

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, hallelujah. Equal justice under law just took an enormous stride forward in this Senate Chamber.

It was back earlier this year in July when Senator LUJÁN and I introduced the Epstein bill—the same bill that just passed the Senate Chamber after passing through the House—and it had 25 sponsors, but we couldn't get a single sponsor from across the aisle, not one. Twenty-five Democrats said: Let's cosponsor this bill because we need transparency; the victims need justice.

And yet the President, who said during his campaign he was all about releasing these files, blocked them, did everything possible to stop them.

And then in September, under consideration of the Defense Authorization Act, we put forward an amendment. In fact, our minority leader, Senator SCHUMER from New York, put forward an amendment and said: Let's take the bill—the bill that Senator LUJÁN and I had introduced with 23 colleagues—and let's vote on it now and put it in the Defense authorization bill. And my good friends across the aisle again blockaded justice. They moved to table the amendment. And with only Republican votes, they created a 51-to-49 vote to kill justice, kill transparency, kill fairness for the victims of this evil—evil—operation that Epstein headed.

But the fight continued. The publicity continued from every part of the spectrum, politically, from the far right and the near right, left of center, far left of center, all saying: This is wrong. The crime is enormous—hundreds of young women, hundreds of girls, raped by powerful men. Every American knows how wrong those rapes were, how much damage they did to the young women involved, often destroying their lives.

Every father of a young girl thinks about how evil it would be for a powerful man to rape his daughter. And yet Trump's persistence in blockading the release of these files continued until the House came back into session, and there was a withdrawal petition—a discharge petition as they call it in the House—and a majority of the House Members said: We must vote on this.

And the President lobbied the Republicans who were on that discharge petition because Democrat names weren't enough to have a majority. He asked them to get off the petition, and they refused.

So it became clear the House was going to vote, and today they did. And when it came to the question of saying yes or no on releasing these files, it was 427 Members of the House strong, 1 opposed, saying today we stand for justice.

And so, just moments ago, the minority leader, Senator SCHUMER from New York, came to this floor, and he asked the Senate to follow the example set by the House. And just earlier today I said: When that moment comes, let's be 100 Senators strong, 100 strong in

saying yes to the unanimous consent request, saying yes to discharge of these files from the executive branch.

I am struck that the language is very full in saying all the details have to be discharged, and none of them can be blocked because of embarrassment or political sensitivity to the powerful individuals who are currently in office or may have been in office or may never have been in office but may have been involved in Epstein's operation. Let the chips fall where they may.

This bill says: Thirty days from a signature being provided by the President, 30 days those files have to be fully released, redacted only to protect the victims' names. So 30 days from now is a long time. And so I say to the President of the United States: You have had plenty of time to have your legal team already redact the names, so release these files now. Release them now. Sign this bill and release the files right away.

Today is a victory, a victory for the voices for justice who have pushed and argued that these two Chambers, the House and the Senate, need to fulfill the vision so embraced by the American people, so powerfully felt in their hearts, their sense of right and wrong, their sense that the powerful should not be able to do evil acts and get away with it, and finally their voices were heard today.

So I thank my Republican colleagues across the aisle. Every one of them decided not to come to the floor and object, which means they are giving unanimous consent. So all 100 Senators, however much they may have obstructed in the past, today did the right thing, and I applaud them for it.

Let's, together, push the President to release these files immediately. They have had plenty of time to redact the names. Let's see no further administrative delays or cleverness and let the chips fall where they may.

May there be justice for the victims. May there be accountability for the perpetrators. Equal justice under law should be served. It is our duty to serve it, and we have taken a powerful stride to equal justice today.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, I ask consent to speak for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, I have come to the floor three times now to call for release of the Epstein files. Earlier today, the House voted to release the full files, and later today, I hope, this Chamber will do the same.

Before we vote, I want us to remember what is really at stake here. This isn't about Democrats versus Republicans. It is about real girls who were hurt, abused, and trafficked by Jeffrey Epstein and the powerful people who surrounded him.

One of those girls was Virginia Roberts Giuffre. She was forced to stay silent for years, but today I want to let her speak in her own words.

Virginia was just 16 when she started working at Mar-a-Lago where she met Epstein's recruiter Ghislaine Maxwell. She writes in her memoir:

Maxwell says she knows a wealthy man—longtime Mar-a-Lago member, she says—who is looking for a massage therapist to travel with him. . . . My lack of experience doesn't concern her a bit. I'm sure you'd be terrific," she insists, looking me up and down. "Will you come for an interview?"

Even today, more than 20 years later, I remember how excited I felt. Could my dreams of becoming a professional masseuse be coming true so quickly? Something about how this proper, well-spoken lady focused on me made that seem possible. I told her I had to get permission from my dad first, but that I really wanted to come.

That wealthy man, we all know now, was Jeffrey Epstein. That moment began years of trafficking and abuse for Virginia.

Later in her memoir, she writes:

I was about to spend more than two years in Epstein and Maxwell's orbit. My job: to do whatever they asked whenever they asked it. There were no bars on the windows or locks on the doors. But I was a prisoner trapped in an invisible cage.

Those are the words of a child—a child who should have been safe from predators like Epstein and Maxwell.

She talks about how Epstein gave her money to rent an apartment so her parents wouldn't question why she had to go to meet Epstein's clients in the middle of the night.

Here is the thing: Epstein did not act alone. He had help. And the men who helped him target and abuse young girls and protected him are still out there walking around like nothing happened. This can't just be another news cycle or another Tuesday. There needs to be justice.

We owe it to Virginia and every survivor of Epstein's to finally get the full truth of how this happened and who allowed it to happen. That is why I am going to, again, call for the full release of the Epstein files. Let's bring this evidence out, stop this secrecy, the coverups, and protecting these elites. The American people deserve the truth, and Virginia deserves transparency, accountability, and healing.

At a press conference earlier today, another Epstein survivor said:

Today we stand in a moment that will decide whether our government belongs to the American people or to those who prey on them.

We owe it to her and every survivor to choose accountability and release the files.

I yield the floor.

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. 515, Ho Nieh, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2029.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, John Barrasso, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Rounds, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tommy Tuberville, Jon Husted, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Deb Fischer, Jim Justice, Kevin Cramer, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, David McCormick.

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 Ho Nieh, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2029, 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.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 32, as follows:

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

[Rollcall Vote No. 619 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Banks	Hagerty	Ossoff
Barrasso	Heinrich	Padilla
Blackburn	Hoeven	Paul
Boozman	Husted	Reed
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Budd	Johnson	Risch
Capito	Justice	Rounds
Cassidy	Kelly	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Coons	King	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Marshall	Tuberville
Curtis	McConnell	Warner
Daines	McCormick	Warnock
Duckworth	Moody	Welch
Ernst	Moran	Whitehouse
Fischer	Moreno	Wicker
Graham	Mullin	Young
Grassley	Murkowski	

NAYS—32

Alsobrooks	Hassan	Rosen
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Schatz
Bennet	Hirono	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Shaheen
Booker	Lujan	Slotkin
Cantwell	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Galleo	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Fetterman	Hawley	Sanders
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 32, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ho Nieh, of Ala-

bama, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2029.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 25-80, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Denmark for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$318.4 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosures.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 25-80, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Denmark for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$318.4 million. We

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Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosures.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BRIAN MAST,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 25-80, concerning the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Denmark for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$318.4 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 25-80

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Denmark.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$270.2 million.
Other \$48.2 million.
Total \$318.4 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): Up to three-hundred forty (340) AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder tactical missiles.

Up to thirty-four (34) AIM-9X Block II tactical guidance units.

Non-Major Defense Equipment: The following non-MDE items will also be included: training aids; weapon software; training; support equipment; spare and repair parts; publications and technical documentation; transportation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Navy (DE-P-AEI).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: DE-P-AEC; DE-P-AEF).

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None known at this time.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: November 12, 2025.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Denmark—AIM-9X Block II Tactical Missiles

The Government of Denmark has requested to buy up to three-hundred forty (340) AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder tactical missiles and up to thirty-four (34) AIM-9X Block II tactical guidance units. The following non-MDE items will also be included: training aids; weapon software; training; support equipment; spare and repair parts; publications and technical documentation; transportation; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The total estimated cost is \$318.4 million.