

Civil War put Franklin's warning to the test. On that hallowed ground, Abraham Lincoln told his audience to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that task, of course, being the preservation of our Union.

Our Nation's history and Pennsylvania's history are full of such significant milestones, and today we face another make-or-break moment for America's future. I have seen our country at its best, as many of you have, from the brave men with whom I served in Iraq to the shopkeepers and the storekeepers along the streets of vibrant, small Pennsylvania towns, to the farmers whose plowed fields dot our Commonwealth's beautiful landscape, beautiful countryside.

I have witnessed firsthand our uniquely American ability to get to the edge of the cliff and to pull ourselves back in times and moments of national peril. We can do it again. A bright future can and should be ours, but it depends on what we do next. We must confront the difficult task ahead, while staying true to the values and ideals that have made America the last best hope of man on Earth.

And what I can say with certainty today, Mr. President, standing in this esteemed Chamber with so many friends, is that this Senator and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can be counted on to do our part.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

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

VOTE ON LOHMEIER NOMINATION

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

Mr. COTTON. 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 434 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Crapo	Husted
Barrasso	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Blackburn	Curtis	Johnson
Boozman	Daines	Justice
Budd	Ernst	Kennedy
Capito	Fischer	Lankford
Cassidy	Graham	Lee
Collins	Grassley	Lummis
Cornyn	Hagerty	Marshall
Cotton	Hawley	McConnell
Cramer	Hoeben	McCormick

Moody	Risch	Thune
Moran	Rounds	Tillis
Moreno	Schmitt	Tuberville
Mullin	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Murkowski	Scott (SC)	Young
Paul	Sheehy	
Ricketts	Sullivan	

NAYS—46

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	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
Gallego	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—2

Britt	Kim
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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 actions.

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. 87, Richard Topping, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

John Thune, Eric Schmitt, John R. Curtis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Bill Cassidy, Jon A. Husted, Steve Daines, Marsha Blackburn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Ron Johnson, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Pete Ricketts, Jim Justice, Bill Hagerty.

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 Richard Topping, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) is necessarily absent.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 435 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Blackburn	Budd
Barrasso	Boozman	Capito

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

NAYS—46

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
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Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gallego	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—2

Britt	Kim
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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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Richard Topping, of Ohio, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

GAZA

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. I have addressed this before, but today I rise with a message that is both straightforward and urgent: Humanitarian aid must immediately reach the civilian population in Gaza.

As one pediatric doctor, the leader of the ward at Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, said, "There is no one in Gaza now outside the scope of famine, not even myself." This is the pediatrician who leads the ward. "I am speaking to you as a health official, but I, too, am searching for flour to feed my family."

The New York Times notes:

The World Food Program, an arm of the United Nations, said this week that the hunger crisis in Gaza [has] reached, in their words, "new and astonishing levels of desperation, with a third of the population"—

That is right, one-third—

"not eating for multiple days in a row."

The suffering we are seeing every day is unacceptable. More measures can be and must be taken to allow Palestinian families to access basic necessities. Those include food, medicine, and shelter.

At the same time, we must focus on achieving a cease-fire as soon as possible, one that would release hostages

held by Hamas and allow displaced Palestinians to return home.

Ultimately, what so many of us want to see is a lasting peace and a two-state solution, but that cannot happen when people are starving. As we pursue that goal, however, it is clear that the system for distributing aid that is now in place, run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, is nowhere near adequate. Yesterday, more than 100 nongovernmental organizations issued an urgent call to action, including CARE, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Save the Children, and so many more.

Acute malnutrition is rising. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in recent weeks while seeking food, most in the vicinity of Gaza Humanitarian Foundation distribution sites and others on the routes of aid convoys. This is simply unacceptable.

Since the collapse of the cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in March, the humanitarian situation has only worsened. Many of us have advocated repeatedly for a change in course. In May, I joined 24 of my colleagues to call on President Trump to press for the immediate resumption of neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance, access, and distribution that fully meets the needs of innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza. That same month, more than 40 colleagues and I sponsored a resolution calling for the urgent delivery of additional aid to Gaza.

And a few weeks ago, when Prime Minister Netanyahu and his delegation visited the Senate to meet with a bipartisan group of Senators, I attended, and I attended for one reason in my capacity as No. 3 in the Democratic leadership, and that was to raise the issue of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

And I did that. I expressed my strong opposition to cutting off vital humanitarian aid, arguing that more aid groups should be allowed into Gaza at more entry points and also conveyed my opposition to the continued displacement of Palestinians.

I say to my colleagues: You can support the people of Israel. You can be horrified and condemn, as all of us did, the terrorist attack, but we cannot continue to allow people to starve.

I believe U.S. diplomacy must focus on an urgent return to a cease-fire, the release of remaining hostages held by Hamas, and an increase in humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. And following a cease-fire, we must pursue steps to end the war, establish postwar security and government arrangements in Gaza, and ultimately, as I noted, reach a two-state solution, an outcome I have long supported and a view I have conveyed in the past, strongly, to Israeli and Palestinian leadership in meetings here in Washington, DC; in meetings in Israel; and a meeting in the West Bank.

In the immediate term, lives are being lost on a daily basis—kids, innocents—and the Government of Israel must change course.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, last week, I stood here and introduced a simple resolution calling on the Justice Department to release the Epstein files, but a Republican Senator blocked it.

In the week since, even more damning information has come out, and now we know exactly why Trump is bending over backwards to keep these files hidden.

We know that Epstein was at Trump's wedding. We know that Epstein once called Trump his "closest friend for 10 years." And we have seen that Trump wrote Epstein a birthday card and said:

"Happy Birthday—and may every day be another wonderful secret."

And the real kicker, we learned yesterday that Trump is in the Epstein files, and he knows it. The truth is coming out, and the coverup is crumbling. So I am here again, and my request is very simple. The Senate should go on record supporting the release of the Epstein files. Any effort to block their release is simply continued coverup for our Nation's elites.

While I stand here on the Senate floor demanding answers, House Republicans have run for the exit, ended their term early, skipping town early to avoid taking up any more discussion about Epstein and the files. They didn't just punt accountability; they literally fled Washington, DC.

While everyday Americans are struggling to afford their groceries and their healthcare, we have a President in the White House focused on protecting the most powerful men and women who preyed on children. This is who Donald Trump really is. He campaigned as a man of the people. When it comes down to it, he is a servant of the powerful and the elite. He built a movement claiming to fight those same elites, and now he is protecting them every way possible.

The American people are seeing right through it. They spent years listening to Trump promise—promise—that he was going to release the Epstein files, and now he is mocking them every day for even believing him and all his lies. But the American people are not stupid. They know something is off. They smell it.

If Donald Trump really wants these files released, they would be out already. Instead, he is orchestrating a coverup, and he is not acting alone. The entire Republican Party, the FBI Director, the intelligence community, and the Justice Department are backing him up to bury the truth. They are doing everything they can to keep the truth buried because they know who is in those documents, and they want to protect them and his friends.

So, today, I am calling on my colleagues to stand with me and stand on the side of the American people—not

the pedophile elites that they are trying to protect—and call on the Justice Department to release these files. It is that simple. If there is nothing to hide, then come out and prove it.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 325; 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, as we hear my colleague from Arizona use I would say very liberal truths as to what he was saying by not giving all the facts, I would also pose this question: Where was all this outrage over the last 4 years when Director Wray was over the FBI and Attorney General Garland was over the DOJ?

He knows, I know, and all the Democrats know that if there was anything to do with President Trump, they would have happily released it. My lord, you went after him for everything else you could possibly think of. Why wouldn't you possibly go after this?

Well, it is because this is nothing but political theater. We know that. We know that what your resolution is—it doesn't actually have transparency because we all want transparency. All of us want transparency. We want to know actually what happened. The American people want to know what has happened. But what this resolution does is it actually is a blurred line between the separation of powers.

When we start dictating to the Department of Justice what they can and can't do—there is a clear separation of power. We are the legislative branch. That is what we do. We make laws. We can't dictate to the other branches on what they must and how they must do their job.

Now, with that being said, I would simply ask the question: Why now? Is it because of their hatred toward President Trump, because they want to do anything they can possibly do to distract from what they might be hiding? Why wasn't this done the previous 4 years? What happened? They had the same files. This case wasn't new.

So this resolution does absolutely nothing; therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, in response to the Senator from Oklahoma, the reason we are here, the reason why there is a request of this nature is because there is one and only one administration and one campaign that ran more than 8 years that vilified—