

It has consumed the Senate Democrat caucus.

Historically, the Senate has found ways to work together to fill important positions in our government and do it in a timely manner. During President Trump's first term, by the time Congress recessed for the August break, the Senate had confirmed 133 nominees, and 79 of them were confirmed by voice vote. During President Biden's term, 150 nominees were confirmed by the time the Senate departed for the August recess, and 76 of them were confirmed by voice vote. Here we are in President Trump's second term, and zero—absolutely zero—nominees have been confirmed by voice vote. That is totally unprecedented. President Trump is the only President in modern history to not have a single nominee confirmed by voice vote.

Obstructionist Democrats are turning the Senate into the world's slowest human resources department. It is by design. They have filibustered every single Trump nominee following the confirmation of Marco Rubio to be Secretary of State on day one of the administration. Democrats are doing this regardless of the qualifications of these highly qualified individuals. They do it regardless of bipartisan support in the committees. They do it regardless of precedent and regardless of urgency.

Democrats filibustered the Chief of Protocol at the State Department. They filibustered the Assistant Administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency. They filibustered the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the Department of Commerce. They filibustered the Under Secretary—not the Secretary but the Under Secretary—for Industry and Security at the Department of Commerce. They filibustered the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering at the Department of Defense. They filibustered the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs. They even filibustered the General Counsel for the Department of Agriculture—all qualified, all delayed—simply because President Trump nominated them.

Even positions that have never been subject to a rollcall vote in the U.S. Senate have not been spared. When nominees finally get a vote on the Senate floor, many have been confirmed with bipartisan support.

A President deserves to have his team in place. President Trump deserves to have his team in place, and America deserves to have leaders on the job. Democrats have set a sad, new standard for obstructing confirmations. Republicans will not stand back while Democrats weaponize the Senate rules, sabotage the process, and paralyze the executive branch. Republicans will do what needs to be done to get President Trump's team in place.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous rollcall vote scheduled at 11 o'clock be started immediately.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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. 271, Cheryl Mason, of North Carolina, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

John Thune, Tommy Tuberville, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, John Barrasso, John R. Curtis, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mike Rounds, Katie Boyd Britt, Roger Marshall, Pete Ricketts, John Boozman, David McCormick, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Rick Scott of Florida, Eric Schmitt, Lindsey Graham.

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 Cheryl Mason, of North Carolina, to be Inspector General, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 458 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	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—41

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

NOT VOTING—6

Blumenthal	Gallego	Kelly
Cantwell	Hassan	Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). On this vote, the yeas are 53, and the nays are 41. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

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

VOTE ON CLARKSON NOMINATION

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. 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 Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 459 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Cantwell	Gillibrand
Baldwin	Coons	Hassan
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Duckworth	Hickenlooper
Blunt Rochester	Durbin	Hirono
Booker	Fetterman	Kaine

Kim	Padilla	Slotkin
King	Peters	Smith
Klobuchar	Reed	Van Hollen
Lujan	Rosen	Warner
Markey	Sanders	Warnock
Merkley	Schatz	Warren
Murphy	Schiff	Welch
Murray	Schumer	Whitehouse
Ossoff	Shaheen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Crapo	Gallego	Kelly
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). 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.

The Senator from Iowa.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, my remarks were written 3 days ago, and the purpose of writing those remarks 3 days ago was to come to the floor and tell you about a person that I think should not be working for the Federal Government. Then the next day, I found out somebody in government was smart enough to see that this guy was fired. But I would like to now tell the Senate why I think people like this shouldn't be working for the Federal Government and why I obviously thought he should be fired.

This refers to Dr. Vinay Prasad. Recently, the Wall Street Journal published an article on this person.

Until Tuesday, Dr. Prasad served as the Food and Drug Administration's—FDA—Chief Medical and Scientific Officer and as the Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

I wonder how he got the job in the first place, and you will understand through my remarks why I wonder how he got that job.

He was appointed by the FDA Commissioner to this position.

According to media reports, Dr. Prasad left the Agency. The Wall Street Journal said the position he held at FDA was "one of the most powerful officials in the federal government," and gets to determine "whether patients get access to many life-saving medicines. Or not."

Sadly, Dr. Prasad believes the Federal Government should restrict access to new treatments that could extend your life.

Dr. Prasad wrote a 2016 article entitled "The case for rationing: Why we should limit public spending on cancer drugs." Dr. Prasad says that "among 71 new drugs approved for solid tumors between 2002 and 2014, the median improvement in survival is just 2.1 months." He believes that when costs are large and the benefits are small, the government should restrict access. He thinks patients don't have the right to extend their lives.

Dr. Prasad is a proponent of what we call government rationing of care that we see in socialized healthcare systems such as the United Kingdom and Canada.

Dr. Prasad sounds like another physician, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, who at one

time wielded a lot of power in the Federal Government. Dr. Emanuel is considered the "architect" of Obamacare and served as Special Advisor for Health Policy to President Obama. In 2014, this architect of Obamacare wrote in *The Atlantic*: "Why I Hope to Die At 75." He argues that people should just check out once they reach 75 years.

Dr. Emanuel has long argued for rationing healthcare and treating the elderly differently because they "already had more life-years." You can even take an online course titled "Rationing Care" at the University of Pennsylvania, taught by Dr. Emanuel.

The government rationing care goes by another name that we throw around, but I have talked about examples of it so you know that it is real, called socialized medicine. Socialized medicine results in longer wait times and delayed care.

Here are some recent examples of outcomes of socialized medicine:

In January, hundreds of Canadian residents in Walkerton, Ontario, began forming a line at 2 a.m. in the dead of winter just to be put on a waiting list to see the town's new family doctor. Some residents have waited more than a decade to have a doctor in that town.

In 2023, 7.1 million people in England were stuck on a waiting list for non-emergency hospital treatment like hip replacements. Today, that waiting list is 200,000 more at 7.3 million people.

Now, you wonder why people come to the United States for medical care, from other countries. That is one of the reasons why.

Of all new medicines launched between 2012 and 2021, 85 percent were available in the United States compared to less than 40 percent in Europe.

We are also No. 1 in medical advances and discoveries. For all these reasons and even more, I don't understand why Dr. Prasad and Dr. Emmanuel believe in government health rationing healthcare.

In 2023, I joined with my Republican colleagues expressing serious concern about the Biden administration's potential use of what is called quality-adjusted life years and other discriminatory metrics when it came to prescription drug programs.

Places like the United Kingdom use quality-adjusted life years to determine drug coverage. If the government decides a drug won't extend a person's life long enough, it will restrict access. Dr. Prasad has applauded the United Kingdom for restricting access to new treatment and said that quality-adjusted life years is "a good way to judge drugs."

The National Council on Disability disagrees with Dr. Prasad, stating that "quality-adjusted life years place a lower value on treatments which extend the lives of people with chronic illnesses and disabilities."

When the government gets to dictate which treatments patients can and cannot access, we devalue people living with rare diseases, we devalue older

Americans, and we devalue individuals with disabilities.

The government should use every opportunity to promote a potential miracle cure or breakthrough treatment. The Food and Drug Administration should determine if a drug is safe and effective. However, it shouldn't limit access because a government bureaucrat believes the costs outweigh the benefits.

The United States is a world leader in innovation and care. Why should the government shy away from testing limits of new treatments and miracle cures? The answer is, we should not.

We wouldn't see headlines like these if we had a different approach. *Time Magazine* says: "A Baby Receives the First Customized CRISPR Treatment."

The *New York Times* says: "From No Hope to a Potential Cure for a Deadly Blood Cancer."

In recent years, I have had constituents sit in my office pleading for the government to remove redtape so that they can access potentially life-changing, life-extending treatments for Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's disease, cancer, and other diseases.

I was proud to be a cosponsor in 2018 of the 2018 Right to Try law that President Trump advocated for and eventually signed. That law lets people with life-threatening conditions access unapproved treatments after they have tried all treatment options and are not eligible for clinical trials.

Dr. Prasad has said he is not in favor of the 2018 Right to Try law and that he "favor[s] a strong regulatory state." He has long criticized the FDA for approving too many treatments that, in his view, provide only marginal benefits.

After he took the job at FDA, Dr. Prasad said:

We will take action at the first sign of promise for rare diseases. We're not going to wait.

Given Dr. Prasad has left the FDA, we don't know if this was an empty promise. I hope that whoever takes on the role of FDA's Chief Medical and Scientific Officer and Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research will support patients who face life-threatening illnesses, instead of using his or her power to restrict access to care, which, I think, is fairly certain we would presume that Dr. Prasad would do just the opposite.

The government shouldn't get to decide when its citizens are required to give up on their own life. This is true when a person turns 75 years old or when rare disease treatments may only extend a person's life by just a short period of time. If there is a cure or a treatment, you should be able to access it, regardless of what bureaucrats think.

Dr. Prasad is gone. It is good he is no longer on the government payroll. I don't know who decided to get rid of this person that shouldn't have been hired in the first place, but I want to thank them for doing that.