

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. HENRICH) are necessarily absent.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 628 Ex.]

**YEAS—56**

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
Galleo	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	Hoeben
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

among nearly 200,000 Afghan nationals who were relocated to our country by the Biden administration under Operation Allies Welcome. This program was part of Biden's larger effort to make illegal immigration legal.

At the time, my Republican colleagues and I demanded answers from the administration about how they could possibly vet all the evacuees amid this chaotic withdrawal.

We must never forget that 13 U.S. servicemembers were murdered by a suicide bomber at the Abbey Gate during the evacuation, including SSG Ryan Knauss of Tennessee.

The Biden administration, however, insisted that the evacuees were properly vetted. The morning after the Abbey Gate bombings, Biden's Press Secretary Jen Psaki told the American people that all Afghan nationals were "screened and vetted prior to being allowed into the United States."

Well, that was a lie and a lie that has now cost the life of a U.S. servicemember.

In 2022, an inspector general report from the Department of Homeland Security found that the Biden administration "admitted or paroled evacuees who were not fully vetted into the United States," noting that "some information used to vet evacuees through U.S. government databases . . . was inaccurate, incomplete, or missing."

We can be grateful that President Trump is taking decisive action to strengthen vetting and prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again. He has halted visas for Afghan nationals and bolstered the vetting process for aliens from 19 high-risk countries. This is what it looks like when a President puts the American people first, and Congress should do everything possible to work with DHS and to support these efforts.

#### KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT

Mr. President, we have known for years that Big Tech has sold out children's safety online for the purpose of making a buck. Their algorithms connect children with drug dealers, pedophiles, and flood their feeds with pro-suicide content. Their AI chatbots sexualize children in role-playing fantasies. Their design features allow children to share their precise, real-time location on a map with anyone, including predators eager to track them down. Their entire profit model depends on addicting children to their product no matter the consequences. They are for doomscrolling by our kids.

Every day, we are learning more about this appalling abuse and addiction. A recent brief filed by more than 1,800 plaintiffs—1,800 plaintiffs—including parents and children, shows how Meta knowingly exposed children to unthinkable harms. According to the brief, Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, conducted internal studies showing that social media addiction among minors fuels anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicidal thoughts.

We all know that these numbers have soared over the past decade. Anxiety, depression, eating disorders, suicide coming from our kids—the numbers are soaring.

So Meta does some research, but here is the kicker that should disgust every single American: When these findings came out and the results were known, Meta buried the research and misled Congress about the results.

As a matter of policy, Meta allegedly refused to remove individuals who engaged in sex trafficking on its platforms until users reported the offender at least 17 times. This is unbelievable. They should never let them on in the first place. But Meta, whether it is Facebook or Instagram—they know that somebody is sex trafficking kids and women, and they still let them on their site. After they are reported once, they get a hand slap. And 5, 10, 15, 16 times, they get a hand slap. They get a notice, but they can stay in business. On the 17th time, they decide, well, that is too much, so they shut them down. Do you know what? A lot of those people go in, and they set up another account with another name, and they continue this sex trafficking mill.

It is disgusting and deplorable and revolting and every other negative adjective you can apply to this. How dare they do this, and how dare Meta let these human traffickers, sex traffickers, drug traffickers use their site to carry out illegal businesses.

Even when Meta detected child sexual abuse material—that is called CSAM—with 100 percent confidence, Meta often failed to remove the content. So they knew people were exploiting children. It is illegal. They knew they were being exploited, that children were being exploited, but do you know what? They didn't remove it. They let it go.

An internal audit even showed that the company knowingly—knowingly—connected minors with potential pedophiles and predators and groomers through its algorithmic "follow" recommendations. On a single day in 2022, it made such recommendations 1.4 million times. That is an accurate number. You have a website, you have a social media platform, and they know they are connecting kids to people that are going to harm and exploit them. In one single day, they do it 1.4 million times—total disregard for the children, total disregard for their welfare, total disregard for their well-being. They allow the exploitation to take place.

There are a couple of things we have learned about these big tech companies. First of all, they cannot be trusted to make their platforms safe by design because meaningful safety measures would cut into their bottom line. These are selfish, greedy people—people with the motto "Move fast and break things." Do you know what they are doing? They are breaking the lives of children and families.

This is why Congress must step up and ensure that these companies fi-

nally face accountability for the harm they have inflicted on an entire generation of our precious children.

Earlier this year, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I reintroduced the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act. It would ensure that children are afforded the same protections from harm in the virtual space with laws we have passed that protect them in the physical world. The Senate's version of KOSA would establish a clear duty of care for online platforms to prevent their algorithms from pushing dangers on minors, including sexual abuse, illicit drugs, the promotion of suicide, and eating disorders.

That duty of care is critical. Requiring big tech companies to take responsibility for making their own products safer is essential to protecting kids and giving parents peace of mind and giving parents and kids a toolbox so that they are able to delink from that algorithmic black box.

You know what, Mr. President. It is amazing to me that in the physical world, if you sell alcohol or tobacco to a kid or expose them to pornography, take them to a strip club, the sheriff is going to come over, and they are going to lock your doors, and they are going to take you to jail. We have laws on the books. It is illegal to endanger a child. It is illegal to endanger a child's welfare and well-being. But in the virtual space, these reckless people at these AI companies and social media companies are developing these chatbots that sexualize and carry on sensual conversations with children. These social media platforms that connect kids to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, predators—they go every day about their business, endangering children and using our children as a product every single time they are online.

The need to do something about this is why we have now 70 cosponsors on the Kids Online Safety Act here in the Senate.

Last week, our colleagues in the House released a discussion draft of a new version of KOSA that would strip out the duty of care. I will tell you, when I looked at that, I thought, it looks like they gave it to Meta to mark it up, the way they redlined that, stripping out the duty of care so they could still take care of friends over at the big tech companies.

With the Senate version of the Kids Online Safety Act, social media platforms would be required to "exercise reasonable care in the creation and implementation of any design feature to prevent and mitigate . . . harms to minors where a reasonable and prudent person would agree that such harms were reasonably foreseeable." With the House version, platforms would only be required to "establish, implement, maintain, and enforce reasonable policies, practices, and procedures that address such harms." Without the duty of care to prevent foreseeable harms, this new requirement is completely unenforceable.