

war, including most recently after risking American prestige in Alaska, Russia's attacks on Ukraine brazenly increased, not decreased. That is right. After each personal attempt to deal with Putin, he thumbed his nose at the United States and instead started slaughtering more innocent Ukrainians. No deal was reached, and Putin stalled and reciprocated with nothing but violence and humiliation.

I believe President Trump wants to find a solution to this horrific war. I support him in that effort. But it is clear to all that President Putin is playing the United States and President Trump. Putin isn't serious, and Putin doesn't want to deal. In fact, just this week we saw him standing next to Mr. Xi of China urging a new world order at a state-managed summit with some of the world's most repressive anti-U.S. regimes, including Iran, North Korea, and Belarus. And may I add, India was part of that meeting as well.

Quite simply, Russia will only respond to increased economic and military pressure. That is a fact. My Republican colleagues in Congress know that as well. It is long overdue for President Trump and the Congress to take these steps.

We have a tough sanctions bill here in the Senate with more than 80 cosponsors. What are we waiting for? Leader THUNE should work with Senator GRAHAM to immediately call up this bill for passage. The security guarantees and weapons for Ukraine that our European allies and President Trump seem to have reached agreement on also demonstrate progress. Let's see them to conclusion. Seized Russian assets can also be used to help Ukraine militarily and economically, and we must continue to give Ukraine the military capabilities to defend itself and force Russia to the table.

Students of history remember the catastrophic miscalculation of former British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. He naively and tragically thought he made a deal with Hitler—Adolf Hitler—to secure “peace in our time.” There is still a chance for President Trump to avoid this fate of history and bring an honorable end to this war, but it will only be through clear-eyed realism when it comes to Vladimir Putin.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, shortly, I will ask unanimous consent to vote on the nominations of Jess Kramer to be the Assistant Administrator for the

Office of Water at the Environmental Protection Agency and Mr. Sean McMaster to be the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, but first I must speak on the historic delay and obstruction that my Democrat colleagues have put toward President Trump's nominees.

So far this Congress, Democrats have not let one single civilian nominee pass by unanimous consent or voice vote. By this point in the Biden Presidency, 76 civilian nominees had been confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent.

This is truly an unprecedented moment in this Chamber's history. For years, we have operated under courtesy and precedent to swiftly move forward a portion of the President's nominees who have bipartisan support. For example, 90 percent of President Obama and President George W. Bush's civilian nominees were passed by voice vote or unanimous consent. Even in President Trump's first administration and the Biden administration, more than half of their civilian nominees were confirmed by voice vote or unanimous consent.

Now, though, we have blanket obstruction regardless of the qualifications or bipartisan support some nominees have. As a result, President Trump's second-term civilian nominees have been subject to 120 cloture votes.

Well, somebody watching from West Virginia might not know what that means. That means obstruction, time delay, and inability to get nominees through.

That is 29 percent more than the total of all of the cloture votes for nominees in the first 200 days of the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations combined.

These hurdles have led to these nominees averaging 94 days between nomination and confirmation in the first 200 days of President Trump's second term. That is 24 days longer than President Biden's nominees, 40 days longer than the nominees in President Trump's first term, and 53 days longer than President Obama's first-term nominees.

Regardless of the reason for obstruction that our Democrat colleagues have, refusing to place well-qualified nominees in Agencies where they can be responsive to all in Congress and help administer programs with congressional oversight and accountability is shortsighted and counterproductive.

So I would like to take a moment and speak about two well-qualified nominees I mentioned that have passed out of my Environment and Public Works Committee with bipartisan support but have been waiting for months literally for consideration on the Senate floor because of dilatory tactics.

First is Jess Kramer. She is the nominee for the Office of Water at the Environmental Protection Agency. Jess has 13 years of experience advocating for clean water at both the State and Federal levels, as well as in

the private sector and is exceptionally qualified to lead EPA's Office of Water.

Jess was voted out of the EPW Committee with a bipartisan vote of 15 to 4 in April. That was 148 days ago.

She has built a career crafting practical, bipartisan solutions to improve water policy and ensure that communities have access to safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

During Jess's time working for me on my EPW Committee staff, she played a role in shaping the water provisions in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, securing historic investments to modernize drinking water and wastewater systems, remove lead service lines, and to address emerging contaminants.

Beyond her experience on Capitol Hill, she has served in both State and Federal roles as well as in the private sector, advocating on behalf of water systems to ensure continued infrastructure investments and smart, achievable regulations.

She understands that environmental protection and economic growth can go hand in hand, and she knows how to ensure regulations are clear, fair, and based on science.

Jess is exactly the serious civil servant all Senators and the American people should want in place now.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 89, Jessica Kramer to be an Assistant Administrator of the EPA; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, on April 9, I voted for Ms. Kramer in the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Since then, the EPA has devolved into a cesspool of fossil fuel corruption. As ranking member of EPW, in my constitutional oversight capacity, I have sent 12 oversight letters to EPA asking for documents and communications, as is my duty and my right—also several QFRs. As of July, when we went through the closing nominations exercise, I had received substantive responses to precisely zero of those 12 letters.

So prior to that August recess, we explored a deal to include Ms. Kramer in the noms package for pre-August recess action if we could get the substantive oversight responses we were due on 4—4—of the 12 topics. These were EPA's grants freeze, Administrator Zeldin's false statements about the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, EPA's plans to rescind the endangerment finding, and EPA undoing the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program at industry request.

I actually considered that to be a minor ask because it is the Administrator's constitutional duty to answer honestly to congressional oversight. Plus, he had made a promise to the chairman and to the committee at his confirmation to be responsive. Nevertheless, EPA was not willing to provide responses to these questions.

I will emphasize—this was EPA's decision, not Chair CAPITO's decision. She is blameless in this. It is EPA that is stonewalling congressional oversight.

So that is where we are. We actually just received QFR responses from Administrator Zeldin which persist in unresponsive and unprofessional non-answers and no provision of documents. In fact, prevarication, insult, and invective have characterized the so-called responses.

I say to my colleagues and to the distinguished EPW chair, I don't think it is a big ask that executive branch Agencies take congressional oversight seriously.

I believe that if former EPA Administrator Regan had ever responded to Senator CAPITO as then-EPW ranking member in such a manner or, frankly, to any other member of the committee, then-Chairman Carper would have hit the roof.

To me, EPA is augmenting its corrupt favoritism for fossil fuel polluters with an unconstitutional rejection of congressional oversight—perhaps because there is, in fact, much to hide.

Again, honest Agency answers to a ranking member ought not to be a big ask. It ought to be the ordinary course of business. A reasonable and good-faith effort to comply should be expected.

We asked for answers to 4 of 12 letters. There is an easy answer here: that EPA follow the law and the Constitution and the Administrator's own promises. But failing that, since EPA won't, I regretfully must object.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I thank the ranking member. I don't thank him for his objection, but I thank him for weighing in here today.

I do think somebody as talented as Ms. Kramer would make the EPA run not just more smoothly, but also, she is such a professional. But I don't think we are disputing the qualifications of the nominee.

I would next like to turn to Sean McMaster, the nominee for the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Mr. McMaster was, again, voted out of the EPW Committee in a bipartisan manner—the vote was 12 to 7—in June.

He has more than 10 years of government service working in the U.S. House of Representatives and at Federal Agencies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation.

For the last 5 years, Mr. McMaster has worked for two private sector transportation companies, first serving

as a national practice consultant and vice president at HNTB and most recently as the vice president for commercial aviation and transportation at the Boeing Company.

Mr. McMaster's professional background in both the public and private sectors relating to transportation policy and implementation makes him especially well-suited to lead the Federal Highway Administration.

The Environment and Public Works Committee is now hard at work developing the next surface transportation bill. This is a major undertaking. We have received hundreds of requests from Senators on both sides of the aisle regarding this legislation.

My goal as chair is to mark up a bipartisan reauthorization bill in the EPW Committee later this year as a step toward having the bill signed into law by next September. The previous bill will lapse at the end of September 2026.

Our committee works closely with the Federal Highway Administration in the reauthorization process.

FHWA provides valuable technical assistance in making sure that the policy provisions that we all come up with achieve the congressional objectives but also are within the parameters of the Department.

Having a Senate-confirmed FHWA Administrator is important to facilitate that cooperation between the committee and the administration.

This will help address implementation issues during the bill development process. And I believe that our bipartisan reauthorization process would benefit greatly from Sean McMaster's confirmation.

So with that, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 177, Sean McMaster to be Administrator of the Federal Highways Administration; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that the President be immediately informed of the Senate's action.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I voted for Mr. McMaster in committee. Indeed, I pushed for his inclusion in a nominations package before the August recess. And I succeeded. He was included for confirmation at that time in that package.

I had asked DOT to release its new National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program guidance, and to do so timely, as consideration for supporting Mr. McMaster's inclusion in that nominations package.

But then what happened? President Trump did not agree to the package. Indeed, he rejected it, adding for good measure an all-caps blast at the Democratic leader that he should "GO TO HELL."

And so Mr. McMaster did not get confirmed, even though he was in the package, because of President Trump losing his temper and objecting to the whole package.

DOT, nonetheless, has released the NEVI guidance, and it is very workable for States. For that, I am thankful, and I would like to support Mr. McMaster.

Unfortunately, last Friday, DOT announced, without warning, that it was terminating nearly \$700 million in grant funding for 12 port projects, including an \$11.25 million grant to the Port of Davisville, in my home State of Rhode Island. I got no prior call or explanation from DOT, just—boom. Friday. Friday.

The chairman has been kind enough to raise this matter with Secretary Duffy, and I would like to sort out how this new obstacle, thrown up Friday by DOT, will be resolved.

It is a bit soon after that unexpected punch in the face to want to resolve a nomination that is only still pending and not confirmed because of President Trump's objection. I would like to work with the chairman on a date to come to the floor in support of a unanimous consent for this individual. Indeed, I would be happy to do the same thing for Ms. Kramer, because I would like to get these issues resolved. But the port hit was an unexpected and, in my view, unjustified blow.

So for the moment, while I try to understand that with the chairman's gracious help, I must object.

And if I may, I would add that there was a third candidate involved in these conversations, Mr. Telle for an Army Corps position, who was also primed to be on that nominations list with my support. Senator HAGERTY, whose chief of staff he had been, made the prudent decision to put him on to the voting list and get his nomination considered on the floor that evening and get him voted through before President Trump exploded the package.

So I just want to make a record of the fact that we were ready to support Mr. Telle as well, even before that vote was called to the floor.

With that, I yield back and renew my objection.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I just would like to address briefly something Senator WHITEHOUSE has said, by tossing all the blame to the fact that we have no unanimous consent and no voice vote candidates under President Trump when the control of that is squarely within the Democrat leader Senator SCHUMER of New York.

We know—if you look at the chart that has been made, we know the numbers that were done under the Biden administration, under Trump one, under Obama, under Bush, under Clinton, when you get down to the end of the chart, dip, big zero for President Trump. So with that, I think we are in a place that we need to make adjustments here. That is what we are looking at.

But I agree with Senator WHITEHOUSE, and these are critical appointments, as many of them are. I am glad that Mr. Telle was able to make it through at the very end. He has already had a visit to West Virginia, and he is going to do a great job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I would just like to offer one set of figures into the record in the hopes that it helps clarify things. My office tells me that Trump nominations that have been confirmed in the Senate as of September 3 number 135. President Biden's nominations confirmed as of that same date in his first months, September 3 of 2021, was 150, not counting judicial nominations. Biden has 141, and Trump has 130.

So the numbers are actually fairly close in terms of the outcome, although the processes have been different.

But, again, I want to reemphasize my desire to work with the chairman to get these cleared. I voted for all three, and I would like to support them as soon as we can get, what seems to me to be, fairly elementary problems resolved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, last month I traveled up and down my State to speak directly with Nevadans about how Washington Republicans and their devastating cuts to Medicaid are going to hurt our communities.

From the University Medical Center in Las Vegas to Northern Nevada HOPES in Reno, I heard firsthand from medical providers about how worried they are about the cuts being made to their funding by the Republican budget law.

According to a report, Nevada hospitals are set to lose up to a half a billion dollars from the Republican Big Beautiful Bill. At a time when our State is already facing a dire shortage of doctors and nurses, we are going to lose up to a half a billion dollars because of Washington Republicans' irresponsible bill.

And remember, Washington Republicans did this so they could pay for even more tax breaks for billionaires.

In Las Vegas, I met with doctors and leaders at the only level 1 trauma center in the entire State of Nevada.

Our conversation made it clear: These Medicaid cuts will be devastating for the hospital's finances, and they will make patients less likely to seek preventative care, often waiting until it is too late.

This will strain our hospital's resources even more and could have terrible consequences for individuals and their families.

There is a similar story in Reno where I visited the Northern Nevada HOPES, a nonprofit community hospital center that serves families in

need. The staff there painted a harrowing picture. When Medicaid is cut and people don't have access to health insurance, what do they do? They delay care. Minor conditions become severe. Emergency rooms overflow, and the financial and human cost escalates.

And as their CEO Sharon Chamberlain said:

This is not a budget issue. It's a public health emergency. And let's be clear: No amount of innovation, no amount of efficiency can fully offset the damage caused by policies that strip coverage of those that need it the most.

These are not abstract worries. They reflect real fear and an urgent concern from families, medical staff, and local leaders. And what is worse, these stories aren't unique to Nevada. The looming crisis is going to hurt communities all across this country.

Republicans, time after time, put politics and tax cuts for billionaires over people's health, over communities' health. And make no mistake, people will die because of the Republican cuts. And it really doesn't have to be this way.

I have joined my Democratic colleagues in helping to introduce a bill to overturn the cruel Republican Medicaid cuts and protect Nevadans, Nevada's families, Nevada's children, everyone—to protect their access to healthcare.

Our hospitals and community clinics, the people on the frontlines of our healthcare system, they work so hard, they care so much, and they are sounding the wake-up call. It is not just their fight; it is our fight.

So let's pass this bill and repeal the damage being done to our healthcare systems before it is too late.

The health of Nevada families is on the line. The time to act is now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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. 262, Maria A. Lanahan, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri.

John Thune, David McCormick, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Ron Johnson, Kevin Cramer, Jim

Banks, Pete Ricketts, Rick Scott of Florida, Ted Budd, Josh Hawley, Jim Justice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Maria A. Lanahan, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 501 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—45

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

NOT VOTING—2

Booker	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute.

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

NOMINATION OF EDWARD L. ARTAU

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, in a few moments, Mr. President, Senate Republicans will vote to advance another Donald Trump loyalist to the Federal bench, Edward L. Artau of the Southern District of Florida.

Mr. Artau's nomination is a textbook example of a quid pro quo if there ever was one. Listen to this: While Artau was actively lobbying the White House for a Federal judgeship in the aftermath of Donald Trump's election last