

Senate rules to restore the Senate precedent of the en bloc confirmation of Presidential nominees.

I have spent plenty of time here on the floor explaining why we are having to take this step. The longtime practice of the Senate was expeditious confirmation of Presidential nominations, often in blocks, using the procedural mechanism of voice vote or unanimous consent. That didn't mean rubberstamping every nominee, but it did mean that the Senate allowed the President to assemble his team so that he could carry out the job for which he was elected.

But over the years, Democrats have steadily eroded that bipartisan tradition—first during President George W. Bush's administration, then dramatically during the first Trump administration, and finally to where we are today. And where we are today is beyond erosion. Democrats have flat-out broken the Senate confirmation process.

We are more than 7 months into President Trump's current term, and the Senate has yet to confirm one single civilian nominee by unanimous consent or voice vote. To put that into perspective, by this point in his administration, President Biden had had 76 civilian nominees confirmed by voice vote—76. President Trump has not had one—the first President on record to be in this position—the first President on record.

Democrats have dragged out the process on every single civilian nominee, including on nominees they ended up supporting on final passage. Sixty-two out of the one hundred thirty-nine nominees we have confirmed have been confirmed with Democrat support. Democrats have refused to voice-vote any of them. Why? Petty partisanship—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

The Democrat leader, of course, would claim that it is because we are dealing with historically bad nominees, but I won't waste time today debunking that. I don't need to. It has been debunked for me by the fact that close to half of President Trump's nominees have received Democrat support on final passage and by the scores of Trump nominees who have emerged from committee with bipartisan support.

No, this isn't about historically bad nominees; this is about petty partisanship. Democrats and their political base cannot deal with the fact that the American people elected President Trump, and so they are dragging out every confirmation in retaliation.

It would be fine if this Democrat temper tantrum didn't affect anyone else, but Democrats' historic obstruction is having serious consequences. In addition to the obvious problem of delays in filling important positions in the administration, having to engage in the time-consuming cloture process on every nominee ties up the Senate floor, preventing us from considering important legislation.

Advice and consent on Presidential nominations is part of our job as Senators, but it is not the only part of our job. The Senate is first and foremost a legislative body, but that primary role is getting crowded out by the need to be constantly considering nominations.

Now, when I became majority leader, I made it clear that one of my priorities was to get the Senate functioning again, and the Senate can't function effectively as a legislative body with the confirmation process in the state that it is in right now. So today, the Senate will move forward on amending the rules to restore the longstanding precedent of confirming Presidential nominees expeditiously.

It would have been nice not to have to go through this process. I think there are a lot of Democrats who are aware that they have created an untenable situation, and it would have been nice to see them acknowledge that and move to return to longtime Senate precedent. But despite extended efforts to engage Democrats, we still haven't gotten to a solution to the problem that they created, and time is about to run out. One way or the other, we are going to fix this today—fix it and restore the longtime Senate precedent of expeditious confirmation and the Senate's role as first and foremost a legislative body. It is not too late for my Democrat colleagues to join us. I invite them to do so.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 366.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Miran, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 366, Stephen Miran, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John R. Curtis, Kevin Cramer, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Eric Schmitt, James E. Risch, David McCormick, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Cynthia M. Lummis, Ted Budd, Jim Banks, John Boozman, Tim Scott of South Carolina, John Barrasso.

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

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 24 years ago today, September 11, 2001, started off like any other day in New York City. The weather was beautiful. People were out and about. It was primary day, and people were lining up to vote. Then, in an instant, everything changed.

At 8:46 a.m., Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. There was chaos and confusion. Seventeen minutes later, flight 175 crashed into the South Tower. The reality of what was happening became clear: This wasn't a horrific accident. America was under attack. New York City was Ground Zero.

The course of American history was changed forever. Twenty-four years later, not a day has passed that I haven't thought about the people we lost that day, including three friends of mine: a guy I played basketball with in high school, a businessman who helped me on the way up, a firefighter I did blood drives with around the city. May their memories be a blessing.

I still think about the scenes when I arrived at Ground Zero in the aftermath of the attack the day after. The putrid smell of dead, burned flesh was in the air. I remember the rows upon rows of people holding up makeshift signs with photos of their missing loved ones because no one knew who was alive and who wasn't: Have you seen my brother Bill? Have you seen my daughter Mary? The anguish on their faces stays in my mind to this day. They are the kind of heart-wrenching images that will stay with me for a lifetime.

While 9/11 was America's darkest hour, I also saw New Yorkers in our finest moments. There were countless acts of kindness by strangers to help each other. In the midst of the tragedy that the world saw, the true strength of America and New York came through. The next day, I called on every American to display the flag on their clothes, outside their homes as a sign of solidarity. And ever since that

day, I wear this flag on my lapel. Every time I look at it, I think of those who were lost. It is a small but constant reminder of our sacred promise: Never, never forget.

"Never forget" especially means honoring the countless brave first responders who ran toward danger, not away from it, to save lives. In our darkest hour, these heroes—police officers, firefighters, EMTs, so many others—risked their lives—construction workers—to rescue others. Many of the finest first responders became sick because of the toxins in the air. Many were diagnosed with rare, deadly cancers and diseases, and many—far too many—succumbed to their illnesses, including my great friend Ray Pfeifer. May he rest in peace.

That is why I have fought to secure nearly \$1.71 billion for the World Trade Center Health Program to help sick first responders get the care they need. Sadly—sadly—it has been such a struggle to get that money.

It has been a difficult few months for many 9/11 first responders and others now sick due to exposures at Ground Zero. Cuts to this program are wrong, immoral, and I have fought in a bipartisan way, with fellow Republicans and Democrats, to oppose them.

I have also fiercely opposed the firing of thousands of HHS staffers who support the World Trade Center Health Program. The heroes who rushed to their towers, the families who have lost loved ones and have sick loved ones don't deserve this kind of chaos, uncertainty, and uncaringness. They don't deserve to have their treatment put on hold because of a backlog or because of disorganization.

I repeat. This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. Taking care of 9/11 families is an American issue to its core.

One of the best ways to never forget is ensuring the World Trade Center Health Program is fully funded, is fully staffed, and is fully operational.

So may God bless—God bless—the memories of those who perished on 9/11. May God bless all of our first responders and families.

And, now, in memory of the 2,977 people killed on September 11, in honor of their families, and in honor of all those who have sacrificed since then to keep our country safe, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate observe a minute of silence in honor of those who died on 9/11.

The ACTING PRESIDING pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senate will observe a moment of silence.

(Moment of silence.)

May we never, never forget the memories of those whom we lost.

#### POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Mr. President, now on another awful subject, I was shocked and horrified to learn about the murder of Charlie Kirk yesterday afternoon. All of us in the

Senate pray for Charlie's family—his wife, his kids. The loss they feel today is incomprehensible.

We thank all of the first responders who were on the scene yesterday, who continue to work until the murderer is brought to justice.

We also pray for all those hurt yesterday in another act of senseless gun violence in Evergreen High School in Colorado, where two students were critically injured at the hands of a lone gunman. We pray for their recovery.

These tragedies—these tragedies—are a constant reminder to all of us of the immense destruction of gun violence and of inaction.

Now, no matter your political views, yesterday's attack was heinous, cowardly and ought to make everyone sick to their stomachs. Political violence is the enemy of democracy, and we have an obligation on all sides to fight it at every turn. We must condemn it whenever it arises, wherever it arises, including this heinous murder of Charlie Kirk, but also the politically motivated shootings of House Members at a baseball practice and the politically motivated murders of Melissa Hortman and her husband earlier this year in Minnesota, as well as the attacks on former Speaker PELOSI and her husband, and the murder of business executives, and the storming of the U.S. Capitol, and so many other incidents of politically motivated barbarity.

These attacks are attacks on all of us—all of us—all of America. If we fail to quell the fires of political violence, regardless of where it comes from, it will become the norm. There should be no finger-pointing because this is an attack on our democracy itself. And if we fail to quell those fires, our democracy will be doomed.

We can disagree with our ideas but not with weapons and bloodshed and killing.

So we mourn the murder of Charlie Kirk and pray for his family. We pray for those injured in Colorado. And we must work together to bring political violence and the scourge of gun violence to a quick end.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, let me finally say a brief word on appropriations, after those two sad, sad subjects. I want to say a brief word on keeping the government open in a bipartisan way.

I just met with House and Senate Democratic leadership to talk about appropriations. House and Senate Democrats are in total agreement: What the Republicans are proposing is not good enough for the American people and not good enough to get our votes.

The American people are hurting with high costs, particularly healthcare, and Leader THUNE and Speaker JOHNSON have an obligation to sit down with us, the Democratic leaders, in bipartisan negotiations if they want our votes.

The American people are hurting. Healthcare is being decimated on all

fronts. People are losing jobs. People are seeing costs go through the roof. People are losing healthcare. People are going to die because of these cuts.

So Democrats' position is clear, and we are united: Republicans have to come to meet with us in a true bipartisan negotiation to satisfy the American people's needs on healthcare and lower people's costs. Without that, they won't get our votes, plain and simple.

#### INFLATION

Mr. President, on inflation, this morning, the Department of Labor reported inflation in August accelerated 2.9 percent from a year earlier. That is the highest year-to-year number so far this year.

Inflation is getting worse—so much for Donald Trump's promise to lower costs "on day one."

We are well past the point where you can't make it through the day without seeing more evidence that Trump's tariffs are hurting our economy.

Donald Trump, a billionaire, can post on social media there is no inflation to his heart's delight, but Americans know he is lying every time they pay more for coffee and beef and rent. And it is all self-inflicted because of these tariffs.

Soon, Senate Democrats will force action on legislation stopping these destructive tariffs because we need to protect people back home. I urge our Republican colleagues to join us when that time comes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CHARLIE KIRK SHOOTING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to begin today by addressing the tragic event that occurred yesterday.

Thirteen years ago, an organization called Turning Point USA was launched to fight back against liberal indoctrination that was occurring on college campuses. It began, as you know, as a little organization. It quickly grew into a dominant force of conservatism on college campuses. It became a national movement.

At the center of this was an 18-year-old young patriot named Charlie Kirk. From students and parents, all the way to President Trump, they all admired Charlie. He was a college dropout who brought debate and dialogue back to our country. For 13 years, Charlie did the most courageous thing in American life: He expressed his beliefs with an open heart. Yes, Charlie had strong political views, and he never feared having those views questioned by anyone, on any topic. In fact, as the Presiding Officer knows, he welcomed it.