

at an absolutely catastrophic inflection point, and I believe that the U.S. Senate has an obligation, as our country does, under international humanitarian law to act.

We can act and help to save thousands of Palestinians who as I speak are starving to death—as I speak, are starving to death.

Two months ago, I led a resolution. It was sponsored by 46 Democrats. It had a simple demand: Our country must work to end the siege on food aid. It was blocked.

You know, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I am sure every bit as much as I am, are horrified at the suffering in Gaza.

But it is not enough for us to be horrified. We have to act. We all condemn Hamas. We all want the release of the remaining hostages. But we have to ask ourselves the question: Is it at all justifiable that there is a policy that has to be recognized that starvation is being used as a tool of warfare?

I reject the legitimacy of that act. It is a war crime. It is a war crime to starve a population to get what you want from your enemy. As righteous as your defense against an enemy may be, it is illegal to starve children to obtain a battlefield advantage. Yet the Netanyahu government has actually said it is doing that.

In my view, Mr. President, it is long, long past the time to say: Enough, enough, no. The United States will not stand by while hunger is used as a weapon. We don't do that, and we cannot separate the current starvation in Gaza from the Netanyahu government's strategy of forcibly displacing Palestinians from their land.

A short-term surge of aid to keep Palestinians alive is not what we need. We need full, uninhibited, generous, accessible aid, medical and food. But that is not the Netanyahu government policy.

And we can sometimes act as though we are not an agent here or we don't quite see or we want to give them the benefit of the doubt because Israel has been our ally. But take the words—can we be numb to the words of the Netanyahu government officials? The Prime Minister himself said “I don't care about targets” and ordered military officials to “destroy [the] homes, bomb [everything in Gaza].”

He said that.

Finance Minister Smotrich said Gaza will be totally destroyed. Civilians will be sent to the south to a so-called humanitarian zone. And from there, they will start to leave in great numbers to third countries.

He said that, a high official in the Israeli Government.

Heritage Minister Eliyahu said last week—last week—that the Israeli Government was rushing toward Gaza being wiped out.

There is no mystery here. These are the statements of high government officials.

Defense Minister Katz said:

Gaza residents, this is a final warning . . . you will pay the full price . . . return the hostages and remove Hamas, and other options will [be] open [to] you, including leaving for other places in the world for those who want to.

The Palestinians who live in Gaza, hard as it may be for us to appreciate it, that is what they call home and they want to stay there.

Mr. President, the tragedy and suffering in Gaza today demands our full attention and our full engagement because this is a war that we are contributing to sustain. I am here today to debate Gaza's famine conditions because the United States has been paying for weapons that Israel is using to flatten Gaza but not to feed Palestinians in Gaza. It was American taxpayers who paid for the bombs and bulldozers that are continuing to flatten homes to ensure they are never returned to and that are creating the misery that all of us are shocked to see today.

America, first under President Biden and now under President Trump, provides cover for extremists in the Netanyahu government to continue these actions. America's closest allies have called for an end to the war and cut off the shipment of weapons that send a green light to the extremist government of Binyamin Netanyahu.

And yet just 2 weeks ago, President Trump notified the Senate that he intends to ship another half billion dollars' worth of 2,000-pound bombs and 1,000-pound bombs to Israel. While President Trump speaks of trimming budgets and spending more money here at home, he is shipping billions of dollars of bombs and shells and bullets that are being used not just to starve the Palestinian people but to flatten their homes and drive them off of their land.

Mr. President, I oppose this. I believe the American people have had enough. The American people are demanding leadership and clarity from us—from the White House—that can put an end to this terrible bloodshed and put an end to the misery of generations of Palestinians in Gaza. And the American people are demanding leadership from us today to help secure a real justice and peace for the people of the Middle East.

Mr. President, whatever differences we may have, none of us can—none of us should; none of us can—condone the excruciating starvation and misery that can be abated immediately with the full access to the food and medicine that the people of Gaza need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

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

NOMINATION OF SAMUEL BROWN

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I want to speak on the nomination that we are considering now. That nomina-

tion is of retired Army CPT Sam Brown to be the Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

The Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs is responsible for making certain the National Cemetery Administration honors the memory of our Nation's veterans by caring for their final resting places and providing services to their surviving loved ones.

More than 4 million Americans are laid to rest in NCA's 156 national cemeteries. Kansas, my home State, is home to three of those NCA cemeteries where more than 62,000 Kansas veterans and their family members are now buried. We must have an Under Secretary who treats this position with the utmost respect and understands the importance in honoring and remembering those who pay an ultimate sacrifice.

We also need confirmed permanent leadership at the VA filling roles that are critical to serving veterans and their families.

Today, we are voting on a leadership role that has a no-fail mission to make certain veterans' families have a dignified place to grieve and to remember their loved ones.

Our nominee is a West Point graduate, combat veteran, a husband and father of three. CPT Sam Brown understands sacrifices made every day by men and women of the U.S. military and their families as well, and he is well-equipped to undertake this significant responsibility. In his testimony before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Captain Brown shared how he suffered painful burns in the line of duty in Afghanistan. His testimony included how he heard his gunner, who ultimately saved his life. That gunner shouted: Sir, I've got you, in the midst of the flames. That is the same message of hope that I know Captain Brown will take with him to the National Cemetery Administration. That is the same attitude of service that I expect he will instill in an entire NCA workforce as they fulfill our solemn obligation to the families of our Nation's veterans.

I am grateful to Captain Brown for his service to our country, for his sacrifice, and now for his willingness to continue serving his country in this new capacity. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting his confirmation today.

I thank my colleagues for listening.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

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

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

VOTE ON MONAREZ NOMINATION

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

Mr. TUBERVILLE. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULIVAN).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted "yea."

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 445 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

Hagerty	Sullivan
---------	----------

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 action.

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 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. 85, Samuel Brown, of Nevada, to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs.

John Thune, Dan Sullivan, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds, Todd Young, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Crapo, Katie Boyd Britt, Jim Banks, Markwayne Mullin, Jon Husted, Steve Daines.

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 Samuel Brown, of Nevada, to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 446 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—2

Hagerty	Tuberville
---------	------------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 45. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Samuel Brown, of Nevada, to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, last year, this body unanimously passed 41 bills from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Now, 16 of those bills, for one reason or another, didn't end up getting signed into law last

year. Some of those bills perhaps were casualties of the legislative calendar but for one reason or another didn't make it through but remained undisputed and remained noncontroversial. They have been reintroduced by Republican and Democratic Senators and are cleared on the Republican side of the aisle.

It is important to note here that these noncontroversial, bipartisan bills all remain completely unchanged. Not a single letter, not a single period, comma, or exclamation mark has been altered on them. They remain utterly noncontroversial—not a whiff of partisan dispute between them.

In the past, these bills were, in many circumstances, packaged together. It has been something of a custom in the Senate to package together groups of bills. Lands bills in some cases were paired together as part of much larger bills.

In some instances, parts of some of those bills were themselves controversial—larger bills, bills that were sometimes written in secret and not available to individual Members to review prior to the time that they were pro-pounded for a unanimous consent request on the floor.

So today, I am going to make an entirely reasonable offer to move four bills off of the floor from among that group that passed last year by unanimous consent in the Senate. They are unchanged, they are still noncontroversial, and they carry no substantive policy objections, no objections to the merits of the bill and what they do. They are bills that are locally supported, bills that have been thoroughly vetted by the committee of jurisdiction and that are ready to move today.

In short, they are bills that are ready to move in the same type of open, Member-driven process that the Senate was built for and that the Senate, quite frankly, prides itself in fostering and encouraging rather than being held hostage for a larger backroom deal negotiated in secret.

The first is a bill from Senator BARRASSO that would provide common-sense flexibility for ranchers during natural disasters to help ensure rangeland health on Federal lands.

The second is a bill that I have introduced called the Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act, which would add Utah as a fourth location for the Southwest Ecological Research Institutes, which would be housed, for the Utah portion of it, at Utah State University. This institute would foster collaboration to promote healthy forests, wildfire prevention, and resilient water supplies. Utah is well positioned and ready to work with the other institutes, including the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, to protect the unique landscapes and communities across the Western United States.

The third bill is one from Senator CORTEZ MASTO, the Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act.