

of six children with Josh. I think a seventh is on the way. They are an incredible family. They are an incredible couple. They have already served the State of Missouri with distinction, and I know Josh is going to continue to serve the State with distinction for years to come.

Judge Cris Stevens is such an exceptional jurist, and I know that my good friend and colleague Senator SCHMITT will have more to say about him in just a moment. They worked very closely together, and Judge Stevens, as I said, is already serving the State with distinction on the State bench. We look forward to having him on the Federal bench for many years to come.

And Maria Lanahan and Zach Bluestone both have rendered distinguished—distinguished—service to the State of Missouri; in Maria's case, in the Missouri Attorney General's Offices, arguing cases for the State, winning judgments for the State; and Zach Bluestone, a Federal prosecutor who has been prosecuting violent crimes, going after child sex abusers, and taking the worst of the worst off of our streets in the State of Missouri. He is an exceptional Federal prosecutor. He is going to be an exceptional Federal judge.

As we come to the end of what has been a long road, to be honest, for these judicial nominations in the State of Missouri, I just couldn't be more grateful. And I want to end by how I began by thanking President Trump for his exceptional leadership, thanking him for choosing these four outstanding individuals who I know are going to make the State of Missouri proud. They are going to make the United States proud, and in just a few minutes here, I look forward to casting the first vote to begin this process to seeing them on the Federal bench.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The other Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask for unanimous consent to speak up to 5 minutes before the scheduled rollcall.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I want to echo the comments from Senator HAWLEY. This is a very proud day for the State of Missouri and significant that the first district court judges that are coming before this body under President Trump's second term in office will be filling the bench, the four vacancies, in the Eastern District of Missouri: Josh Divine, Cris Stevens, Maria Lanahan, Zach Bluestone.

I want to talk about Mr. Divine and Mr. Stevens, briefly, here, both of whom worked in the office when I was attorney general, Josh very briefly. He came on, originally, with Senator HAWLEY. But Cris Stevens, I want to talk about him first.

You know, when you are in a role like attorney general, you need a lot of good people around you, and you have

a core team. And for me, that process, you kind of rely on a lot of social capital over the years, and you ask around. You have some relationships, but you have people who then refer you to people, and you go through an interview process. And Cris Stevens was the name that just kept coming up. And I didn't know Cris before that. I knew his reputation just a little bit.

But when he and I got together and visited about the vision for what we wanted to do with the office, we instantly clicked. He is an incredible family man, a devout Catholic, his wife Leigh—they have great kids. He is a wonderful father.

And before he came to my office, he was probably one of the more decorated and storied criminal prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's Office in generations. I mean, if there was a tough criminal case, Cris Stevens was the guy. And so I brought him in originally as our criminal chief. He later—when Tom Albus, who was my first assistant, went on to become a judge, Cris Stevens then took that first assistant role. And what I was always impressed by Cris was not only his work ethic but his willingness to work with younger lawyers, to be a mentor. His legal acumen was beyond reproach. He is a brilliant guy. He is going to do an incredible job on that court.

I am just so proud for him and his family today as this vote happens, and he will ascend to that really important role, a lifetime appointment, and will do the business of the people on that bench. We need more people like Cris Stevens so it is really a special day.

Josh Divine, as Senator HAWLEY mentioned, is a very, very smart guy. He has done a great job in the Solicitor General's Office with the current attorney general, Andrew Bailey. He will do a phenomenal job on the bench.

We are really lucky to have such a deep legal bench in the State of Missouri. As these nominees came forward, we just have an embarrassment of riches in Missouri. I think that is true, and the first two of them will be voted on here today.

And as I mentioned, Maria Lanahan and Zach Bluestone will come after that.

So I just want to wish congratulations to them as this vote takes place, and I can't recommend both of them more strongly. And, again, it is a real honor for the State of Missouri to have these two incredible jurists before this body for their confirmation vote.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 260, Joshua M. Divine, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri.

John Thune, Todd Young, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Shelley Moore Capito, Ted Budd, Ashley B. Moody, Tommy Tuberville, Joni Ernst, John Barrasso, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mike Rounds, Lindsey Graham, Pete Ricketts, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Ted Cruz.

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 Joshua M. Divine, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri, 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 North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 412 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	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	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Smith	Tillis
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 46, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 325

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, I am introducing this resolution to require

the Department of Justice to release its files related to Jeffery Epstein.

For years, Donald Trump and the MAGA movement have railed on about the Epstein files. They have told the American people they are going to release the files and expose the elites. Pam Bondi has said she has the files on her desk, and they are ready to go public.

The names of these shady elites who have abused children were just sitting there, and she was ready for it to be released.

But now a complete reversal.

Trump is straight up gaslighting the American public. Does he think the American people are that dumb? Did he really think the American people would not forget what he had said for years on the campaign trail?

Just yesterday, we learned that the Trump administration abruptly fired one of the lead prosecutors in the Epstein case—no explanation. No warning. Just gone.

So what happened? It is really easy to run a campaign and rile up people, but when it is Trump's turn to actually expose the elites, Trump has chickened out. And it is because he is one of those elites, and he is taking care of his own.

It is all connected. Just look at his legislative agenda: tax breaks for his rich buddies; subsidizing private jet purchases. Again and again, he rigs the system against everyday Americans. And that is what this resolution is about, to show the American people they deserve the truth.

No more shady coverups. If there is any evidence of a coverup in the Epstein case, the public has a right to know. If there is a list, the public deserves to see it. Americans deserve to see the truth, even if it is not what Donald Trump and his elite friends want.

If the Department of Justice has these files and there is nothing to hide, then release them and prove it. Trump's own people have told us a million times that they have it and that they promised to make it public. So bring it out. It doesn't matter who is implicated in that.

The American people are done with these games, these lies, and the two systems of justice: one for the elites and one for everyone else.

Enough with the secrets. The American people deserve the truth. So I am calling on my fellow Senators to join me in demanding the Department of Justice release the Epstein files to restore public trust, affirm institutional accountability, and to prevent the politicization of justice.

With that, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 325, submitted earlier today; further, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, this is nothing but political theater. It is so obvious that the Democrats are just using this for a political football.

If they are really serious about this, what happened the last 4 years? Where were they? Silent. Doing nothing but covering up for an absent President. And now, all of a sudden, they want to talk about transparency.

We haven't even figured out who ran the White House the last 4 years, and now all of a sudden, they want to make something of this. Are you kidding me?

If they are serious about it, then why didn't they say something the last 4 years? This is nothing more than just political theater trying to go after a President that they truly despise; therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, the Senate just had the chance to demand transparency and stand up for the truth. Instead, my colleagues chose to protect the powerful and perpetuate years of misinformation.

Transparency is the foundation of accountability. When people are told again and again that the evidence exists, and then, suddenly, they're told it doesn't, that undermines the faith in our entire system, and it's an insult to the intelligence of every single American paying attention.

You don't rebuild public trust by hiding the truth Mr. President; you do it by proving you have nothing to hide. So I'll ask again, if there's nothing to hide in the Epstein case, then what are you so afraid of? What are they hiding? Why did the Trump administration abruptly fire the prosecutor leading the case? Why the silence? Why the backpedaling? Why the objection?

The Department of Justice should work for the people, not the powerful elites.

Today's resolution should have made that clear.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, next year, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Nation's founding, and I am glad that in anticipation of this great celebration, President Trump has issued an Executive order outlining preparations that our country will make to celebrate this anniversary.

As part of this effort, President Trump has also issued a separate Executive order specifically directing the elimination of woke and anti-American displays at the Smithsonian museum.

Now, this may come as a shock to many people, but every single Institution in this city seems to be infected with political ideology and bureaucratic agendas, and the Smithsonian is no exception.

The 21 museums that make up the Smithsonian Institution have been a

treasure for a long time; but, unfortunately, in recent years, they have strayed from their true mission. These museums should be a place where up-and-coming generations of Americans can go to learn about American heroes and who built our great Nation.

They should be places where they learn about our Founding Fathers, the founding documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the pioneers who explored and settled this great land, and those who endured great hardships in order to make a better life for their children.

There are so many great stories of Americans, people who have done so much to make our country what it is today. These stories are what our young people need to hear because how else will you inspire the upcoming generation to stand on the shoulders of their forebearers and continue to make life better for more and more people who call this great country home?

How will we teach those who will one day lead this Nation—whether that is in government or in business, in medicine or any other field—that these pursuits are honorable and they have a purpose, if they have not yet learned these lessons about the heroic men and women who have gone on before them?

Unfortunately, as I indicated a moment ago, the Smithsonian has strayed from its original reason for being. The Smithsonian Institution was founded in 1846 for the expressed purpose of increasing the diffusion of knowledge among men. It was founded as a gift by James Smithson, who devised his entire estate to the U.S. Government.

Congress, as we now know, accepted this gift and provided for its governance and its financing. The Smithsonian Institution operates as a trust, which means that it is an executive Agency of the U.S. Government and is chaired by a 17-member Board of Regents.

But since its original founding in 1846, something has gone terribly wrong with the direction of the Smithsonian. A writer and mother of six recently described her experience taking her children to museums in our Nation's Capital on a warm summer day.

At the family's first stop, the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, her 4-year-old was excited to see dinosaur skeletons. But she was disappointed to learn that much of the dinosaur exhibit was dedicated to climate change.

One exhibit specifically read:

Since the last ice age, Earth's climate has warmed. But now that warming is getting faster because of us.

Well, you don't have to be a climate denier—and I am not—to recognize that something is profoundly wrong with this message.

Is it really the message a 4-year-old needs to learn, that climate change is something that she or he is personally guilty of contributing to?

Unfortunately, to the mother's dismay, she said the museum's website highlighted additional polarizing displays. A historian from the museum told the mother: