

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 Vaeth himself—actually put in a one- or two-sentence memorandum that rescinded the one he had made just the day before.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

Fischer	Klobuchar	Schmitt
Gallego	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Gillibrand	Lee	Scott (SC)
Graham	Lujan	Shaheen
Grassley	Lummis	Sheehy
Hagerty	Marshall	Slotkin
Hassan	McCconnell	Smith
Hawley	McCormick	Sullivan
Heinrich	Moody	Thune
Hickenlooper	Moran	Tillis
Hoeven	Moreno	Tuberville
Husted	Mullin	Warner
Hyde-Smith	Murkowski	Warnock
Johnson	Paul	Welch
Justice	Ricketts	Whitehouse
Kaine	Risch	Wicker
Kelly	Rosen	Young
Kennedy	Rounds	
King	Schatz	

NAYS—18

Blunt Rochester	Merkley	Sanders
Coons	Murphy	Schiff
Duckworth	Murray	Schumer
Hirono	Padilla	Van Hollen
Kim	Peters	Warren
Markey	Reed	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Fetterman	Osoff
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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 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. 10, Christopher Wright, of Colorado, to be Secretary of Energy.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, James C. Justice, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, David McCormick, Steve Daines, Joni Ernst, Roger Marshall, Deb Fischer, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Ted Budd, John Kennedy, John Boozman, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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 Christopher Wright, of Colorado, to be Secretary of Energy, 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 New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 27 Ex.]

YEAS—62

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

NAYS—35

Alsobrooks	Kelly	Schatz
Baldwin	Kim	Schiff
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Markey	Slotkin
Cantwell	Merkley	Smith
Coons	Murphy	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warnock
Duckworth	Padilla	Warren
Durbin	Peters	Welch
Gillibrand	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Rosen	Wyden
Kaine	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Fetterman	Osoff
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The yeas are 62, the nays are 35.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Christopher Wright, of Colorado, to be Secretary of Energy.

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 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. 7, Douglas Collins, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, James C. Justice, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, David McCormick, Steve Daines, Joni Ernst, Roger Marshall, Deb Fischer, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Ted Budd, John Kennedy, John Boozman, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

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 Douglas Collins, of Georgia, to be Secretary 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD).

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 yeas and nays resulted—yeas 83, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 28 Ex.]

YEAS—83

Baldwin	Graham	Murkowski
Banks	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagerty	Paul
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blackburn	Hawley	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Ricketts
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Rosen
Britt	Husted	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Cantwell	Johnson	Schiff
Capito	Justice	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Kim	Sheehy
Cotton	King	Slotkin
Cramer	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lujan	Tillis
Curtis	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Warner
Duckworth	McCconnell	Wicker
Durbin	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
Fischer	Moran	
Gallego	Moreno	
Gillibrand	Mullin	

NAYS—13

Alsobrooks	Murphy	Van Hollen
Coons	Padilla	Warren
Hirono	Schatz	Wyden
Markey	Schumer	
Merkley	Smith	

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Lankford
Fetterman	Osoff

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 83, the nays are 13. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Douglas Collins, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 12.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.