

the sacrifices they make in order to protect our freedom and public safety.

I am grateful to President Trump and to FBI Director Patel for their swift response and for their commitment to bring the perpetrator of this heinous event to justice; but even more than that, we need to make sure it does not reoccur through other poorly or insufficiently vetted Afghan parolees. Unfortunately, this is part of the legacy of the Biden administration's open borders and immigration policies where they defied the law which reserves parole through a case-by-case basis to do it on a categorical basis along the southern border and now with the Afghan parolees.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, October 18, 2024.

Hon. ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY MAYORKAS: We write today to request more information about the immigration status of Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, the Afghan national who was recently arrested in connection with a plot to commit a violent attack on behalf of ISIS in the United States on Election Day. According to the criminal complaint filed by the Department of Justice, Tawhedi "entered the United States on September 9, 2021, on a special immigrant visa and is currently on parole status pending adjudication of his immigration proceedings." However, according to reporting from Fox News, Tawhedi was never approved for a special immigrant visa and was not "well known to the US government" when he was brought to the United States.

We remain deeply troubled by the increasing likelihood that foreign extremists may successfully exploit the weaknesses of our immigration system or our southern border to commit an act of political violence or an act of terror here on U.S. soil, and the policies of the Biden-Harris administration have only made matters worse. It was President Biden and Vice President Harris disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan that led to Tawhedi being in the United States in the first place. In the chaos following the withdrawal, the Biden-Harris administration paroled into the U.S. over 77,000 Afghans with no or significantly incomplete security checks done on them prior to their arrival. In the three years since, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has failed to conduct proper vetting of these parole recipients. A DHS Office of Inspector General report from May 2024 found that DHS has no established process or dedicated component for monitoring parole expiration for the Afghan parolee population, and that there are significant gaps in how DHS responds to potential derogatory information discovered in the recurrent vetting process.

This ongoing failure to protect Americans from potential terroristic threats is unacceptable and it is only a matter of time before it yields deadly results. As part of our ongoing oversight of DHS's use of immigration parole and its response to the heightened threat environment the U.S. finds itself in, we are requesting that you provide to us for review a copy Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi's alien file (a-file) and any other records related to his parole and vetting he received prior to his arrest, no later than November 1, 2024.

Thank you for your prompt attention and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Lindsey O. Graham, John Cornyn, Mike Lee, Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Marsha Blackburn.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, we have only three scheduled workweeks before Christmas. Compared to what the Senate had left on its plate last year, I think a great deal of praise is in order for our leadership—Senator THUNE and Senate Republicans generally—for getting so much done in the last 11 months.

We started the year off with an impressive clip, confirming President Trump's Cabinet at a record speed. We successfully passed a reconciliation package, which will extend President Trump's tax cuts for working families, known as the One Big Beautiful Bill or the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, which contains far more than just tax relief for the American people. We passed our first draft of the National Defense Authorization Act in the Senate.

In addition to these impressive accomplishments, the Senate has also passed the first tranche of government funding bills and a continuing resolution to keep the lights on through January. While it may seem odd to commend Congress for just doing its job, this has become a notable achievement because it means we will not be here on Christmas Eve voting on a massive omnibus spending package. That, unfortunately, has happened too often in the past.

Suffice it to say, the first year of the 119th Congress, led by Republicans, has been far more productive than recent years, but now we have more work to do because we are not quite finished. We have a few more tasks to complete before Saint Nick comes to fill up our stockings.

First and foremost, we need to finish the National Defense Authorization Act. This is a must-pass piece of legislation. It is absolutely critical to providing the men and women who protect this country with the finances and the resources and the training they need in order to do their job.

The House and the Senate have passed their own respective versions, which means now, the task is for a conference between those two versions to reconcile any differences and pass that version in both Chambers. Then the final version, of course, as we all know, can go to President Trump.

As part of the process to finalize the NDAA this year, I remain adamant in my provisions to address outbound foreign investments that they be included in the final version.

We all know that the Chinese Communist Party is the greatest national security threat—not just to the region but globally—at this time. What many of us did not fully appreciate is how

American investors are directly supporting the Chinese economy and the Chinese military through outbound investments to the tune of billions of dollars.

The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission noted that the United States is "the most important single source of investment to semiconductors, quantum computing, and AI in China." In other words, we are funding our principal competitor, and that competitor is not only an economic competitor but is vying for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific and threatening a military conflict to take Taiwan any day, week, or month in the future.

So why in the world would we engage in willful blindness, not knowing what American investors are doing to help prop up the Chinese economy and the Chinese military?

Failure to address outbound investment transparency is to pretend that national security doesn't matter. And we don't have any more time to procrastinate. The best time to act on this was years ago when my initial outbound investment legislation was proposed and passed as part of the Senate NDAA, but now, we need to finish the job we started back then in this year's NDAA.

The last item on our plate, in addition to securing our national defense, is to address our Nation's healthcare. The so-called Affordable Care Act—better known as ObamaCare—was as dubiously named as the Inflation Reduction Act, which did not reduce inflation, just like the Affordable Care Act did not make healthcare affordable.

When ObamaCare was crafted, debated, and passed, Democrats refused to work with Republicans to make it a bipartisan law.

So this failed experiment in ObamaCare that is now proposing 18 percent premium increases in places like the State of Texas this upcoming year has been a complete failure.

President Obama said that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; he said that if you like your healthcare plan, you can keep your healthcare plan; and he also said that it would reduce healthcare costs by an average of \$2,500 per American consumer—none of which has proven to be true. Democrats preferred to write the bill all by themselves and then misrepresent to the American people about their being able to keep their doctor or existing insurance plans.

ObamaCare was a massive failure that left Americans disappointed and our healthcare system virtually bankrupt. Ignoring this reality, Democrats came back for more during the COVID pandemic, using a national healthcare crisis as an opportunity to serve up more of the same bad recipe for our healthcare needs.

Of course, we all know the Senate's secret sauce is deliberation and debate. That is what we are supposed to do. The Senate is a forum where colleagues

who may have different party affiliations and different ideas about how we should solve problems can come together to try to build consensus and to work through our differences to arrive at a policy framework that gets at least 60 percent support in this body. The result of that process is a product that has been stress-tested by Members on both sides and one that works out better in the long-term for the American people.

But with the COVID-era enhanced ObamaCare credits set to expire according to a timetable set by Democrats since no Republican voted for it in the first place—instead of working through the regular order to come up with a bipartisan solution, the Senate Democrats have chosen to play hardball. They shut down the government, denying paychecks to millions of Americans, in an attempt to beat Republicans into accepting their terms unilaterally. This is simply not the way the Senate is supposed to work.

The Democrats' use of a government shutdown as a tactic to get what they wanted—to extend this failed policy in ObamaCare—is a shameful tactic, but now that the shutdown is over, Democrats have an opportunity to reconsider and do the right thing.

President Trump has already given us some great ideas about how to accomplish this and made the point, which I think is an important one, that rather than send the money to insurance companies that have, by the way, done very, very well and made a lot of money, let's send the money directly to the consumer so they can choose what suits their needs the best.

There are many good ideas that have been circulated. Senator BILL CASSIDY, a physician from Louisiana and a member of the Finance Committee, has put forward a framework based on the administration's proposals—bypassing the insurance companies and sending the money directly to the consumer. I know others who have a lot of experience in the healthcare field, like Senator RICK SCOTT of Florida, have introduced legislation as well. So there are a lot of great ideas out there.

We know that ObamaCare itself has failed and is unsustainable in its current form, so we have a lot of work to do and not much time to get it done. The goal, of course, is to make sure that everybody in America can get access to healthcare and to make sure we don't bankrupt the country in the meantime.

So all these ideas are a solid step in the right direction toward righting the wrongs of ObamaCare and ensuring we put dollars in the hands of the consumer or American families rather than in the coffers of insurance companies and insurance company executives.

But to actually solve the healthcare challenges that this country faces, we need to have a robust debate between our Members, and I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will ap-

proach this discussion in good faith. Based on history, I am not overly confident that will happen, but I remain hopeful.

So I look forward to working with all of our colleagues, as well as President Trump, to come up with the right solution for healthcare that actually relieves the burden of rising health costs on American families, primarily caused by the abomination known as ObamaCare.

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.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Bragdon nomination.

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. 472, David A. Bragdon, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Jon A. Husted, John R. Curtis, Tom Cotton, Bernie Moreno, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Markwayne Mullin, Kevin Cramer, Pete Ricketts, Katie Boyd Britt, Tim Sheehy, Jim Banks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David A. Bragdon, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina, 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Arizona

(Mr. GALLEGO), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 624 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—9

Curtis	Kim	Sanders
Fetterman	McConnell	Schiff
Gallego	Risch	Warnock

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David A. Bragdon, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, all postcloture time be expired and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Bragdon nomination at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow; further, that the cloture motion with respect to the Freeman nomination ripen following disposition of the Bragdon nomination; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Freeman nomination, the Senate vote on the nomination at 2:15 p.m. tomorrow; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Tuesday's session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the