

character. These attacks serve no purpose other than to frustrate an investigation into Credit Suisse's Nazi past. That absurd conduct is, in fact, a spit in the face to the victims of the Holocaust.

The U.S. Congress won't tolerate and shouldn't tolerate that kind of evil here in the 21st century, and neither will those brave souls long past that lived through the Nazi evil. They stand guard as our spiritual strength.

So let this be a message to the bank obstructionists: This Senator, as chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, will leave no stone unturned when it comes to Nazi evils—and neither will Senator WHITEHOUSE.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF SCOTT BESSENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, we will hold a vote on the nomination of Scott Bessent to be Treasury Secretary. An example of the American dream in action, Mr. Bessent rose from challenging economic circumstances to a career in the world of finance, and he brings a wealth of private sector experience in the economy and markets to his new role, as well as a concern for the needs of working Americans.

During President Trump's first administration, we passed major tax relief legislation. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act reformed our Nation's outdated Tax Code, lowered tax rates across the board, nearly doubled the standard deduction, doubled the child tax credit, and enacted pro-growth policies for American businesses of all sizes. As a result, the economy took off, and our Nation became more competitive. Household incomes increased, and the employment rate hit its lowest level in 50 years.

Now, however, a lot of that tax relief is close to expiring, and without action, American families and businesses will face a staggering \$4 trillion tax hike next year. At the top of the Republican agenda is extending that tax relief to help our economy and the American people thrive. I deeply appreciate the fact that Mr. Bessent shares that commitment, and I am looking forward to working with him on extending the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

I am also looking forward to working with him to help ensure that American businesses large and small remain competitive in the global economy. Over the last 4 years, we have witnessed the Biden administration embrace the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and negotiate with nations around the world on a Pillar 2 global minimum tax regime—all, I might add, without consulting Congress and, I would argue, without fully appreciating the damage to the United States' own tax base and our ability to set tax policy for U.S. multinational firms.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act helped create an environment where American

businesses could thrive on the global stage, and I am committed to working with Mr. Bessent and the Trump administration to continue to protect American businesses and ensure that we do not enter into agreements that put U.S. businesses at a disadvantage next to their foreign counterparts.

NOMINATION OF SEAN DUFFY

Mr. President, this afternoon, we will also be voting to invoke cloture on the nomination of Sean Duffy to be Secretary of Transportation. Mr. Duffy brings valuable experience that will help him in managing our Nation's sprawling transportation system, and he has some important work ahead of him.

In recent years, there have been a number of challenges in the transportation sector. We have seen serious safety concerns affect air travel. Issues at our ports have led to supply chain challenges. A pilot shortage has resulted in reduced air service in parts of the country. All the while, the Biden administration seemed to be focused on forcing Americans into electric vehicles and forcing progressive ideology into transportation policy.

The American people expect to have a safe and efficient transportation system, and that is the top priority of the Transportation Department, and it is what Sean Duffy is focused on.

As a five-term Congressman and a co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, Mr. Duffy worked with Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate on a number of infrastructure projects, including the replacement of a decades-old, structurally deficient bridge connecting Wisconsin and Minnesota and upgrading the Soo Locks.

Our colleague Senator BALDWIN has called Mr. Duffy "the right person for this job," and he earned a unanimous, bipartisan vote out of the Commerce Committee last week.

As Mr. Duffy mentioned during his confirmation hearing, he and his wife Rachel have nine children, and I am not the first to observe that the logistics of moving the Duffy clan is by itself preparation for this job. But more seriously, as a father and a parent of new drivers, transportation safety is personal to Mr. Duffy. As a resident of a rural State myself, I appreciate that, coming from rural Wisconsin, he knows that infrastructure needs in rural parts of the country are just as important as those anywhere else.

Sean Duffy will bring valuable experience and knowledge to the Transportation Department, and he has a proven track record of working with Republicans and Democrats to deliver good infrastructure for the people we all serve. I look forward to working with him in this new role, and I look forward to confirming both Mr. Bessent and Mr. Duffy in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF SCOTT BESSENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as the leader has just said, I come to the floor for the same purpose: to talk about my vote in favor of Mr. Bessent to be Secretary of the Treasury.

This Cabinet position is one of the most important positions in any administration. The Secretary is the tip of the spear for a President's domestic economic agenda. Moreover, the Secretary is a very key player in international affairs, with responsibilities covering international trade, global finance, and foreign sanctions—and that is just to name a few.

Given the current challenges we face as a nation, the next Treasury Secretary will have a full load on their plate.

The United States is facing what former Clinton Treasury Secretary Larry Summers recently called "the biggest fiscal sustainability problem since the Civil War."

At the same time, the expansionist ambitions of Russia in Europe and China—particularly China's pursuit of economic hegemony—threaten the international economic order.

Having met with Mr. Bessent, I am confident he is up to the task. He has in-depth knowledge of economic history. In fact, he taught a class on the subject at Yale University. That and his decades-long career in finance make him uniquely qualified to be our next Secretary of the Treasury.

He is acutely aware of the risks posed to our national economy by our \$36 trillion national debt. He understands that digging ourselves out of our fiscal hole will require spending restraint and, coupled with that, great economic growth.

As he discussed in testimony before the Senate committee, avoiding the largest tax hike in the history of our country by extending the 2017 tax law is crucial to the health of the American economy. And we all know in this body that the biggest tax increase in the history of the country can happen to the middle class even without a vote of Congress because the 2017 tax bill sunsets at the end of this year.

Mr. Bessent also understands that international trade and access to foreign markets are vital to the economic success of the American farmer. And when I spoke with this nominee in my office, I was pleasantly surprised by his knowledge of agriculture, stemming from his ownership of farmland in North Dakota.

As with all nominees, I stressed to Mr. Bessent the importance of responding to Congressional letters. Congress has a constitutional duty to perform oversight of the executive branch. I intend to hold him to his commitment to

respond to all congressional inquiries in a timely and responsive manner.

I also told him that every nominee that comes before any committee is asked that same question: Will you respond to our letters? And I say, kind of tongue-in-cheek but with some truth to it, that you ought to say “maybe”—because I showed Pam Bondi, our nominee for Attorney General, when she was in my office, a whole file of 158 letters in the last 4 years that I sent to the Department of Justice that have remained unanswered or not fully answered, and all that.

So I hope that we can get this Trump Cabinet to keep their word that they are going to answer our letters, because they need to focus it from the standpoint of the Constitution. You learn in eighth grade civics that we not only pass laws here and appropriate money, but under checks and balances, we have the responsibility to make sure that the executive branch faithfully executes that law or spends that money appropriately.

And so checking up on that requires a lot of communication between us in the Congress and the executive branch, and that is true whether it is a Republican or Democrat President. But I hope this administration is committed to fully cooperating with Congress on our oversight responsibilities.

Now, there is another item I always stress with Treasury nominees, and that is the importance of the IRS Whistleblower Program that I authored critical updates to in 2006. To date, this program has brought in over \$6 billion to the Treasury, thanks to whistleblowers who often risk their careers to blow the whistle on tax cheats.

This legislation is meant to make sure that the IRS has total information on who is paying their taxes and who isn't. So if you are working with some corporation that is not paying their taxes and you can report that successfully—the collection of those taxes—to the IRS, that whistleblower can get a share of the return.

And so far since 2006, \$6 billion—billion dollars—has come back into the Federal Treasury as a result of that program.

However, in regard to that program, for much of the program's history, there has been an embedded culture in Treasury and the IRS that has hampered the success of the program. So I will look forward to working with Mr. Bessent to turn that culture around so that the 2006 legislation will be much more productive in not having the Federal Government cheated out of taxes that people owe.

So based on my discussions with Mr. Bessent, there is no doubt in my mind that he is well qualified to be Treasury Secretary. So I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of his nomination later today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. ROUNDS assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 261 are printed in today's RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a totally unrelated subject, this week two Senate committees will hold confirmation hearings for Robert Kennedy, Jr., President Trump's nominee to be Secretary for Health and Human Services.

Every day, HHS, this major government Agency, makes life-and-death decisions. That Agency oversees the Food and Drug Administration to make sure that what we eat is safe, to make sure the drugs that are sold to us are effective and safe as well.

The National Institutes of Health is in this Agency. It is the premiere medical research agency in the world—in the world. Some \$40 billion spent each year to find cures, to find new drugs, to move us toward a better America.

And the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, their job is not as flashy as some, but it is so important. What they do is to make sure whatever is going around, as they say, doesn't hit our families. We count on them every single day.

It is a big job that requires responsible leadership and honesty overseeing an Agency that has these critical Agencies of government.

Now there may be some certain areas where we agree, such as curbing drug ads or improving the quality of the food supply. And I know Robert Kennedy, Jr., and I have worked with him in the past. I can work with him on those issues.

But on the fundamentals, the basic question of his leadership is troublesome. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is dangerously—dangerously—unqualified and entirely irresponsible in his judgment. He embraces quack science and cherry-picks information to fulfill his numerous conspiracy theories. His decades-long crusade to spread lies about vaccines is just one example. Let me show you a chart that is pretty explicit, pretty short.

Robert Kennedy, Jr.:

There's no vaccine that is safe and effective.

This man who wants to head the Agency which develops vaccines and monitors their use said there is not a single vaccine that is safe and effective. He has stated that as recently as July of 2023.

Contrary to scientific fact, he has also said that:

I do believe that autism does come from vaccines.

I have heard this theory, and I think about it so many times when I think of

my friends and families who are raising children with autism. What a responsibility. What an effort they have to put into it to give these young children a chance. And to have this quack theory out there that this has something—their child's condition have something to do with vaccines is cruel.

And an outlandish conspiracy manifesto which he has helped to publish and wrote the forward for entitled “Cause Unknown”—here is the book—attempted to link COVID-19 vaccination with deaths in young kids.

Let me put this up here. It is a picture of the cover of this book. “Forward written by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.,” who is up for approval as part of the Trump Cabinet, head of HHS.

The book's cover has a picture of a young man whose name is Braden Fahey. The only problem this book, which is called “Cause Unknown: The Epidemic of Sudden Deaths” and talks about COVID vaccine—Braden never received a COVID vaccine. This poor little boy died at football practice due to a malformed blood vessel on his brain, and the book included his photo without the knowledge or consent of his parents. The height of irresponsibility.

Mr. Kennedy pushes facts aside when he wants to tell us about his agenda. The Hippocratic Oath for doctors states: “First, do no harm.” But I am fearful, if we put Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in charge of our Nation's health, innocent children will die.

It is no secret what he would do. Mr. Kennedy himself petitioned the FDA to rescind authorization of all COVID vaccines in 2021, and a key associate of his has petitioned to remove the polio vaccine.

I look over here to the pages we have in the Senate. I think of my own experience, when I was 4 or 5 years younger than them. It was in the 1950s. We knew polio because we saw kids in our classrooms who were here today and in the hospital tomorrow. They contracted polio. It could be deadly. It could be crippling. It could affect you for the rest of your life.

We knew this thing called an iron lung that looked like a big vat—a big white vat—and the head sticking out of the end of it was this young person who contracted polio. This iron lung was helping these young kids to breathe and stay alive.

We lived in dread of the possibility of coming down with polio. I remember talking about it when I was a little kid. How do you get polio? Nobody knew.

Then the day came when Jonas Salk—Dr. Jonas Salk—developed a vaccine that was going to protect us from coming down with polio. Later on, Dr. Sabin developed an oral version of the vaccine, which we kids liked a lot more. But the bottom line was, in my lifetime, in my childhood, we stopped polio in the United States. It was a vaccine that worked, over and over and over again—a million times over again. It worked.