

Can we get to work on a bipartisan basis and agree that if we are going to keep safe borders, we also want to make sure that the right immigrants are here for our future?

Any is one of those people. Without due process, she was sent back to Honduras. Her fate is still uncertain despite a court order. But there are hundreds of thousands like her who, with enough determination, hard work, and opportunity, can make America a greater nation. She is my 150th Dreamer. I hope she is part of America for years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

S.J. RES. 91 AND H.J. RES. 131

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this morning as we begin debate on two identical disapproval resolutions. This is S.J. Res. 91—I filed it with Senator SULLIVAN—and then H.J. Res. 131, which is a companion measure filed by our delegation colleague Representative BEGICH. These resolutions would nullify the Biden administration's Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program. This was unilaterally rewritten and finalized over our objections back in November of 2024.

We are going to have an opportunity to vote later on a motion to proceed to my Senate resolution. Then, if that succeeds, our final vote tomorrow will be on the House resolution because it can then go directly to the President's desk.

Those of us in the Alaska delegation filed these resolutions because we are again seeking to overturn the Biden administration's effort to effectively shut down resource production across Alaska. We opposed their Central Yukon Resource Management Plan, their integrated activity plan for our National Petroleum Reserve, and their decision to shut down any potential development on a very small part of the Coastal Plain.

So for those who have not followed this, the Coastal Plain is a 1.56 million-acre tract of land. This is on the eastern part of Alaska's North Slope. So if you look at the overlay here of Alaska, across the lower 48 States, the ANWR region is up here in the upper eastern corner. The refuge itself is about 19 million acres. This is approximately the size of South Carolina. The non-wilderness area—this is the 1002 area—is 1.5 million acres, which is approximately the size of Delaware. Again, you see this in that section of the map there.

The Coastal Plain is part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, but in designating that as a refuge, Congress specifically reserved this area up at the top, on the slope there, for energy ex-

ploration and potential future development. Congress did this through what was known as section 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. We call it ANILCA. So when we refer to the 1002 area, it is this Coastal Plain here within the ANWR region.

Section 1002 of ANILCA starts with a purpose that explicitly authorizes "exploratory activity within the coastal plain in a manner that avoids significant adverse effects on the fish and wildlife and other resources."

So I think it is important that people understand this purpose, this distinction. The 1002 area—this area here, the purple area—is not Federal wilderness. By law—by law—it is a Federal set-aside. This area here is wilderness. This is the refuge area. The 1002 area, again, was specifically set aside to authorize exploratory activity.

Then Congress left the decision on development to be determined later. It was years—it was decades, actually—it was in 2017 that we in Congress agreed as to what should be allowed. I was chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee at the time, and we added a title II to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. It drew bipartisan support, but we effectively put an end to a 40-year battle. We opened up a small fraction of the Coastal Plain to responsible development. And under the terms of that act, we required at least two area-wide lease sales over the course of 7 years.

But we provided balance to all that. It wasn't just "open the whole thing for exploration." We limited surface development to just 2,000 acres.

So, keep in mind, in this area that is the size of Delaware, we limited surface development to 2,000 acres, which is one one-hundredth of 1 percent—one one-hundredth of 1 percent—or one ten-thousandth of all of ANWR. That is what we included within that measure in that 2017 act.

We did not shortcut or truncate the environmental review process. The Department of the Interior effectively spent 3 years designing a sound, environmentally protective program, and the result, then, was a record of decision in August 2020 that would have allowed us to safely develop the area's anticipated resources while fully protecting the fish, the wildlife, and the subsistence uses.

We have talked a lot on this floor and in other areas about the resources that we project to be in the ANWR area—prolific resources—an estimated 7.7 billion barrels of oil, which would be enough to add a half million barrels a day to our Trans-Alaska Pipeline System for perhaps the next 40 years and help to fill up our pipeline.

I am one who has been engaged in this battle for decades, and I absolutely understand the concern about whether or not limited development makes sense in the area. And like so much of Alaska, the Coastal Plain is a special place. None of us wants to see it

harmed, and that is why we went to such extraordinary lengths to ensure that energy development and environmental protection could coexist. We didn't trade one for the other. We didn't put energy above the environment.

We had a lot of confidence in the program that was finalized in 2020, but, unfortunately, we never got the chance to, once again, demonstrate how Alaska leads the world when it comes to balanced, environmentally responsible development.

We held our first lease sale in early 2021, but after that, everything seems to have just kind of gone in reverse, because on his first day in office, President Biden suspended the Coastal Plain Program. His Department of the Interior paused all leasing and development activities before arbitrarily canceling every lease in the area.

And the Biden administration didn't stop there, either. They next decided to rewrite the Coastal Plain Program to make leasing unattractive and development impossible. And they claimed deficiencies in the original process, between 2017 and 2020, that they had to somehow go back and remedy, but they never really cited anything specific. Now, keep in mind, the Biden administration in their political agenda did not include energy from Alaska. So they were trying to move forward and address what they said were flaws, but their process was also fatally flawed.

For starters, the Biden administration failed to meaningfully consult with the people who actually live on the North Slope, including those who live in Kaktovik, which is the only community within ANWR's boundaries. When I say "failed," I mean they refused—they flatout refused. I added report language to my Interior appropriations bill directing them to do the consultation, and still they refused.

The Biden administration issued a record of decision for a new Coastal Plain Program in November of 2024. And if you spend time looking at it, you will understand why we are here, because it clearly and repeatedly contradicts Federal law, because the Tax Cut and Jobs Act opened the 1.56 million-acre Coastal Plain to potential development, subject to the 2,000-acre surface limit.

We were very clear in what that law was. The Biden administration took that, flipped it on its head, and finalized the program that allowed leasing on just 400,000 acres—so, gone, immediately. Gone was potential leasing on 74 percent of the 1002 area. And the 400,000 acres that was left available, which is—I question the availability there—but it amounted to less than was bid on at the 2021 lease sale. And even there, 231,700 acres were subject to no surface occupancy, another 84,300 were subject to controlled surface use, and 3,100 acres were subject to timing limitation. So only about 5 percent—only about 5 percent—of the overall Coastal Plain was subject to standard

lease terms and conditions under the Biden plan. So think about that—just 5 percent now.

The Biden administration also restricted seismic surveying—the best way to understand the Coastal Plains resources. They restricted the surveying of the lands that were now theoretically available for leasing. They even reinterpreted the 2,000-acre limit to not be a “saleable feature” of leases. We had discussed this with the Parliamentarians during the budget reconciliation back in 2017, but it was a matter of secretarial discretion to allow development of anywhere between 0 and 2,000 acres. So, again, they flipped that on their head.

So it wouldn't surprise you to learn that the 2024 program contemplates development on a maximum of 995 surface acres. Again, what we had statutorily prescribed—what the law says—was 2,000 acres.

Finally, the Biden administration expanded and created new lease stipulations and required operating procedures to further dissuade leasing interests and clamp down on any potential for development. The goal wasn't hard to understand. It is evident in the 2024 record of decision.

Interior acknowledged that, under their preferred alternative, future oil production from the Coastal Plain would decline nearly 80 percent. They knew it. That was the plan. I think they were probably trying to shoot for closer to 100 percent.

Under the 2024 plan, there would be no leasing, as we clearly saw in a lease sale that was designed to fail and then did fail late last year. There would be no development on the Coastal Plain, regardless of congressional action, support from Alaskans who live on the North Slope and within the Coastal Plain, or our national need for responsibly produced energy.

Bear in mind, this is all taking place right as the Biden administration was relaxing sanctions on countries like Iran, like Venezuela, allowing them to produce more and financially benefit from the development. And it also happened right as California, which is a traditional market for Alaska's oil, was importing more oil from the Middle East, which is a long way from California, but also from other countries in South America, actively deforesting the Amazon rain forests. So if you want to talk about a massive geopolitical and environmental failure, that was it—that was it—happening under that administration.

Less oil from Alaska means a Trans-Alaska Pipeline System that is running mostly empty. It means a west coast that increasingly turns to imports instead of domestic energy, regardless of the terror that that breeds or the devastation that it causes.

It also means fewer jobs for hard-working Alaskans, less opportunity in our communities for the folks who support and benefit from energy development, less revenue for the State of

Alaska, and, in turn, less infrastructure and services. To me, that just makes no sense.

The people of the North Slope, the Alaska delegation, and the State of Alaska were ignored as the Biden administration put its 2024 program into place. From the start, this was a fait accompli. There was no question in my mind what they planned to do, and there was nothing unfortunately that we were able to do to change their minds.

It really didn't matter what Alaskans wanted. It didn't matter what the law required. It didn't matter that they wound up in court and lost—and lost badly—as they did when a Federal judge ruled that their cancellation of the Coastal Plain leases was blatantly illegal.

All of that was their choice, and this is ours. This is our choice—to disapprove and permanently nullify their actions so that they never come back in substantially similar form. So if you care about the rule of law, if you care about our domestic energy security or the consequences of sending our dollars abroad for energy that we have here at home, then I would ask you to join us in supporting this resolution.

I think if you acknowledge that no one cares more about Alaska than Alaskans, you should be with the full Alaskan delegation on this. We can restore the rule of law. We can require Federal Agencies to follow congressional direction. We can return to balanced management on the Coastal Plain, while still protecting 99.99 percent of ANWR's surface acreage. I think the choice is pretty clear.

I would urge colleagues to support the motion to proceed later and the underlying resolution when we vote on it tomorrow.

Mr. President, I would ask, as I wrap here, that unanimous consent be provided for letters of support from those who live on the North Slope, as well as letters from the Resource Development Council and the NFIB, to be printed in the RECORD.

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

NOVEMBER 19, 2025.

Re Support for S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res 131—Congressional Review Act Disapproval of the “2024 BLM Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision”

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. NICHOLAS BEGICH III,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MURKOWSKI, SULLIVAN, AND REPRESENTATIVE BEGICH: On behalf of the North Slope Inupiat leadership—including Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS), the North Slope Borough (Borough), and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), we write in strong support of Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions introduced being introduced by the Alaska Congressional Delegation, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule sub-

mitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to the “2024 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision.”

BACKGROUND

The North Slope Inupiat have called the Arctic home for over 10,000 years. We are proud of our self-determination efforts to ensure future generations of Inupiat continue to reside in our communities and have access to essential services. Without a stable economy, our communities will suffer, along with our ability to fully engage in and sustain our Inupiat cultural traditions, including our vital subsistence way of life.

The North Slope of Alaska spans an area nearly the size of the state of Minnesota and, within that expansive area, there are eight Inupiat communities—Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Point Hope, Point Lay, Utqiagvik, and Wainwright. None of our communities are connected by a permanent road system; all supplies must be flown or barged in, making the cost of living extremely high and economic opportunities generally low.

Over fifty years ago, the Federal Government directed Alaska Native people to organize into a new structure of indigenous representation. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) was a dramatically different and transformative approach by the Federal Government to federal Indian policy. The fact that our ancestral lands were claimed by the Federal Government before our people had a right to settle aboriginal land claims should inform every decision the Federal Government makes in managing those lands.

Unlike the Lower 48 model of indigenous representation where tribal governments typically administer the delivery of services such as healthcare, public safety, education, land management, and economic development, the passage of ANCSA created a shared system of Alaska Native representation and delivery of services. Our region has a multitude of Alaska Native entities that work together to effectively serve, provide for, and enrich the lives of the North Slope Inupiat we represent. Our three regional entities, the ICAS, the Borough, and ASRC are three of those entities. While our roles differ, our constituencies overlap, which is why we work closely together to protect the cultural and economic interests of the North Slope Inupiat.

While our leaders over fifty years ago were initially wary of any development on our lands, our Inupiat leaders have spent decades prioritizing open communication and transparency in planning with industry. We have exercised true self-determination through a unique framework of Alaska Native governance—a framework that relies on our tribal governments, municipal governments, and Alaska Native corporations established by Congress to serve our indigenous constituents. For millennia, Inupiat ingenuity has transformed our relationship with industry into a partnership that has both protected our environment and our way of life and has brought significant economic benefits to the region that would have otherwise been absent. Our North Slope residents are keenly aware that advances in our communities—running water, local schools, health care, public safety, electricity, and more—have come because of the coordination and cooperation of Alaska Native leaders and entities across the region.

ICAS

Established in 1971, the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope is the federally recognized regional tribal government for the North Slope and represents over 14,000 Inupiat tribal members. The mission of ICAS is to exercise its sovereign rights and powers

for the benefit of tribal members, to conserve and retain tribal lands and resources including subsistence.

BOROUGH

The Borough is a home rule government located above the Arctic Circle that represents roughly 10,000 residents. The Borough's jurisdiction includes the entire National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and the eight villages within it. In 1972, the North Slope Iñupiat formed the Borough, in part, to ensure our communities would benefit from oil and gas development on their ancestral homelands. It was the first time Alaska Natives took control of their destiny using a regional municipal government. The Borough exercises its powers of taxation, property assessment, education, and planning and zoning services to serve our communities. Taxes levied on oil and gas infrastructure, not development, have enabled the Borough to invest in public infrastructure and utilities, support education, and provide police, fire, emergency, health, and other services. Elsewhere in rural Alaska, these services are typically provided primarily by the State or Federal Government, or both.

ASRC

ASRC is a for-profit, land-owning Alaska Native regional corporation formed pursuant to ANCSA. ASRC represents the same region as the Borough and ICAS, and the same eight villages whose residents are predominantly Iñupiat, and who comprise many of our over 14,000 Alaska Native shareholders. ASRC holds the title to approximately five million acres of land on the North Slope, including both surface and subsurface lands. These lands—the ancestral lands of the North Slope Iñupiat—were conveyed to ASRC by the United States pursuant to ANCSA to provide for the economic and cultural well-being of our Iñupiat shareholders.

ASRC is committed to both providing sound financial returns to our shareholders, through jobs and dividends, and to preserving our Iñupiat way of life, culture, and traditions, including the ability to maintain a subsistence lifestyle that supports our communities. In furtherance of this congressionally mandated mission to provide benefits to our shareholders, ASRC conducts and continues to invest in a variety of activities related to infrastructure and natural resource development and other economic initiatives.

ASRC's perspective is based on the dual realities that our Iñupiat culture and communities depend on a healthy ecosystem and subsistence resources, as well as infrastructure and resource development as the foundation of sustainable North Slope communities.

NORTH SLOPE TRILATERAL DISAPPROVAL OF THE 2024 COASTAL PLAIN ROD

It is important to emphasize that our trilateral organizations did not support the 2024 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision. The primary reason for our opposition was the lack of meaningful consultation with the Iñupiat people, our tribal government, and regional institutions. The previous administration failed to engage in meaningful government-to-government consultation with ICAS, the Borough, or ASRC, despite the fact that North Slope communities are the most directly impacted by decisions in the Coastal Plain.

This failure disregarded the sovereign rights of ICAS, the municipal authority of the Borough, and the land and shareholder interests of ASRC. Federal law requires that agencies conduct meaningful consultation with tribal governments and Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) before issuing decisions that affect our communities. That did not

occur in this case. Instead, the process sidelined the voices of our people, creating a decision that was neither legitimate nor consistent with the principles of self-determination.

For the Iñupiat, consultation is not a procedural box to check, it is a legal obligation that recognizes our relationship to the land and our right to be heard. By ignoring this responsibility, the Coastal Plain ROD failed to account for the subsistence needs, cultural values, and economic stability of North Slope communities. This is why our organizations could not support the ROD, and why we now stand behind its disapproval through the CRA process.

SUPPORT FOR S.J. RES. 91 AND H.J. RES. 131

For these reasons, our trilateral organizations strongly support passage of the CRA which disapproves of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision (issued December 9, 2024). Overturning this rule is necessary to restore balance to federal policy, reaffirm Congress's intent for responsible development in Alaska, and uphold the economic, cultural, and subsistence well-being of the North Slope Iñupiat.

Our identity, resilience, and survival are deeply rooted in our traditional lands, which encompass both the Coastal Plain and the NPR-A. We take great pride in our ongoing efforts toward self-determination, focused on securing a future where future generations of Iñupiat can continue to live in our communities with access to the essential services they need to thrive. We thank you for your leadership on this important resolution and look forward to continued collaboration to ensure that federal policies reflect both national priorities and the needs of the people who call the Arctic home.

Sincerely,

NICOLE WOJCIECHOWSKI,
*President, Iñupiat
Community of the
Arctic Slope.*

JOSIAH PATKOTAK,
*Mayor, North Slope
Borough.*

REX A. ROCK Sr.,
*President and CEO,
Arctic Slope Re-
gional Corporation.*

VOICE,
November 18, 2025.

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. NICK BEGICH,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MURKOWSKI, SENATOR SULLIVAN, AND REPRESENTATIVE BEGICH: Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat (VOICE) writes today in support of Senate Joint Resolution 91 and House Joint Resolution 131, the congressional disapprovals of the Bureau of Land Management's 2024 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). In 2017, VOICE's Board of Directors unanimously passed Resolution 2017-04 in support of the opening of the 1002 Area, also known as the Coastal Plain, of ANWR to oil and gas exploration and development.

VOICE is a nonprofit established in 2015 by the region's collective Iñupiaq leadership to speak with a unified voice on issues impacting the North Slope Iñupiat, and to preserve and advance North Slope Iñupiaq cultural and economic self-determination. Our 21 member organizations collaborate to ensure that our collective voice is heard and respected—locally, regionally, nationally, and

internationally. VOICE's Board Members are elected leaders representing local governments, federally recognized tribes, tribal service providers, and Alaska Native Corporations from across the North Slope.

Our Board of Directors unanimously supports the Kaktovikmiut, the residents of Kaktovik, and their right to self-determination. Since the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980, which was crafted, passed, and signed without consulting the North Slope Iñupiat, the Kaktovikmiut have been fighting for their right to explore and develop their homelands located in the Coastal Plain of ANWR, which they have occupied and which have sustained them for thousands of years. VOICE is proud to support policies that reflect their voices, including this effort to nullify the 2024 ROD.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure that the people most affected are included and heard in the policymaking processes.

Quyanapqak,

NAGRUK HARCHAREK,
President.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL,
Anchorage, AK, December 2, 2025.

Re Support for S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res. 131

Hon. Senator LISA MURKOWSKI,
Washington, DC.

Hon. Senator DAN SULLIVAN,
Washington, DC.

Hon. Congressman NICK BEGICH,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MURKOWSKI, SENATOR SULLIVAN, AND CONGRESSMAN BEGICH: The Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. (RDC) writes to express strong support for S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res. 131, which would disapprove the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 2024 Coastal Plain Oil & Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision (ROD). These resolutions are essential to upholding federal law, restoring congressional intent, and reaffirming Alaska's right to responsible development in the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

RDC is a statewide, non-profit trade association founded in 1975. Our membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's fishing, tourism, forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries and includes Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

CONGRESS INTENDED THE 1002 AREA FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

In 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) expanded ANWR, but in a compromise set aside 1.5 million acres of the coastal plain for study and potential development. When Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, it reaffirmed that intent by directing BLM to conduct two area-wide lease sales by 2024. Congress also limited development to no more than 2,000 surface acres, a footprint representing roughly 1/10,000th of refuge lands.

The Biden administration's subsequent actions including suspending and cancelling valid leases and issuing a 2024 ROD that closes 76 percent of the Coastal Plain to leasing, directly contradicted this mandate. In March 2025, a federal court ruled these actions unlawful, and the Government Accountability Office confirmed that the 2024 plan is subject to the Congressional Review Act. S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res. 131 are necessary to correct this overreach and restore

a lawful, workable program. Restoring the 2020 program is aligned with H.R. 1 and the FY 2025 reconciliation bill, which require four lease sales over the next decade under the terms of the 2020 ROD.

ALASKA'S RECORD OF SAFE, LOW-IMPACT ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT IS PROVEN

Alaska has demonstrated for decades that responsible development on the North Slope can coexist with environmental protection, subsistence resources, and wildlife. Since the 1970s, the surface footprint of oil development has decreased by more than 80 percent due to technological advancements, while drilling reach has increased dramatically. In fact, over the past 40 years of North Slope oil production, many wildlife populations, including caribou, have grown or remained stable. The 2020 Coastal Plain ROD incorporated extensive safeguards, including targeted protections for sensitive habitats and important subsistence areas. It also reflected strong support from North Slope residents, including the community of Kaktovik—the only village within the refuge.

ENERGY PRODUCTION IN THE COASTAL PLAIN STRENGTHENS ALASKA AND THE NATION

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates the Coastal Plain holds 7.7 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil, enough to support roughly one million barrels per day for more than 20 years. This resource is vital to maintaining throughput in the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), creating jobs across Alaska and the nation, generating billions in revenues to fund essential services and state and federal governments, and strengthening U.S. energy security.

WHY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IS NEEDED

Passage of S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res. 131 is essential because these resolutions nullify an unlawful and overly restrictive federal action and reinstate a leasing program that aligns with clear congressional direction. They help ensure that future administrations cannot disregard statutory requirements, while respecting Alaska Native input and local priorities. Restoring a lawful program also provides much-needed certainty for industry, communities, and the state's economy.

For 50 years, RDC has supported responsible North Slope development as a cornerstone of Alaska's economy and an essential component of America's energy security. S.J. Res. 91 and H.J. Res. 131 uphold the law, defend Alaska's interests, and restore a balanced and environmentally responsible path forward for the 1002 Area.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to Alaska's future. RDC strongly supports passage of these resolutions.

Sincerely,

CONNOR HAJDUKOVICH,
Interim Executive Director.

NFIB,

Washington, DC, November 17, 2025.

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MURKOWSKI: On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business, I write in support of S.J. Res. 91, which would repeal the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)'s 2024 Coastal Plain Oil & Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision (ROD) that restricted oil and gas leasing on over 1.15 million acres of land in northeast Alaska. This land was specifically set aside by Congress in the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act for oil and gas leasing. Unlocking the 7.7 billion barrels of discoverable oil in this region by repealing this rule is an important step to lowering energy costs for small business owners across the whole country.

NFIB represents approximately 300,000 small and independent businesses across the United States, including more than 1,000 in the state of Alaska. In NFIB's most recent Problems and Priorities survey, small businesses ranked the cost of natural gas, propane, gasoline, diesel, and fuel oil as their 6th most pressing issue. Job creators depend on affordable, reliable, American energy so they can own, operate, and grow their small businesses.

In the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Congress directed at least two lease sales in the "1002 Area" by 2024. Nine tracts were leased out in 2021, but these contracts were promptly frozen on the first day on the Biden administration and cancelled shortly thereafter. To make matters worse, in December 2024, BLM issued a final ROD that permanently closed 76% of the area to further energy development. Thankfully, Congress' 2025 tax package rebuked this plan, and mandated four lease sales in the next decade. Passing S.J. Res. 91 will help achieve this target.

In a recent NFIB member ballot, 88% of NFIB members supported Congress streamlining regulations on the production and transportation of energy sources. Repealing the 2024 ROD would do just that, allowing for the production of more American energy on land owned by the taxpayer.

NFIB supports repealing this burdensome rule and other rules that increase production costs and make energy less affordable and reliable for small businesses. We look forward to working with you to advance this bill and help ensure continued American energy dominance.

Sincerely,

LOUIS A. BERTOLOTTI,
Principal, Federal Government Relations.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. 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. 474, Matthew E. Orso, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western 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 under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Matthew E. Orso, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western 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 Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and

the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 628 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—40

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Alsobrooks | Kelly | Sanders |
| Baldwin | Kim | Schatz |
| Bennet | King | Schiff |
| Blumenthal | Klobuchar | Schumer |
| Blunt Rochester | Lujan | Slotkin |
| Booker | Markley | Smith |
| Cantwell | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Murphy | Warner |
| Duckworth | Murray | Warnock |
| Fetterman | Ossoff | Warren |
| Gillibrand | Padilla | Welch |
| Hassan | Peters | Wyden |
| Hickenlooper | Reed | |
| Hirono | Rosen | |

NOT VOTING—4

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| Boozman | Heinrich | Hoeven |
| Coons | | |

(Mr. RICKETTS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 40. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Tennessee.

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last week, the day before Thanksgiving, our Nation's Capital experienced a horrific tragedy. Just blocks from the White House, two National Guard members were ambushed by a gunman. One of the victims, 20-year-old Sarah Beckstrom, tragically, succumbed to her wounds. The second, 24-year-old Andrew Wolfe, is currently fighting for his life.

We join thousands of Americans who are praying for him and for a full and complete recovery, lifting up his family and also lifting up the family of Sarah Beckstrom.

Now, these two young, brave, patriotic Americans answered the call of duty to serve their Nation in uniform, and, for that, they were gunned down in cold blood.

What do we know about the shooting suspect? He is a 29-year-old Afghan national. He entered the country in 2021 during President Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. He is