

## NOMINATION OF JOSEPH KENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the National Counterterrorism Center plays a crucial role keeping our country safe. The Agency is responsible for collecting and analyzing intelligence to help protect our Nation from terrorist threats. It is sober, serious work that requires a level head and a commitment to putting the mission before politics, which is why I am deeply alarmed that Republicans are charging ahead to put it under the thumb of a conspiracy theorist who espouses White supremacist views and is patently unqualified for this important role in just about every way imaginable.

You are supposed to pick people with qualifications, but just about everything we know about Joe Kent is disqualifying for this role and alarming. There is his track record chumming it up with White supremacists, from discussing campaign strategy with avowed White supremacist Nick Fuentes to giving an interview to a guy who has defended Hitler, to rallying with the founder of a far-right paramilitary group. And let's not forget the Proud Boy that he hired as a consultant.

And it is not just his connections. There is his own bigoted statements, like claiming Islam is "based on conquest at its core" and pushing racist "replacement theory" rhetoric. That is alarming stuff. Let's be frank: These are White supremacist views, and they should have absolutely no place in our Federal Government.

And then there is his track record of politicizing intelligence, like when he was caught redhanded pushing to change intelligence reports—facts be damned—so they would agree with Trump and attack Biden.

Joe Kent also has a track record of peddling conspiracies and attacking law enforcement, from saying our country is at war with a "leftist cabal" or calling to completely defund the FBI and ATF, Agencies that keep Americans safe from foreign and domestic threats, or pushing the offensive and false conspiracy that the January 6 insurrection was somehow a deep-state plot.

You want to know who in the Federal Government was behind the insurrection? How about we start with the man in the White House who promised to march to the Capitol with them. How about we start with the President who calls rioters patriots. How about we start with the guy who pardoned violent cop beaters en masse.

If you cannot be honest with the American people about January 6, you have no business being trusted with protecting our democracy. It should be that simple.

And let's not forget, Joe Kent was on the infamous Signalgate chat, where classified attack plans were discussed with no regard for security, for law, not to mention the safety of our servicemembers.

You know what he had to say about that? He said no classified information was discussed. That was the answer he gave at his Senate confirmation hearing.

Now, it is obvious that answer was a complete lie. Last week, the Pentagon's watchdog confirmed there was classified information in that Signal chat.

So was Kent being intentionally dishonest or does he not understand what classified information is? Either way, it is completely disqualifying, which, as I think I made clear, is pretty much the pattern here.

So here is my warning to Republicans. Confirming someone like Joe Kent to lead the National Counterterrorism Center makes about as much sense as putting Donald Trump in charge of releasing the Epstein files after all that we have learned. We have all the evidence we could ever need in the public record right now that he is not going to do the right thing, and we have no reason to believe he will do this important, high-stakes work in a serious, impartial manner, let alone a competent one.

So I am here to urge all my colleagues to join me in doing exactly what people back in Washington State have done each time they were asked to trust Joe Kent: vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend from Washington State. I want to follow some of her concerns. It is pretty remarkable, so I do rise with grave concern to speak in opposition to the nomination of Joe Kent to lead the National Counterterrorism Center.

Others may have already said this, but this is not a nomination we should treat lightly. The Director of NCTC plays a central role in asserting and integrating intelligence on terrorist threats, both foreign and domestic. That person must be trusted to tell the truth and to uphold the core principles of the intelligence community: objectivity, nonpartisanship, and fidelity to fact. Unfortunately, Mr. Kent has shown, time and again, that he cannot meet the standard.

Now, let me acknowledge at the front end that I respect Mr. Kent because he spent much of his adult life in service to this country. He enlisted in the U.S. Army at 18. He served for two decades as a Green Beret. He deployed overseas 11 times before working as a field operative for the CIA. That record of service deserves recognition.

And I do not question Mr. Kent's devotion to our country. However, that service, while admirable, cannot overcome a consistent pattern of questionable judgment and false statements, at odds with the objectivity he would be expected to uphold as Director of NCTC.

In May, Congress received clear written evidence that Mr. Kent, while serv-

ing as Chief of Staff to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, sought to manipulate intelligence to match a political narrative promoted by President Trump. Specifically, after the National Intelligence Council assessed that the Venezuelan Government was not directing the movement of Tren de Aragua—the Tren de Aragua gang—into the United States, Mr. Kent pressured career analysts to alter that conclusion, not because of new intelligence but because he feared the report would "be used against the DNI or POTUS." Let me say that again. Mr. Kent pressured career nonpartisan intelligence analysts to change their conclusions not to reflect the facts but somehow to protect Donald Trump and Tulsi Gabbard.

The remarkable thing that happened next is that when the analysts stood firm, they were fired, sending a chilling message to every intelligence officer tasked with protecting this country.

Let me be crystal clear. Tren de Aragua is a violent and dangerous transnational gang, and the Maduro government are pretty bad folks. And nobody that I know of—least of all me—is minimizing the threat that Tren de Aragua poses or the importance of tracking their ideas and their activities in the United States. But our national security decisions must be based on facts, not politics.

When intelligence professionals conclude, based on the best available information, that the Venezuelan Government is not coordinating with that gang, their analysts—analysis—I think, has to be respected, even if it contradicts a political talking point.

Distorting that analysis to score political points not only undermines trust in the intelligence community, it risks misdirecting resources and attention away from the real threats we face.

Unfortunately, this incident is part of a much larger pattern, underscoring that Mr. Kent lacks the judgment and commitment to truth required of such an important position.

Mr. Kent has openly embraced the lie that the 2020 election was "rigged" and "stolen," a lie that the Senator from Washington indicated helped fuel an insurrection against our democracy, and he has defended those who violently stormed the Capitol on January 6, referring to them as "political prisoners," and falsely claimed that the FBI and intelligence community were involved in directing the violence that occurred that day.

I can tell you, I was here that day. That was not directed by the FBI.

He has participated in the Signalgate group chat, where Gabbard, Pete Hegseth, and other political appointees discussed classified information, carelessly putting our sailors and pilots at risk—and for which Mr. Kent, in testimony before my committee on the Senate Intelligence Committee, remained thoroughly unrepentant.

During his nomination hearing, rather than reassuring the committee of his qualifications or judgement, he launched into a diatribe about the so-called Russia hoax, dismissing well-documented foreign interference in our elections as if it were a partisan invention.

Down to my last two pages, Mr. President.

That claim is not just wrong, it is willfully ignorant. The Senate Intelligence Committee conducted a comprehensive, five-volume, bipartisan investigation of the Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Over those five volumes, we detailed how Russia interfered in our democratic process, how those efforts were designed to help Donald Trump, and how individuals affiliated with his campaign welcomed his efforts.

That is not a hoax. That is a fact. Matter of fact, unanimously confirmed by every member of the Senate Intelligence Committee—Republican and Democrat.

Mr. Kent's outright dismissal of it speaks volumes about how he views the truth, intelligence, and accountability, nor can we ignore his troubling associations. Mr. Kent has repeatedly aligned himself with far-right extremist groups, employing a member of the Proud Boys, a white nationalist organization with a record of political violence and extremism, as part of his 2022 campaign for Congress, a campaign for which he also solicited help from white nationalist Nick Fuentes.

At a time when domestic, violent extremism is one of the fastest-growing threats to the homeland, we are being asked to put someone in charge of counterterrorism who has aligned himself with political violence, promoted falsehoods that undermine our democracy, and tried to twist intelligence to serve a political agenda.

I urge my colleagues—particularly those who value the credibility of our intelligence Agencies—to think carefully about what message it sends if Mr. Kent is confirmed. Allowing Mr. Kent to lead the NCTC would not just compromise the integrity of our counterterrorism efforts, it would embolden those who believe loyalty to one man should outweigh loyalty to the truth. It would signal that the politicization of intelligence in service of falsehoods is no longer a disqualifier, and it would make this country less safe.

Mr. President, for these reasons, I join others and strongly urge a “no” on this nomination.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON KENT NOMINATION

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

Mrs. MURRAY. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 452 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—4

Gallego	Markey	Slotkin
Kelly		

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). 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 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. 113, Tyler Clarkson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, Joni Ernst, Rick Scott of Florida, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Kevin Cramer, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Jim Banks, John Boozman, John Barrasso, John Hoeven.

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 Tyler Clarkson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 453 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—44

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

NOT VOTING—3

Gallego	Kelly	Slotkin
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Tyler Clarkson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII and as if in legislative session, it be in order for Senator SANDERS to make motions to discharge S.J. Res. 41 and S.J. Res. 34, and if made, the Senate vote on the motions to discharge in the order listed at 9 p.m. today; further, that following the disposition of the motions to discharge the joint resolutions, the Senate vote