

quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Thomas Gaiser, of Ohio, to be an Assistant Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 449 Ex.]

#### YEAS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeben	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	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

#### 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
Gallo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 47.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is July 30—my older daughter's birthday—but we are approaching a season that Senators and our staffs alike look forward to each year with some anticipation, which is going back home, talking to our constituents—more importantly, listening to our constituents, hearing what is on their minds, and determining how we might do our jobs better.

I sometimes, tongue in cheek, refer to Washington, DC, as a forward operating base in hostile territory, but the truth is, many of the most important battles that are fought in our country are fought out here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. But, as we look ahead to next month, it is worth taking stock of where we have come in the first half of the 119th Congress, in the first 6 months of President Trump's tenure as President of the United States—certainly, in his second term, obviously—which has been an amazing record of accomplishment if you look back at it.

We have confirmed President Trump's Cabinet at a record pace—no

thanks to our Democratic colleagues who have reflexively or, you might even say, mindlessly opposed each and every nominee of this President, with maybe one exception. That would be the Secretary of State, Senator RUBIO.

In the process of obstructing all of these nominees and forcing us to burn valuable floor time by not agreeing to any voice votes or to the expedited consideration of noncontroversial nominees, they have forced us to burn valuable floor time, during which we might have taken up other important bipartisan matters. Nevertheless, we have done important things—unfortunately, alone on this side of the aisle, without any support from our friends across the aisle—like extending the Trump tax cuts from 2017 and making them permanent, addressing the looming debt ceiling to prevent a national default. We have secured many other important wins for border security and law enforcement through the One Big Beautiful Bill.

We also passed our first rescissions package, codifying many of the most important spending reforms identified by the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE.

While these accomplishments are not insignificant, we are just getting started.

As I mentioned, our Democratic colleagues here in the Senate have reflexively and mindlessly opposed President Trump's nominees, but we have confirmed 107 of them while 147 lower level but critical nominees are still waiting to be confirmed by the Senate—147. These include many Ambassadors to key allies around the world that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has voted out of committee. They are waiting for their day on the Senate floor.

To date, Senate Democrats have allowed voice votes or given unanimous consent on exactly zero—zero—of President Trump's civilian nominees. This is the only time in recorded history that the minority party has refused to do so on any nominees at this point in a Presidency, and it is shameful. It is inexcusable. They are not hurting Republicans; they are not hurting President Trump. They are hurting the American people because these are people who will serve in critical positions that require Senate confirmation not only here in the United States and the administration but around the world in representing the United States at Embassies all across the planet.

Senate Democrats' partisan obstruction is making our country less safe; it is making American foreign policy less effective; and it is ceding the field to our adversaries, who have no problem putting their representatives in these countries which currently lack American Ambassadors.

I, for one, believe that if our Democratic colleagues do not relent on this needless and mindless obstruction, Senate Republicans will have to con-

sider what additional steps we need to take in order to expedite this process.

There is precedent for this. Back in 2017, when Neil Gorsuch was nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court, our Democratic colleagues refused to grant cloture or closing off debate by giving 60 votes for that purpose. It forced Republicans to change the Senate rules to lower that threshold from 60 down to 51, which had always been the longstanding tradition. Even in spite of the possibility of requiring 60 votes, it simply had not been required previously.

And when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada was majority leader, the Democrats changed the threshold for cloture on all other Federal judges from 60 to 51. So in 2017, in order to break that logjam on Supreme Court nominees, Republicans returned the favor.

I believe that some similar process by which we set a new precedent on the President's nominees may be necessary before we leave this Chamber, before we leave the Senate and Washington, DC, this month.

The President must have his team in place. Again, our Democratic colleagues seem unwilling to accept the fact that President Trump actually won the election, receiving a mandate from the American people. Why else would they obstruct all of his nominees and force us to burn valuable floor time by not agreeing to any sort of expedited process, force us to burn all this valuable floor time just to confirm 107 nominees and leave 147 waiting?

It is not fair to the American people because these people are supposed to serve in important positions of responsibility on their behalf. It is not fair to President Trump, who has been denied his team. But it is also not fair to the people who agree to serve in these important Senate-confirmed positions, many of whom have had to sell their businesses, go through a rigorous ethics and legal background scrub, and are simply waiting, day after day after day, will they or won't they, will they or won't they vote to confirm me to this position, which, for many of them—maybe all of them—is an honor of a lifetime.

So we owe it to the American people. We owe it to President Trump. We owe it to these nominees who have volunteered to serve their country to vote on these nominees without further delay.

There is more work to do. In addition to confirming President Trump's nominees, another task that awaits the Senate upon our return is the National Defense Authorization Act. This is the necessary authorization that Congress passes each year to support our men and women in the military, to make sure that we remain the preeminent military strength in the world, and, as President Trump has said time and time again, to make sure that our main national security policy is peace through strength.

We don't want to fight any unnecessary wars, but the best way to avoid

fighting wars is through deterrence, and that comes with peace through strength.

The Defense authorization bill is the main legislative vehicle for ensuring that our military has the resources they need to achieve the missions of today and to rise to the challenges of tomorrow.

We are, I believe, living in the most dangerous world since World War II, and we must take seriously our obligation to authorize additional resources and support the men and women and the families who serve in the U.S. military.

We passed the Defense Authorization Act for 63 consecutive years, and 2025 cannot be the year that we break that streak.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, under the leadership of Chairman WICKER, has done an excellent job on a bipartisan basis. His committee has already completed the markup of the Defense authorization bill and filed it for consideration on the Senate floor.

Last year, in contrast, under the Senator from New York, the Democratic leader Senator SCHUMER, we did not see the Defense Authorization Act come to the floor until more than 2 months after the September 30 deadline. But I am optimistic now, with new leadership and with Republicans at the helm, we will pass the Defense authorization bill on a timely basis.

Finally, in addition to confirming the President's nominees and ensuring our military readiness, Congress needs to fund the government. The end of the fiscal year is the end of September, but our Senate Democratic colleagues are already threatening not to work with us on funding the government—which perhaps is the most basic responsibility of Congress—threatening a harmful and unnecessary government shutdown. But it is clear, with their reluctance to work with us to make sure that that doesn't occur, that the risk of that happening is squarely on their shoulders.

Their stated excuse is that they don't agree with some of the things that the Trump administration has been doing. I will remind our colleagues across the aisle that the American people are ultimately the ones who will have to pay the price if they continue to persist in delay tactics that lead to a government shutdown.

It is simply mind-boggling to me that our Democratic colleagues would choose to impose a punitive shutdown on the American people as some sort of partisan payback for Republican efforts to put our country on a more sustainable fiscal path.

Yes, we are trying to look for efficiency. We are trying to avoid waste, fraud, and abuse due to the efforts of the Department of Government Efficiency and other leaders in the Trump administration, but the fact remains that our country is more than \$36 trillion in debt. The only way to ensure

that our social safety net programs remain viable for generations to come and that we continue to be the pre-eminent military power in the world and maintain that deterrence that I spoke of a moment ago, the only way we can do that is by responsibly funding the government, and that has to happen between now and September 30.

As the Senate winds down this week, and with a recess approaching, I will remind our Democratic colleagues that our work is cut out for us upon our return, and we have important work to do yet before we leave, particularly with regard to this backlog of 147 nominees.

We have had a productive and successful Senate, notwithstanding Democratic obstruction. But I look forward to doing even more, not only in the remaining time before we leave for the recess but when we return from that recess.

After all, we should not get bogged down by partisan battles that cause us to neglect our larger responsibility. We are here to represent the 350 million people who call this country home, and it falls to us, on their behalf, to do the job that they sent us here to do and not to engage in this mindless partisanship and increase the dysfunction and inefficiency of that government.

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

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

#### NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a subject that transcends partisanship and political parties, and that is our growing national debt.

Nearly 230 years ago, President George Washington issued his Farewell Address. It is a speech full of advice and wisdom that this country still looks to today for guidance. But lost within that address is an often-overlooked warning—a warning against the accumulation of debt.

Specifically, our first President cautioned the newfound American public that our government should avoid “the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned.” In other words, President Washington warned us against kicking the can down the road and pushing off a burden that he said “we ourselves ought to bear.”

So today I ask, has our country heeded these words of warning? Let's take a look. As of this morning, the national debt totaled \$36.7 trillion. To put that into perspective, that is more than triple the amount of debt from when I first came into office in 2009. And to

get your head around it, if you break that number down per American, it translates to more than \$107,000 in debt for each and every person in our country.

By 2029, the debt held by the United States as a percentage of our economy is expected to be higher than at any point in the entire history of our Nation. Within the next decade, the United States will spend more annually to pay down the interest—just the interest—on our debt alone than we do on anything else except Social Security.

So in answer to the question “Have we listened to President George Washington's warning?” I think the answer is very clear: No, we haven't.

The American people may be asking: Well, what does this matter to me? How does this impact my life, my future?

They may ask: If it truly mattered, why are not more people—not only here in Washington, DC, but across the country—talking about the issue? If it truly mattered, if this truly mattered, having this massive debt, why did Republicans in Congress just pass a bill that will increase our debt by trillions in additional dollars?

Point blank, I think the majority of Americans just want to know: Why should I care?

Mr. President, I am here to tell every American and all of my colleagues here in Congress that we must take this seriously because the national debt is an issue that impacts the daily life of every single person in our country.

For one, the higher our national debt grows, the greater the likelihood that interest rates will also increase. Higher interest rates mean the cost of everything—from mortgages, to student loans, to car payments—will become even more expensive for hard-working Americans. The larger our debt becomes, the more money we must dedicate to paying it off, and that often means fewer resources that we can invest back into our communities, whether it is to upgrade infrastructure, to improve our schools, or to support economic development in our communities. It means fewer resources for critical programs that support early childhood education, boost workforce development, expand access to quality, affordable housing, and more—things that actually benefit every person in this country.

So the moral of the story is, as debt grows, life becomes more expensive for all Americans. And at a time when the price of gas, groceries, housing, and everyday needs is already too high, the American people simply cannot afford this added cost.

Our growing debt also presents real threats to our national security. If we face another major emergency like a pandemic or a global financial crisis, there is serious concern that we may be too hamstrung by our debt to respond effectively. This fact should concern every American.

As we work to address this issue in a tangible way, we need to make sure we