

can move forward with the transparency that maybe both of us actually want.

Therefore, I object to combining them. I would ask my colleague once again to accept my resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard to the modification.

Is there objection to the original request?

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. GALLEGRO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let's just understand why we are here. The political theater was started more than 8 years ago—the political theater started just 5 months ago when the President said, after appointing his Attorney General, that they are going to release the Epstein files; when the Attorney General said "I have those files right here; I am going to show them to you," and then, all of a sudden, the shenanigans started. All of a sudden, the files are gone; they are not there; they were made up by somebody else. That is where this political theater is coming from.

The American public wants to know why. Why, after 8 years of this President promising that "I will release the files"; why after 8 years, getting into the office and then appointing his Attorney General and then directing the Attorney General to go look for those Epstein files and that Attorney General saying they are going to release the Epstein files and then poof—all of a sudden, there is an issue. All of a sudden, there is backpedaling.

This is what stinks for the American public. This is what smells like an elite coverup. That is what we are trying to get to.

If my good colleague from Oklahoma agreed with me, then we would do both because that is what is being demanded by the American public, because the first promise was made by this President that they were going to release the files. That is where this political theater started.

With that, Mr. President, I object to the good Senator from Oklahoma's motion, and I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, in closing, I would just simply say that maybe my colleague from Arizona and I can work together, if he wants to, and we can drop some of the stuff in his resolution. Maybe we can come up with a conclusion with my resolution. I have concerns about yours blurring the lines between the separation of powers and at the same time want transparency.

If we can both agree we want transparency—we have worked together on several issues in the past. Let's sit down and try working this one out.

Mr. President, with that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

NOMINATION OF RICHARD TOPPING

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to speak just a moment before we cast a

vote in just a few minutes. I want to speak about the importance of confirming the nomination of Army CPT Richard Topping to be the Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I chair the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. We have had Mr. Topping before us, and he, as the Chief Financial Officer, if confirmed, is responsible for making certain the VA is a good steward of taxpayer dollars, that the VA has the resources to carry out the Department's mission of caring for our Nation's heroes and their loved ones.

We must have a Chief Financial Officer who puts veterans first, prioritizes accountability and transparency, and understands the importance of this responsibility in helping the Department of Veterans Affairs fulfill its mission.

Captain Topping was raised in a military family and served in the U.S. Army, so he is a veteran. In his testimony before the committee, he shared about the important role the VA played in his life, from caring for his sister who become ill while serving in Iraq to enabling his grandfathers, both World War II veterans, to receive a college education through the GI bill.

He also discussed the importance of using his experience as a servicemember and a veteran to advocate to enhance the VA's financial systems to make certain taxpayer dollars are used effectively and transparently and to improve budget forecasting and management, all of which are critical to the Department's success.

I am grateful to Captain Topping for his willingness to continue serving his fellow veterans in this new capacity, and I look forward to working with him to improve the lives of veterans, caregivers, survivors, and military families in my home State of Kansas and across the country in the coming years. I will be voting yea.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Bove nomination.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF RICHARD TOPPING

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise, sadly and reluctantly, to oppose Richard Topping as the next VA Financial Officer, and I say "sadly and reluctantly" because the VA really needs leadership now at a time of mass firings, freezes on hiring, cuts, and the kinds of chaos that we are seeing at this great institution that serves our Nation's heroes. We need a really experienced, steady, principled financial leader. And, unfortunately, Richard Topping is not that person.

He is not the kind of accountable and transparent leader that the American people and veterans across the country expect at the VA.

When I questioned him at his nomination hearing—just to give you one

example—about a government audit that found extreme errors in his judgment while he was CEO of a company called Cardinal, he blamed the Democrats; he blamed others for his own shortfalls. That is not leadership. That is not what our veterans identify as leadership.

He has never been the chief financial officer of any company. He has never been CEO of a public company—that is to say, an institution responsible to shareholders or to the public—and he lacks essential qualifications in his educational background as well as in his experience.

The VA's 2025 budget request is for \$370 billion. It is second only to the Department of Defense. It needs someone who not only is loyal to President Trump—in fact, more than loyalty to President Trump—it needs someone with the objective qualifications and experience. His main qualification is, in fact, his fealty to Donald Trump.

That is not the qualification that should count here. What we need is someone who will do the job with the excellence and integrity that veterans have a right and need to expect. I urge my colleagues to vote against this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that we move up the 1:45 vote to start right now.

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

VOTE ON TOPPING NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Topping nomination?

Mr. MORAN. 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 senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASIDY).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 436 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

Risch	Scott (SC)	Tillis
Rounds	Sheehy	Tuberville
Schmitt	Sullivan	Wicker
Scott (FL)	Thune	Young

NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	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
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Britt	Cassidy
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The nomination was confirmed.

The **PRESIDING OFFICER**. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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 senior assistant executive 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. 292, Emil J. Bove III, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

John Thune, Lindsey Graham, Katie Boyd Britt, Eric Schmitt, Tommy Tuberville, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Crapo, John Barrasso, Rick Scott of Florida, Chuck Grassley, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Cornyn, Kevin Cramer, Ron Johnson, Ashley B. Moody, Mike Lee, Josh Hawley.

The **PRESIDING OFFICER**. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Emil J. Bove III, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, 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 Arizona (Mr. **GALLEGO**) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 437 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Banks	Blackburn	Budd
Barrasso	Boozman	Capito

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

NAYS—48

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

NOT VOTING—2

Britt	Gallego
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The **PRESIDING OFFICER**. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 48. 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 Emil J. Bove III, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. **THUNE**. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 273.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Wright, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2030. (Reappointment)

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 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. 273, David Wright, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2030. (Reappointment)

John Thune, David McCormick, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Ron Johnson, Kevin Cramer, Jim Banks, Dan Sullivan, Pete Ricketts, Rick Scott of Florida, Ted Budd, Jim Justice.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. **THUNE**. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 110.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Earl Matthews, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Defense.

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 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. 110, Earl Matthews, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Defense.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, John Hoeven, Marsha Blackburn, Bill Cassidy, John R. Curtis, Jim Justice, Thom Tillis, Katie Boyd Britt, 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.