animals and, given the close proximity of her hometown of Houston, it is fitting that the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge be renamed in her honor.

SEC. 3. RENAMING OF ANAHUAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

(a) RENAMING.—The Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located in the State of Texas shall be known as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the national wildlife refuge referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed with the vote.

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

VOTE ON DAILY NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Daily nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted “aye.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 248 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—4

Graham	Heinrich
Hagerty	Whitehouse

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 actions.

The majority leader.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the MacGregor nomination be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection? 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 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. 84, Katharine MacGregor, of Florida, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

John Thune, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Cynthia M. Lummis, Mike Rounds, Rick Scott of Florida, Roger F. Wicker, Katie Boyd Britt, Steve Daines, John Boozman, John R. Curtis, James E. Risch, John Barrasso, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Dan Sullivan, Bernie Moreno, Jim Justice.

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 Katharine MacGregor, of Florida, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 249 Ex.]

YEAS—57

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—2

Graham	Warner
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Katharine MacGregor, of Florida, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

EDUCATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is one of my colleagues, Mr. Connor Domingue, from my office.

High school seniors throughout our country are looking forward to graduation, which is going to happen here in the next few months—in some cases, weeks. The sad reality, though, is that some of these high school seniors won't be able to read. They won't be able to read their diplomas.

In fact, students in several States have actually filed lawsuits against their schools for failing to teach them basic skills like reading and math. One student plaintiff actually alleged in his petition that he can't spell his name, and he is a high school senior.

And it brings me no pleasure to point this out. We all know we have a problem with elementary and secondary education in America, but the truth is that some—not all, but some—of our schools here in America have become failure factories, and our kids are falling behind their global competitors in just about every category—not just reading, not just writing, not just math, also science.

We live in the freest, most prosperous country in all of human history, and yet American kids rank 22nd—22nd—not in all 195 countries in the world, but 22nd among developed nations in terms of our education achievement. It is embarrassing, and the American people deserve better, and so do American kids.

In 1979, President Carter established the Department of Education. As you know, Mr. President, it is a Cabinet-level Agency. Its purpose was to improve education outcomes throughout the country. I want to read you what the Department's mission is supposed to be. I am quoting here. The Department of Education is supposed to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access."

Pretty words. Pretty words. That is all they are. Just empty, pretty words. The results have been anything but excellent.

This chart represents reading skills among our kids in America. Down here, mathematic skills.

This is when we started the Department of Education way back here in 1979. This is where we are today. The line—we are doing a little better in math, but the line for reading is basically flat, and the line for mathematics is not exactly steep.

The truth is that our scores, both for reading and math, have not improved appreciably in decades, and any progress that we have seen from the Department of Education's long tenure—which is very low. You can see the

numbers; they speak for themselves—they disappeared during the pandemic when people in power decided to close down our schools.

Funding for the Department of Education has far outpaced spending in the rest of Federal Government. If you compare spending just for the Department of Education to spending in the rest of the Federal Government, the difference is dramatic. Since the 1980s, the Department of Education's spending has increased by 370 percent—370 percent. All other forms of spending have increased, on average, about 195 percent.

Yet the scores remain stagnant, both for reading and for math. Now, looking at these numbers, I think it is pretty clear why President Trump is calling for us to shut down the Department of Education altogether. He wants to—as we know, he wants to return education to our States, and Louisiana provides a perfect example of why that is a good idea.

I want to be clear. I am not saying that Louisiana public education and secondary education is perfect. We are not well, but we are doing much better.

Over the past few years, Louisiana has actually outpaced the rest of the country in several measures of academic improvement and academic achievement in our K through 12 schools. According to the Nation's report card—that is what everybody looks to. The Nation's report card is put out every year by the Department of Education, grading our States on progress in elementary and secondary education. It might be the only decent thing that the Department of Education does. I forget the formal name of it, but we all refer to it as "the Nation's report card."

And according to that report card, Louisiana led the country in reading growth in 2024, and I want to show you that here in a second in a chart. But, first, I want to go back.

I should have emphasized this. Once again, these are the average reading and math scores for all the kids in America since the Department of Education was established—flat line, mostly flat line. But look what happened here—a dramatic drop in both math and education scores. That is the pandemic. That is what happened when people in power decided to shut down our schools.

It was more than one person, I understand that, but for all the people who made this decision—they should hide their heads in a bag. I mean, look what happened. We shut down our schools. We had the largest learning loss in modern history. That is just a fact.

Now, some people are going to disagree with me, and I am not saying that if they disagree with me, they are dumb. But I am saying that if they disagree with me, they better hope the dumbest person in the world doesn't die because they are going to take their place.

I want to come back. Let me go to Louisiana for a second. We didn't shut

down our schools but for a short period of time. You can see the results on this chart. Between 2019 and 2024, Louisiana's fourth graders went from ranking dead last in the country for reading proficiency—here we are, 48th—to ranking 16th. I am very proud of that. Math scores also steadily increased. Louisiana climbed from being ranked 50th to 38th. We went from 50th to 38th and 48th to 16th best in our country. Louisiana made this growth happen during the pandemic and afterwards.

The pandemic was probably one of the most challenging educational periods in our country's history. Parents remember. I remember. Even if your kids are grown, you remember. It was difficult for kids to try to learn from home. It was a disaster. Shutting down these schools was a disaster, and American kids suffered because of it.

According to the Education Recovery Scorecard, which measures how much of the loss we were able to gain back, American students—I am talking about all kids throughout America—are still one-half of a grade behind where students were when they were tested before the pandemic. On average, we lost half a grade. In many States, the academic loss was a full year. That means that fourth graders today can only read as well as third graders prior to the pandemic.

This is an entire generation of kids who fell behind because our people in power decided to shut down our schools. And many of our States, despite the billions of dollars we appropriated to help them, have failed to catch up.

I am going to say it again. The people who insisted on shutting down our schools during the pandemic are responsible for the largest learning loss in modern history. It was dumb, dumb, dumb. And again, I am not saying the people that made that decision to shut down the schools in America are the dumbest people in the world, but they better hope the dumbest people in the world don't die.

Louisiana, though, managed to thrive during this period and afterwards. Why is that? We looked around at what our friends and our neighbors were doing in America and across the world, and we didn't go with the flow. Only dead fish go with the flow. We didn't go with the flow. We said: Let's look at what other countries are doing and working and what other States are doing and working, and that is what we did.

First, we started giving our teachers the tools they needed to teach, and that is important.

In 2021—I remember it like it was yesterday—our State legislature passed a law mandating that all K through 3 teachers receive advanced training in the very best methods of teaching reading. Reading is fundamental. If you can't read, nothing else matters in terms of educational progress. So we sought out the best methods for teaching kids from kindergarten to the third