

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF SEAN DONAHUE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the nomination of Sean Donahue of Florida to serve as General Counsel of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Donahue may be the most unfit nominee ever for any Federal Agency general counsel. As I said in my remarks in committee, this guy would have trouble getting an entry-level legal position in any one of our offices, yet here we are.

The Constitution provides the Senate with advice and consent power. This power should carry some meaning. "Advice and consent" should not be empty words, a rubber stamp.

The Senate confirmation vote on Mr. Donahue that is moments away shows how little we care to live up to that constitutional responsibility. This is a truly preposterous nominee. The EPA general counsel is the chief legal advisor to EPA on environmental laws, including Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, the Superfund Act, and others; on the Agency's development and implementation of regulations under its various statutes; and on litigation strategy with DOJ in court challenges to Agency actions. The general counsel oversees nearly 200 lawyers and 300 total staff.

Mr. Donahue has no experience qualifying him to do any of these things. He has never tried a case to verdict, never taken a deposition, never signed a pleading, never argued a motion. He has never personally litigated any case, let alone Federal cases implicating our Nation's most important environmental office.

What has he done? Mr. Donahue practiced law for a year and a half at a small firm in Buffalo that fired him for his version of being "overloaded with work." He was not even a member of the New York bar, however, and he then failed the DC bar on his first attempt. He claims, in New York, to have supervised six to eight individuals, which seems a stretch for someone not even a member of the bar. And there is no evidence—whatever minimal and unsuccessful legal experience Mr. Donahue had—that any work he may have done bore at all on the laws and regulations applicable to EPA.

The previous seven Senate-confirmed EPA general counsels were pretty impressive: Counsel Prieto, two decades in Federal service, including as general counsel at both the Department of Agriculture and DOJ's Energy and Natural Resources Division; Counsel Leopold, 14 years as an environmental lawyer and general counsel of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Counsel Garbow, 21 years practicing environmental law in the public and private sectors, including at the EPA and DOJ; Counsel Fulton, 22 years of leadership roles at EPA, following 8

years at DOJ's Environment and Natural Resources Division; Counsel Martella, court of appeals law clerk, 7 years with the Natural Resources Section of DOJ, Acting EPA general counsel; Counsel Klee, law firm for 9 years, chief counsel to the Senate Environment Public Works Committee for 5 years, and senior counselor to the Secretary of the Interior; Counsel Fabricant, 2 years in private practice and 5 years as private counsel, then chief counsel to then-New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman. This guy? A year and a half, fired, then in-house counsel at a solar company, tried no cases ever.

So why him? Well, I suspect part of it is that he will be so grateful that he will do whatever he is told. We have actually seen this already, even before his confirmation. He testified that the Trump administration's current assault on congressionally authorized, appropriated, and obligated funding was legal, never mind multiple Federal district court orders to the contrary. I would love to see him take that argument into those courts that had already found those orders illegal.

Second, and perhaps more telling, who cares at EPA if their counsel has neither experience nor knowledge? They are going to be overseen by the fossil fuel industry anyway. He will be told what to do by fossil fuel polluter lawyers. So all he will have to do is put what they want on EPA letterhead and file it.

Oh, yeah, and the nepo thing. His significant other is the Deputy Director of Presidential Personnel, a role with purview over every political appointment, including his.

Mr. President, this is a pretty bleak low point in Senate nominations' history. This is the last chance to pull back from the brink of confirming, likely, the most flagrantly unqualified person ever for an Agency general counsel position.

I urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON DONAHUE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Donahue nomination?

Mr. MORENO. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. MCCORMICK).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Fischer	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	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	Moody	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Kelly	McCormick
--------	-------	-----------

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Virginia.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S. RES. 195

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I move to discharge S. Res. 195 from the Committee on Foreign Relations, as provided under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S. Res. 195, requesting information on El Salvador's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time until 1:45 is equally divided.

The Senator from Kansas.

FOOD FOR PEACE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the call to feed the world has been answered by many Kansans, from farmers and ranchers to Senator Bob Dole and President Dwight D. Eisenhower. American farmers are linked to global markets and, by extension, to the well-being of people everywhere.

Two of our Nation's most successful programs for delivering American-grown food to the hungry around the

world are Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, both rooted in my State of Kansas.

At the recommendation of a Kansas farmer way out in Northwest Kansas, Kansas Senator Andrew Schoepfel introduced the Food for Peace Act in the Senate to purchase commodity surpluses to feed the hungry around the world. It was signed into law by another Kansan, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1954. Later, Senator Dole became the key champion of its reauthorization. Since its creation, Food for Peace has reached more than 4 billion people in more than 150 countries using American-grown commodities.

Another food aid program, the McGovern-Dole Program, was established in 2002 through the farm bill. It originated from the partnership between Senator Bob Dole of Kansas and Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. Since the beginning, McGovern-Dole has delivered more than 5.5 billion school meals to children around the globe.

The mission of these programs is more urgent now than ever. In 2023, more than 735 million people around the world faced chronic hunger. That is 1 out of every 10 people on the planet. Food security also contributes to our national security. When governments cannot feed their own people, chaos and violence often follow. Food assistance provided by the United States leads to greater stability in regions of the world important to America's strategic interests.

Hunger can drive children to join militias or nations to descend into chaos, opening up an opportunity for adversaries to step in and coerce a country for natural resources or military capabilities.

Hunger fuels desperation, and desperation fuels unrest. In the Sahel region of Africa, violent extremism is on the rise. Terrorist groups exploit food insecurity to win recruits and enforce loyalty. Programs like Food for Peace and McGovern-Dole break that cycle.

In Lebanon, where economic collapse has shredded the supply chain, Food for Peace delivered over 100,000 metric tons of wheat last year. In fiscal year 2023, McGovern-Dole provided school meals to more than 2.5 million children in developing countries like Bangladesh, where families fled ethnic cleansing and rely upon rations to survive.

Through these programs, Kansas wheat, Arkansas rice, and Iowa soybeans are feeding the hungry around the world who are facing famine, war, and national instability.

Food for Peace also provides a critical market for our producers. This is an issue that matters to Kansas farmers and farmers around the country. It allows them to sell nearly \$2 billion worth of excess commodities every year, so farmers don't have to let the crops go to waste and shoulder the losses.

For years, Food for Peace has been hampered by bureaucratic delays, mis-

management, and abuse within USAID. The inefficiency of USAID hasn't just wasted taxpayer dollars; it has weakened the reach and effectiveness of some of our most vital humanitarian aid programs.

Thanks to its extensive infrastructure and hands-on experience in both domestic and international operations, the USDA is uniquely positioned to manage Food for Peace. In February, I introduced a bill with my colleague from Kansas Senator MARSHALL and our colleague from North Dakota Senator HOEVEN and Representative TRACEY MANN—the occupier of the seat in the First District of Kansas—in Congress to move Food for Peace out of USAID and under the Department of Agriculture in an effort to prevent waste and bring the program closer to the farmers who depend upon it.

Right now, USDA runs two highly successful foreign assistance programs and already handles all domestic commodity purchases for Food for Peace Title II.

Most importantly, USDA has the trust of American farmers. They know the Agency. They understand their work, and it can deliver results. I am grateful that USDA Secretary Rollins has expressed a willingness to take on this program and for their commitment to preserving and strengthening the program's mission.

By placing Food for Peace under USDA's authority, we make certain the program can continue to bring revenue to American agriculture producers.

In fiscal year 2023, Food for Peace purchased \$713 million worth of U.S.-grown commodities and McGovern Dole purchased another \$33 million—both direct investments into rural communities across Kansas and the country.

I cochair the Hunger Caucus in the Senate. I cochaired the Hunger Caucus in the House. I took on that responsibility to try to make a difference. I have seen the differences these programs can make around the world, and I support their continuance, even if it needs to be in a new form.

I often tell farmers in Kansas: Farming is a noble profession. Feeding people is a worthwhile cause, and God gave you a purpose. God gave you, a farmer, a purpose for your life.

It was Kansas farmers who came up with the idea for Food for Peace as a moral and commonsense solution to prevent excess American food from going to waste and using it to feed the hungry across the globe.

For 70 years, the United States of America has made the difference between life and death for millions of people around the world and has made circumstances better for farmers here at home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise during Police Week to honor the brave

men and women in North Carolina and across the Nation who serve in law enforcement. Thousands of officers and their families come to our Nation's Capital every year to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect our communities.

Each name added to the memorial wall represents a story of courage, selflessness, and sacrifice. Unfortunately, North Carolinians know all too well about that kind of sacrifice. Today, I want to honor three heroes who we lost in North Carolina since last year's Police Week in May 2024.

Last September, North Carolina was hit by Hurricane Helene, one of the worst natural disasters in the State's history. The historic flooding and devastation caused by Helene required an all-out effort by first responders, who were working around the clock.

One of those first responders was Court Officer James Lau. Officer Lau's vehicle was swept away by unexpected floodwaters from a river, in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Officer Lau was a Vietnam veteran, and his law enforcement career spanned nearly four decades across 3 States. In fact, Officer Lau was 75 years old. He was already fully retired, but he continued to serve his community as a security officer at the Macon County Courthouse. He is survived by his wife, five children, and four grandchildren.

We also remember Major Michelle Lynn Quintero of the Madison County Sheriff's Office, who was only 48 years old. She was tragically killed by the same storm and fast-moving floodwaters caused by a dam that had overflowed and took down all the power, radio communication, and phone service. Major Quintero was swept downhill and was hit by a tree careening in the fast-moving water.

She served more than 17 years with the Madison County Sheriff's Office. Major Quintero is survived by her husband, who also works in law enforcement, and she is survived by her two children, both of whom work for the Madison County Sheriff's Office.

Late December of last year, on the day before Christmas Eve, Greensboro Police Officer Michael Horan was shot and killed while responding to a call about a man with a firearm in a grocery store. The murderer fled the scene and led law enforcement on a multi-county chase. The brave men from multiple law enforcement agencies apprehended the suspect on Interstate 40.

Officer Horan was a reservist in the U.S. Coast Guard, where he earned multiple awards, including the Coast Guard Enlisted Person of the Year award in 2015 and 2019. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of chief warrant officer, earlier this year.

Officer Horan served with the Greensboro Police Department for 7 years. He was only 44 years old and is survived by his wife and children.

While we can't stop natural disasters or accidents, lawmakers can play a role

in helping to reduce the intentional targeting of law enforcement. That is why I continue to push for the passage of the Protect and Serve Act. This is legislation that I introduced that makes it a Federal crime to intentionally harm or attempt to harm a law enforcement officer. It also gives prosecutors new tools to penalize criminals who target law enforcement.

Officers go to work every day prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for their communities, and they need our support now more than ever.

I had a colleague of mine in the Judiciary Committee today make a great point. That uniform now includes a bulletproof vest. They know what they have signed up for. They wear that as a matter of procedure because every single day they go out there, they assume they may be shot at.

I am asking my colleagues to consider the importance of this legislation and encourage them to take a stand on behalf of law enforcement officers who are no longer with us. There is a reason the Protect and Serve Act is supported by law enforcement groups across the Nation: the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Police Officers' Defense Coalition, the North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the Major County Sheriffs association.

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know why it is hard for any Member of the U.S. Senate to get behind this bill. It simply says that we are going to raise the stakes for anybody who would knowingly do harm to a police officer.

To every officer serving today: Thank you for your courage. You have earned my unending gratitude.

By supporting this bill, Members of the U.S. Senate can demonstrate their enduring gratitude to law enforcement.

By not supporting it—I don't know what that says, but I know it is something that in North Carolina and among law enforcement agencies, it is not good.

To the families of the fallen: Your loss is shared by a grateful nation. We will never forget your loved ones' service, nor their sacrifice. God bless them. God bless law enforcement. And may God bless the United States of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, the nominees I will discuss today were approved by the Armed Services Committee with bipartisan support. Republicans and Democrats agreed they are qualified and ready to serve. President Trump was elected in a landslide, and the American people expect and deserve our support in getting his agenda accomplished.

President Trump and his administration are working incredibly hard to bring back the U.S. policy of peace through strength and to ensure our

military is a respected and lethal fighting force. This is not an easy task after President Biden's weakness allowed our enemies free rein while our military leadership was distracted with being woke.

President Trump needs his full team in place to deliver on his agenda to restore our Nation's military to focus on the warfighter.

To that end, I ask that we move to consider the following nominees: First, I will ask we consider Dale Marks to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Marks is a former fighter pilot and combat-wounded veteran. After his distinguished military career, he continued service in a civilian capacity, where he rose through the ranks of Senior Executive Service. He is currently serving as Executive Director of the 96th Test Wing, Air Force Materiel Command at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

The position he is nominated for is essential to ensure our military installations remain strong, our energy policies support mission success, and our environmental strategies enhance, not hinder, operational readiness and support peace through strength.

I urge the Democrats to drop their misplaced stall tactics and allow for his immediate confirmation.

I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 109, Dale Marks, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Reserving the right to object, I appreciate my colleague from Florida asking for a competent team of professionals at the Department of Defense. We all want the Department of Defense to be managed efficiently and effectively. It is vital to our national security.

What we have right now is chaos, literally, confusion, turmoil, and turbulence, in part, because we have a Department of Defense that is unaccountable.

Last Congress, I led a bicameral letter to then-Secretary Austin demanding answers after a GAO report found significant failures in barracks' facilities across the country. Billions of dollars have been poured into installations for housing and infrastructure improvements. Again, those investments are being undercut by the mass layoffs we see right now at the Department of Defense.

We expect Mr. Marks to manage the entirety of these installations and environmental programs at DOD, but the administration, in effect, is undercutting at every turn.

This Secretary of Defense has created that chaos. He has shredded the Department's report on climate change, despite its outlining the serious implications it will have on the military in coming decades. I wonder whether the Secretary has actually visited Guam or Alaska and seen the effects of climate change in either place. I wonder whether he understands the equipment, the electronics, the ammunition that are required and that themselves require special storage and resilient infrastructure if we expect them to perform in combat effectively.

As climate change creates a more challenging environment for our warfighters, the DOD should be leading the charge in research and adaptability.

I feel especially strongly that the DOD, in firing its scientists and throwing research in the trash, is betraying the values and principles that the Secretary ought to be fighting to uphold.

Mr. Marks would be responsible for all of it. Yet the Secretary hasn't the slightest idea of what he is doing in these areas. We questioned him for more than 4 hours during his hearing at the Armed Services Committee; that is, the Secretary. We all knew that he was the least qualified Secretary of Defense in our history. And 4 months later, sadly, unfortunately, we can say, confidently, we were right.

What he is doing is slashing personnel, the experts, the scientists. He is the reason I stand here and say that we cannot accept Mr. Marks' shortcutting the proper process that provides for debate on all these issues, and therefore I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I am not sure I understand my colleague's objections. These are well-qualified nominees. They enjoy bipartisan support. There are several more nominees waiting. It is obvious, my colleagues across the aisle will do everything they can to undermine President Trump's agenda and delay these nominees.

Next, I would like to consider Keith Bass to be Assistant Secretary of Defense. Mr. Bass is a retired U.S. Navy commander. He is also a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the National Rehabilitation Association, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors.

Prior to nomination, Mr. Bass served as the Medical Center Director for the West Texas VA Health Care System. The role Mr. Bass has been nominated to oversee is a Military Health System that has 9.6 million beneficiaries entitled to care. The military health system is currently undergoing many reforms to improve efficiency, increase readiness, and deliver better care. I urge my colleagues to allow for his immediate confirmation.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 70, Keith Bass, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Reserving the right to object, I, once again, agree with my colleague from Florida that we worked together in a bipartisan way for years now, and I appreciate his leadership on the C Power Subcommittee where we share a number of interests.

I fear that the chaos at the Department of Defense, due to the slashing of positions, the confusion caused by ideological interventions that are harmful, reckless, and unnecessary, that those kinds of downsizing and defects in leadership will hurt the military families and, particularly, their access to healthcare.

TRICARE provides for the well-being of our servicemembers, their families, and loved ones.

Mr. Bass has a long service record, but this administration is undercutting his potential work, and we deserve to debate it on the floor of the Senate without unanimous consent, without shortcutting public accountability.

The administration now in charge of the Department of Defense should be held accountable for exactly the healthcare interests that Mr. Bass will have responsibility for advancing. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, the President deserves his national security nominees today. Let me see if we will consider this one: Brandon Williams to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, Military Health System.

Mr. Williams is a nuclear submarine officer. During his service, he made six strategic deterrence patrols, was a nuclear weapons safety officer, nuclear weapons security officer, and nuclear weapons radiological control officer. He is pretty competent.

This role is responsible for the maintenance of a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear stockpile.

Confirmation is critical to President Trump's "peace through strength and strategic deterrence" agenda. Hopefully, my colleague will see the wisdom in allowing this confirmation—this individual who is clearly qualified to be confirmed today.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Ex-

ecutive Calendar No. 107, Brandon Williams, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, on this one, I think the stakes are particularly high. At the Department of Energy, the DOGE-Musk cuts led to hundreds of employees being fired. They were responsible for overseeing our nuclear weapons stockpile. That set of moves caused a massive counterintelligence disaster and a logistical train wreck. After realizing these employees were indispensable, the Agency begged for them to come back.

Billions of dollars have been poured into this program, and what we have seen now is the whirlwind, the confusion, and chaos caused by this mismanagement. We need full accountability. We need more facts, which we have been denied.

Our Armed Services Committee, along with other committees, should be looking into what the consequences were of those DOGE slashing-and-trashing steps that put our Nation in jeopardy. We are not going to have it if we proceed to this nomination with unanimous consent, shortcutting public debate. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, one final ask. I hope my colleagues can agree that we have at least one critical nominee today approved.

Let's consider Bradley Hansell to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security.

Mr. Hansell is a former Green Beret, Senior Director on the National Security Council staff, and has previously received bipartisan support. He will be responsible to exercise the Secretary of Defense's authority, direction, and control over the DIA, NSA, NSA, NRO, and the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency. His confirmation is critical to the President's "peace through strength" agenda.

I, once again, urge my colleague to allow for the nominee's immediate confirmation.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 108, Bradley Hansell, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish I could agree to the unanimous consent on this nominee.

As my colleague from Florida obviously understands, the issues here are bigger than any one of these nominees. The issues are more consequential than the career or advancement of any single member of the Department of Defense team. This Secretary seems more concerned with his own public image than the safety of our servicemembers because he has violated basic security protocols.

We are talking here about an official who will be responsible for securing our national intelligence. When this Secretary, in effect, has jeopardized them through actions that are currently under investigation, how is the person responsible for the Office of Intelligence and Security at the Department of Defense supposed to do their job when they face the most serious counterintelligence threat in recent memory from within the Department of Defense? Elon Musk's firings put thousands of highly qualified people out of a job. Many of them possessed security clearances and knowledge of their Departments' most sensitive programs. Their service is vital to our national security. Thousands were fired without cause. Our adversaries couldn't be happier, and they may be profiting from those mistakes right now.

These cuts come at a time when we are prioritizing—we in the U.S. Senate—funding to expand our nuclear triad and to counter China's growing nuclear capabilities. These workforce reductions undermine our goals across the board in the Department of Defense. We need to provide personnel for program oversight, supply chain management, cyber security, and other critical functions. So I think we need accountability, and we need the facts. They haven't been forthcoming.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. At some point, this has got to change. We have Presidential elections every 4 years. Our President got elected. President Trump got elected, whether people like it or not. He deserves an opportunity to put his team together and act as the President and put his agenda in place.

This idea that both parties sit here and delay nominees and the ability to put teams together doesn't make any sense for the future of this country. This is not a time that there is no risk in the world, and so, at some point, we are going to all have to come together to start accelerating this. We have so many nominees. Whether it is a Republican or a Democrat President, we have got to allow these nominees to get through and get confirmed in a much more expedited manner. Otherwise,

none of our Presidents are ever going to get in a position that they can ever put a team together during their 4-year term.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. What I hear from the other side is, essentially, "Give the President whatever he wants in the name of his having the prerogative." He should name his own team, but we have a responsibility. It is a constitutional obligation. "Advice and consent" is more than just saying: Give him his own team. If we had been responsible in this body—if my Republican colleagues had stood up and spoken out as they should have done—we would have a different Secretary of Defense right now. It would have been unnecessary for the Vice President to come here and break a tie. We would have a more competent Secretary of Defense. That is the mindset that got us where we are today, and that is the reason I have lodged these objections.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Let's remember what we just did today. This is not the confirmation of the Secretary of Defense. These are the confirmations of very competent people. No one can question the competence of these four people. No one can. All right? These are competent people who have served our country and who do a great job. So what we are doing is we are saying: Because some people don't like our Secretary of Defense, we are not going to allow the President to put a team together of very competent people.

So what we are doing is, now we just have acting people whom none of us get to vote on and none of us get to question until they come to committee. None of this makes any sense. It is not helping us put together a team and holding people accountable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

S. RES. 195

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise to discuss S. Res. 195, which is a vote on a motion to discharge that will be the next pending vote in the Senate.

It is actually a pretty simple bill about very basic concepts: Do you believe in the Constitution or not? Do you believe in the rule of law or not? Do you believe in due process or not? Do you believe that final orders of the U.S. Supreme Court should be respected or not? Those are the questions at issue on S. Res. 195.

Our President, President Trump, has entered into an agreement still shrouded in some secrecy with the President of El Salvador, President Bukele, to deport American residents into El Salvador and imprison them in prisons in a country that has been charged by the United States and others with gross human rights violations.

The Congress that is in charge of appropriating taxpayer dollars should want to know the circumstances of this imprisonment and whether U.S. law is

being followed. The \$6 million payment to the El Salvadoran prison likely violates human rights law in accord with many experts who looked at the details as they emerged, and that is where we begin. These are dollars that Congress has appropriated, but the precise mechanism for the transfer of these moneys and the President's authority to both spend the money and carry out the deportations is questionable.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of one of these individuals who it admits was deported by mistake—and there are many others similarly situated—is defying an order of the Supreme Court. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a nine-to-nothing ruling that the administration should facilitate the return of Mr. Kilmar Abrego Garcia. Thus far, nearly a month later, that has not occurred.

This is about fighting lawlessness. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution, to which we all pledge fealty, is pretty straightforward:

No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

That was the clause that the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously interpreted to mandate the return of Mr. Abrego Garcia.

The President was asked recently whether he had an obligation to uphold the Constitution, which he swore an oath to in the witness of all of us on Inauguration Day. He was asked if he had to uphold the Constitution. Just within the last week, he said he did not know. We know the answer to that question, but the President does not. The particular country to which these American residents have been deported, El Salvador—this now goes back a year—has a track record of imprisoning individuals—innocent individuals. The last thing any of us should want is an innocent individual in prison, especially if that innocent individual is an American.

But this is the punch line: The President has indicated that this is not just for those who are here with questions about their legal status. President Trump has said "homegrown" are next. Trump doubles down on sending American criminals to foreign prisons. We have a prison system in the United States—local jails, State prisons, Federal prisons. The notion of sending American citizens to foreign prisons without scrutiny is truly shocking, and that is the reason that I filed the resolution.

What is this resolution?

It is a privileged motion—available to any Senator—directing the administration to produce a human rights report about a nation—in this case, El Salvador. S. Res. 195 directs the Secretary of State to produce a report to this body that would be available not only to us but to the American public about the human rights record in El Salvador, and a couple of the clauses of the resolution, I think, are specific about this particular case.

The report should contain information about the treatment of citizens or

residents of other countries, including the United States—non-Salvadorans—who are being detained or imprisoned in El Salvador, including any opportunity provided to such citizens or residents to demonstrate that they are being wrongfully detained or imprisoned.

We should all want to know whether Americans detained in El Salvador have an opportunity to demonstrate that they are wrongfully imprisoned. The report will require that.

The report would require an assessment from the Secretary of State of the conditions in El Salvador's Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, including an assessment of allegations of torture and other gross violations of human rights.

Remember again that the Trump administration has acknowledged that at least one of the individuals who was deported was deported mistakenly. He has been in prison for some time. If he is not there now, he was for some time in CECOT. We should want to know whether Americans in prison there are subject to torture or to other gross violations of human rights.

The report should include a description of any actions that the U.S. Government has taken to ensure that the Government of the Republic of El Salvador releases U.S. citizens being detained or imprisoned in El Salvador in compliance with U.S. court orders regarding their return.

Finally, the report would require information—a description of actions—the U.S. Government is taking to provide due process in compliance with U.S. law for relevant persons detained or imprisoned in El Salvador.

Why would anyone in this body, in understanding this record—the forceable deportation of American residents, some admittedly deported by mistake and whom the Supreme Court has ordered returned into El Salvadoran prisons—why would anyone in this body not want to get a human rights report about the conditions of that confinement, particularly given the fact that President Trump has indicated that he may intend next to send U.S. citizens into those same prisons?

This information will be very relevant to important decisions that we take in our relationship with El Salvador and also in our decisions we take with respect to the Appropriations Act. So I urge my colleagues to vote for S. Res. 195.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my friend and colleague Senator Kaine for his longtime leadership and support of human rights and the rule of law. It is an honor to team up with him in introducing this resolution.

As he indicated, this is designed to expose the truth about a scheme that is threatening the constitutional rights of everybody who lives in the United

States of America. As we speak, President Trump is paying American taxpayer dollars to the Government of El Salvador, which has been a notorious violator of human rights. He is paying them American taxpayer dollars to lock up American residents without due process of law. The Constitution is clear in the 5th Amendment and, by application to the States, the 14th Amendment, but the 5th Amendment to the Constitution guarantees due process.

As Senator KAINE indicated, when President Trump was recently asked whether he had to comply with the Constitution of the United States, despite the fact that he put his hand on the Bible and took the oath of office right down the hall here not that long ago, the President's response was:

I don't know.

That should concern every single Member of the U.S. Senate, regardless of party.

The principle of not depriving somebody of their liberty without the due process of law is a fundamental core American value. That is why it is in the Constitution of the United States. This is not a liberal issue. It is not a conservative issue. It is not an issue that belongs to any one party. This is a fundamental American issue in the Constitution of the United States.

I know that Donald Trump wants to continue to change the subject when it comes to this matter, but the subject could not be more clear, and that is to protect the constitutional rights of people who reside in the United States.

One person who was caught up in this unconstitutional scheme was Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who is a constituent of mine in Maryland, as are his wife Jennifer and their children.

Federal agents illegally abducted Kilmar Abrego Garcia while he was driving with his 5-year-old son, who has autism. They took him to Baltimore, then Texas, and then they shackled him and handcuffed him and put him on a plane. He didn't know where he was going. The next thing he knows, he ends up in El Salvador at this notorious prison called CECOT, which is the gulag of Latin America.

The Trump administration admitted in a Federal court that they had wrongfully detained Mr. Abrego Garcia. They admitted it. They said it was an "administrative error" that landed him in CECOT. But what did they do? Instead of fixing that egregious error, they fired the lawyer who told the truth to the court. That is what they did.

Since then, they have been ignoring the orders of the district court, the Fourth Circuit, and the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, in a 9-to-0 decision—we don't see many of those—ordered the Trump administration to facilitate the return of Mr. Abrego Garcia in accordance with his right to due process. If President Trump can ignore the courts, that is a very short road to tyranny.

I have made very clear from the start that I am not vouching for the man, Mr. Abrego Garcia; I am vouching for his rights because if you deny his rights, you put in jeopardy the rights of everybody who resides in the United States of America.

So that is why I did travel to El Salvador, both to meet with Kilmar Abrego Garcia to find out whether he was dead or alive and report back to his family but also to ask the Government of El Salvador to stop being complicit in this scheme with President Trump to deny residents of the United States their constitutional rights.

When I met with the Vice President of El Salvador, my worst fears were reinforced.

I asked the Vice President of El Salvador: Why are you holding Mr. Abrego Garcia? Do you have any criminal complaint against him?

No. No, not at all.

Why?

Because the U.S. Government, the Trump administration, is paying us to do so. That is why.

I ultimately got to see Mr. Abrego Garcia—at first, I was stonewalled by the Government of El Salvador—and he has been totally unable to contact anybody in the outside world before I met with him and since. He is not only in a total news blackout, but nobody can call him—not his lawyers, not his wife, not his mother, not his brother. That is a violation of international law, and that is one of the hallmarks of this El Salvadoran gulag, is people go into CECOT or these other prisons and you never hear from them again.

The State Department's 2023 human rights report on El Salvador—the most recent one we have—reported “credible reports” of “cruel, inhuman, or degrading torture” in El Salvadoran prisons, including beatings with batons and rifles, overcrowding, underfeeding, and life-threatening medical neglect; reports that guards fire stun guns on wet floors to deliver electric shock to the entire cell at once. That is where we are sending people like Abrego Garcia without any due process of law, and that is why it is so important that we adopt this resolution, which Senator KAINE has so well described.

I would urge my Republican colleagues to stand back and think of the moment we are in because not only did the President of the United States say he wasn't sure if he had to comply with the Constitution of the United States, which should set off alarm bells all over the country, regardless of party, but Steve Miller, one of his top policy advisers, publicly talked about suspending habeas corpus, suspending the Constitution of the United States. That is a very dangerous idea, and all of us—all of us, regardless of party—should stand up to protect the Constitution, protect due process, and make it clear that the President of the United States cannot ignore a nine-to-nothing Supreme Court order, which he

is doing as we speak, because if he can do it with one person or do it to two people, he can do it to anybody in the United States of America, and that is un-American.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I first want to begin by thanking my colleagues Senator KAINE and Senator VAN HOLLEN—I believe Senator SCHUMER will be joining us—for this important issue. I want to thank them for their efforts to provide some needed moral clarity at this critical time.

Earlier this year—I hope you have seen the news reports—all across the country, there were stories of families waking up to learn that their loved ones had disappeared—a husband with no criminal record detained after a routine immigration appointment, complying with the conditions of his status at the moment; another instance was a makeup artist, who had fled Venezuela after being targeted for sexual orientation and political views, one day gone simply for having crown tattoos in honor of his parents; a mother who learned the whereabouts of her son only when she saw his face on propaganda videos released by El Salvador.

Over 200 migrants were sent to El Salvador's notorious, high-security prison known as CECOT. By the way, that includes eight women whom the Trump administration mistakenly flew to the all-male prison, only to have to fly them back. But hundreds of men have been sent to prison with no trial even, no sentence, no end date, no communication with the outside world.

Let me be the first to say and I think I speak on behalf of my colleagues when I say that if you have committed a crime in the United States of America, then, yes, you deserve to be prosecuted. But, as we all know—and I hope we continue to respect—we have a justice system to do just that, a justice system that has a process for those charged with a crime to be found guilty or innocent, because, yes, you actually have to be found guilty in a court to be guilty. Now, that shouldn't be controversial.

Anyone who claims to be for “law and order” has to be for both law and order. You can't just overlook the “law” part of the slogan. But Republicans continue to leave out that fact and the fact that the overwhelming majority of those deported had no criminal records.

A report from “60 Minutes” just last month showed that 75 percent of those deported to CECOT had no criminal record. These were people who in many cases had pending asylum cases or some other sort of immigration protection. But simply because they may have tattoos, the Trump administration has decided to use them for a poorly executed and expensive publicity stunt.

As I think Senator VAN HOLLEN began to explain to us, if Republicans

allow Donald Trump to make himself judge, jury, and executioner, then we are all in trouble. This is the behavior of a foreign dictator, not the President of the United States. A dictator wishes to do away with due process and disappearing loved ones to foreign countries without a trace.

This administration is violating Federal law by sending people to places like CECOT and, soon, maybe Libya, where they may very well face torture or some other horrific treatment.

For anybody who thinks this may not concern them because they are an American citizen, think again. You may not actually be given an opportunity to prove your citizenship before you are sent away. Donald Trump has said publicly that he wants to imprison American citizens in El Salvador next—not my words; his—so there is no telling where all of this is going to lead.

We have seen Federal courts time and again rebuff the Trump administration's lawlessness and order them to take steps to return wrongfully deported immigrants. We have also seen the Trump administration continue to resist and ignore court orders.

So, colleagues, the resolution before us today would force the Trump administration to start opening up the books, to tell us what meaningful actions they are taking to comply, to be accountable to the American people, and, yes, demand that the administration publish a report on the human rights violations being committed by the country Trump is so willingly embracing. But it also does another thing. It puts us all on the record because history will judge not only those who willingly embraced the erosion of civil rights that is happening, but it will also judge those who chose to sit back and watch it happen over and over again.

Every Member of this body has to decide whether they will stand up and demand answers from the administration or sit silently while Trump imprisons innocent men.

This is more than just about immigrants or immigration. This is about due process. This is about civil rights. This is about the foundation of our liberties.

I urge my colleagues to join us in holding this administration accountable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I will conclude prior to the vote just by saying this is a very basic resolution.

Everyone in this body, knowing that Americans have been deported without due process to a prison in a foreign country that has a grievous record of human rights abuses, should at least want to get information about the circumstances of that confinement, about whether that prison is according American residents any semblance of due process and whether the United States is undertaking efforts to ensure that

that country and that prison are following final orders of the U.S. Supreme Court.

If you support the rule of law, if you support due process, if you support the Constitution, if you support human rights, if you support final orders of the U.S. Supreme Court, you will support S. Res. 195.

I now ask for the vote.

VOTE ON S. RES. 195

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the resolution.

Mr. KAINE. 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 assistant bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Leg.]

YEAS—45

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

NAYS—50

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

NOT VOTING—5

Graham	McCormick	Sanders
Kelly	Moran	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 45, the nays are 50. The motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 125.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Charles Kushner, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant 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. 125, Charles Kushner, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the French Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, John Hoeven, Marsha Blackburn, James Lankford, Bill Cassidy, Roger F. Wicker, Todd Young, Mike Crapo, Markwayne Mullin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

GUIDING AND ESTABLISHING NATIONAL INNOVATION FOR U.S. STABLECOINS ACT—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 66, S. 1582.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 66, S. 1582, to provide for the regulation of payment stablecoins, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 66, S. 1582.