

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS BURGUM

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum from my home State of North Dakota to serve as our Nation's 55th Secretary of the Interior.

Whether it is energy, grazing, outdoor recreation, water supply, the National Park Service, or Tribal relations, Doug Burgum is an outstanding choice who fully understands the vast responsibilities under the Department of the Interior.

I have had the pleasure to know Doug for over 30 years, and throughout his career, Doug has gained well-deserved national recognition as an innovative leader.

Governor Burgum is a proud native of Arthur, ND, earning his bachelor's degree from North Dakota State University—home of the Bison—and his master's in business administration from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

After working as a consultant at McKinsey, he returned home to North Dakota, and he literally bet the family farm to purchase a nascent accounting software company, Great Plains Software. Over time, Doug hired thousands of North Dakotans to build and grow Great Plains Software, eventually launching a public offering in 1997. Then, ultimately, Great Plains Software was purchased by Microsoft in 2001, and it is now known as Microsoft Business Solutions. The vision of Microsoft actually goes back to the company that he built and to this day I think employs several thousand people in and around Fargo, ND.

Great Plains Software, as I said, became Microsoft Business Solutions. He remained at Microsoft for a number of years, actually hiring the current CEO during his time there. He then left Microsoft in 2007, started a number of other companies, went into philanthropy and helped really revitalize downtown Fargo, continued his support for NDSU, and just had a very significant impact in many different aspects of business of philanthropy.

It is because of his countless contributions to North Dakota that, in 2009, during my time as Governor, I named Doug as the 37th recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award, which is our State's highest honor.

I remember he looked at me at that time and said—it was kind of funny. We had this big event for him and gave him this nice State honor. He looked at me and said, "Gee, JOHN, this is really great, but I sure hope I am not done accomplishing things at this point," you know, as he was getting the award. I remember that very clearly. Obviously, he was far from done.

In 2016, Doug was elected as the 33rd Governor of North Dakota, and then he was reelected in 2020. He has been a true partner as we worked together to

grow North Dakota into an energy powerhouse for our Nation.

When I started as Governor, we produced less than 100,000 barrels of oil a day, going down, and we have gotten it up all the way to 1.5 million barrels of oil a day—at that point, second only to Texas. It has gone back a little bit under the Biden administration, but we look forward to continuing to grow not just oil and gas but all the different sources of energy—coal-fired electricity, renewables, hydro. Just a real energy powerhouse for our country. So he brings that incredible energy experience to his new role.

Doug did a great job as Governor, and then he ran for President. He was the first Presidential candidate, when he left the race, to endorse President Trump—first one to do it.

President Trump knows the importance of a big energy agenda, and he knows what energy dominance means for our country, for our economic and national security. President Trump saw that Doug is not just the right fit to head the Department of the Interior as Secretary; President Trump also tapped Doug to lead the newly formed National Energy Council. Doug will do a tremendous job leading this integrated effort to truly make our country energy dominant, and he will work with President Trump to do that—vital important for our economy, vital important to bring down inflation, vital important for national security, and vital important to our allies so that they get energy from the United States rather than buying oil from countries like Russia or Iran and fueling either Russia's war machine or Iran's state sponsorship of terror.

But Doug not only understands energy, he is also a rancher, a hunter. He loves our national parks, and he loves the great outdoors. That is what you want in a Secretary of the Interior because all of those are part of his portfolio at Interior.

He has extensive experience in Native American affairs, and not only does he have the support of all of the Tribes in our State, he has the support from more than 180 Tribes from across the Nation.

Doug received overwhelming bipartisan support from our Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He came out of committee 18 to 2. So I strongly urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for his confirmation when we vote here very soon on his approval to be the next Secretary of the Interior for the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on confirmation of the Burgum nomination at 6:15 p.m. today and that if cloture is invoked on the Wright nomination, all postcloture time be considered

expired and the Senate vote on cloture of the Collins nomination; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Collins nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the votes on the confirmations of the nominations occur at times to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democrat leader, no earlier than Monday, February 3.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the Wright and Collins nominations be waived.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT FLIGHT ACCIDENT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in mourning the 67 people who were killed in the tragic aircraft collision last night near Reagan National Airport.

Among the victims, as reported in the news: a woman from my State, from Mahtomedi, MN—a wonderful town. It will be very hard to talk to her family; figure skaters we lost from the U.S. team and Russia who will never get to compete in the world championship; families flying in from Wichita to Washington, DC, who will never get to see our Nation's Capital; and three American soldiers, whose moms and dads will get the call that every parent dreads when their son or daughter signs up to serve our country.

This was a horrific tragedy. While there is still so much more that we need to know about this crash, we know we must get to the bottom of what happened.

My thoughts are with the victims' families and loved ones and the first responders who led the recovery operation last night and then, of course, are leading the operation today in the icy waters of the Potomac.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. President, I turn to another topic that is completely different, which is what is going on right now in the Halls of Congress and over at the new administration.

I also join my colleagues in expressing serious concern about the chaos that we have seen in just the first week of this new administration.

Earlier this week, the administration issued an order to cut off support that families across the country rely on, including funding for first responders. It was actually a two-page memorandum from a guy named Mr. Vaeth in the Office of Management and Budget. I have never heard of him, but he issued this two-page memorandum that made the intent very, very clear. He cut off loans and grants and announced that this was, in fact, the position of the administration and that they were going to freeze—or pause, in their words—loans

and grants for everything from funding for childcare, for health centers, for medical research, and for the heating assistance that millions of people rely on in my State, especially on these cold, cold days. This order—made with a stroke of a pen by a single, unelected bureaucrat—opened the door to stalled projects, economic uncertainty, and confusion across the country.

Yesterday, the administration—Mr. Vaeth himself—actually put in a one- or two-sentence memorandum that rescinded the one he had made just the day before. So that was a moment to say: OK. We are looking forward to working with our Republican colleagues and with the administration to make government more efficient and to look at reforms in the way things are done. OK. That is great. Let's do it together.

But it wasn't over because then the administration created more confusion by putting out a series of contradictory statements and a social media post from the press secretary in the White House that, in fact, that wasn't true; that, in fact, the funds were still frozen.

So we have still been getting calls throughout the day trying to figure it out. We have heard reports of some portals that have been shut down—I have heard that from other Senators as well—and then of some that have been opened up and some that, of course, have been opened up because of the temporary court stay that was put in place.

This chaos—here is the point—does nothing to actually bring down the cost of housing, childcare, healthcare, energy bills. But it reminds us that it is our job for those of us who took an oath of office just about a month ago—that it is our job to protect and defend the Constitution because, honestly, this was a defiance of the Constitution. Congress is set up in article I. It is our job to make these decisions, and these were funds that were voted on and passed by Democrats and Republicans in working together when we got the last budget done, and then we got it extended.

So this isn't a game. What Americans are feeling is real. A number of them voted for change—they wanted to see something new—but for them, that meant there actually being new things that helped them with costs.

I think about the mom who was unsure if she could get her child into childcare yesterday when she saw the news.

I think about the teenager in a cancer study when those funds were frozen.

I think about the woman in an abusive relationship who has nowhere to go because her local domestic violence shelter was cut off from funding. My office heard yesterday from a domestic violence organization that couldn't access their funding.

I think about the firefighters who rely on grants to hire and retain fire-

fighters, as well as grants for equipment.

I think about the 30,000-plus American veterans. I think about how our leading organization fighting veterans' homelessness gets half of its funding through Federal grants.

I think about the construction workers who are worried they could lose their jobs if they are working on infrastructure projects right now—projects where the money has been not only voted on and signed into law but also where the money is actually out, and they are working on the projects, but then they don't know. The questions we got are, So are these funds frozen too?

I think about the seniors who rely on Meals on Wheels. We have heard from volunteers with that program who are worried. What should we do? Should we keep serving the seniors? Are they going to have meals? What should we tell them when we go to the door and they ask us?

I think about the small business owners who get their support through SBA loans.

And I think about the rural families who count on electric co-ops—we have one of the highest percentages, in my State, of smaller co-ops—to keep the lights on.

At a time when rural families are already dealing with the uncertainty of proposed tariffs and how that is going to affect them, particularly in farming communities, on workforce issues, with input costs, and more, the last thing they need right now is more chaos and confusion.

As I said, article I of the Constitution makes it clear that it is Congress's job to direct funding through laws passed by both Chambers. It is a system of checks and balances. And I mentioned this at the inauguration: Why do we have the President's inauguration not at the White House or at a gilded executive office building, but we have it at the Capitol? Why do we do that? Because it is very clear: This is a country wherein the Founding Fathers set up a system of checks and balances with three equal branches of government. That is the foundation of our democracy.

Fortunately, actually, there was pushback from this Chamber—there was pushback from our side of the aisle at least—and there was pushback when they looked at the law. Two Federal courts have said: No, that is not how this works.

Despite all of that, everyone, I believe, in this Chamber is ready to work with the administration on some new ideas for reform, but that was not how this was handled. This was handled by a faceless bureaucrat, Mr. Vaeth, whom I have never met—I look forward to meeting him one day—who was able, with the stroke of a pen, to kind of call all grants and loans for all of these people and businesses to a halt—just like that. The result was just more confusion, more commotion, and more

chaos, but maybe the chaos is the point.

This was a moment where I was hopeful we could find common ground on some issues. Of course, I knew we would stand our ground on some things—that is how this place works—but we are not going to find common ground if we are in the middle of chaos, because then everyone rushes to defend the people in their States, which is what they have to do because their constituents are, like, What is this?

With the three Chambers that we have here—with the executive branch and with the House and the Senate—we should try to work these things out. In fact, given that Republicans run all three branches right now, at least they should be able to work it out in a way that is legal. Instead, what do we hear about? We hear about tax breaks for billionaires at the expense of everyone else and of dismantling the healthcare system.

This is a big deal—or as maybe the former President said in his words—a "big 'hmm' deal."

We have got to get this right if we are going to do this, if we are going to make change. But the way this happened—what happened here—was wrong. I am glad there was pushback, and we are going to continue to lead that fight, but I hope our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, the next time, will join us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON BURGUM NOMINATION

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Burgum nomination?

Mrs. BRITT. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. Booker), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Fetterman), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. Ossoff), are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 79, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 26 Ex.]

YEAS—79

Alsobrooks	Britt	Cotton
Baldwin	Budd	Cramer
Banks	Cantwell	Crapo
Barrasso	Capito	Cruz
Bennet	Cassidy	Curtis
Blackburn	Collins	Daines
Blumenthal	Cornyn	Durbin
Boozman	Cortez Masto	Ernst