

Peters	Schumer	Warnock
Reed	Shaheen	Warren
Rosen	Slotkin	Welch
Sanders	Smith	Whitehouse
Schatz	Van Hollen	Wyden
Schiff	Warner	

NOT VOTING—4

Blackburn	Cruz	Schmitt
Coons		

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "COASTAL PLAIN OIL AND GAS LEASING PROGRAM RECORD OF DECISION"

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 91) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision".

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session and consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Susan Courtwright Rodriguez, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator WELCH be recognized to speak up to 10 minutes following my remarks for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

HEALTHCARE

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, we are 12 days away from the deadline for Americans to get healthcare coverage starting January 1—12 days. Time is running out for us in Congress to act.

Ultimately, we can all agree on one thing: Healthcare in America is unaffordable for families, for farmers, and for small businesses alike.

This morning, the HELP Committee held a hearing called Making Health Care Affordable Again: Healing a Broken System. Many ideas were shared. But walking out of that hearing room only heightened my sense of urgency. You see, just 2 weeks ago, Senator COONS and Representative MCBRIDE and I met with the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce, and the high

cost of healthcare took up three quarters of the meeting.

Like many Senators here, my office has received phone calls and emails about how devastating a lapse in ACA tax credits would be for our constituents. James from Selbyville, DE, reached out this morning to tell me his story. He said:

My family's ACA premium will increase 110 percent without the continuation of the enhanced premium subsidy.

One hundred ten percent.

Let's break this down. The average income for a family of four in Sussex County, DE, is \$78,000 a year. With a 110-percent increase, their premium could jump from \$241 a month to \$507 a month. That is a monthly increase of \$266. That is more than the current premium cost. The increase cost works out to an additional \$3,192 a year.

How are families supposed to afford this? How is James supposed to keep his family healthy and pay the rent, utilities, groceries? Costs are already high and through the roof for all of these things.

It is time we approach the healthcare crisis with the urgency our constituents deserve, which is why tomorrow I will be introducing a new bill, the Restoring Patient Protections and Affordability Act.

Here are five ways that this bill will help people like James: First, it would extend the ACA tax credits for 3 years, which would prevent health insurance premiums from spiking; second, it would make it easier for working people who want coverage to enroll by cutting redtape because we all have enough on our plates, and no one needs more paperwork to fill out; third, it would force insurance companies to be transparent about enrollment opportunities so that no one falls through the cracks; fourth, it would protect consumers from surprise premium bills; and fifth, it would lower out-of-pocket costs for consumers by reversing the harmful Trump administration regulations that increase premiums, deductibles, and cost sharing back in June.

Senator WYDEN and I are introducing this bill because it is time for Congress to stand up for people like James and his family because no one should have to choose between rent and healthcare, between groceries and a checkup, between keeping the lights on or paying for chemo.

It is long overdue we address the health crisis and lower costs for everyday Americans. We have 12 days—12 days—to ensure that people get their healthcare coverage. We have no time to waste, and I urge my colleagues to consider my bill. The clock is ticking.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

UKRAINE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, 4 years ago, on February 4, 2022, Vladimir Putin initiated his full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The question that Ukraine

faced then was this: Could they defend themselves? Could Ukraine hold against a far more powerful enemy?

Most thought the answer to that was no, including our own Central Intelligence Agency that predicted that Kyiv would fall in a matter of weeks.

The questions the United States faced at that time were: Would we choose, the United States of America, to aid a sovereign country that was defending itself from a brutal attack by an aggressor? Would the United States remain steadfast with our European allies in defending a world where borders cannot be changed by force, where nations do not invade and seize territory of their weaker neighbors, and where might does not make right?

Nearly 4 years later, we face the same question today. We faced that question within those 4 years. We have seen the bravery, the resilience, and the effectiveness of the Ukrainian people who are standing up to the Putin aggression. What Ukraine has done is create the largest army in Europe. With approximately 1 million in arms, what the Ukrainians have done is build a remarkably adaptive military fighting machine with innovation that would rival Silicon Valley. Long-range Ukrainian-designed drones and cruise missiles are now striking thousands of miles into Russia against oil facilities and strategic air force bases. Ukrainians have changed naval warfare. With their stealthy naval drones, they have pushed the feared Russian Navy out of Crimea.

Ukraine is now producing close to 100 percent of its own drones. More than 200 new homegrown Ukrainian tech startups are producing millions of drones annually, all while they are being bombarded by Russia.

Also, we have seen in those 4 years that our European allies have stood strong and rallied to help Ukraine. In many cases, the European countries together, on a per capita basis, have contributed more to Ukraine than even the United States. While it is true that the United States has been, by far, the largest single nation contributor, Europe overall, our allies, have contributed more in both military aid and financial aid.

Even our own defense has benefited. We have now two new allies in NATO, Sweden and Finland—also, the contributions of our allies. Denmark gave Ukraine advanced F-16s that are shooting down Russian drones and cruise missiles. Italy gave Ukraine critical air defense missiles and artillery systems. Greece is contributing to regional economic integration by signing an agreement just last month to supply American LNG to Ukraine. These are just a few of the coordinated actions taken by the United States and its allies.

On the other hand, when we see what Russia has done, what Putin has done, we see that Putin's war plan is to directly target civilians, including innocent women and children, and send soldiers into the meat grinder of certain

death where there have been, by many reports, over a million casualties.

Last week, Putin launched over 600 drones against civilians in Kyiv on a single night, and the objective was to kill civilians, especially women and children. Not since the Blitz of London in 1940 has a European capital faced such a ruthless campaign of airborne terror that was directed at civilians.

Next to me here is a photograph of the graves of three children from a single family who were killed by Putin's campaign of terror. These kids were among the more than 600 Ukrainian children who were killed recently by Russian strikes. Three graves. Parents, neighbors—everyone knows that their kids could be next.

On this question of the United States coming to the aid of Ukraine, I want to acknowledge the leadership of many of my Republican colleagues, especially Senator MCCONNELL, who stood firmly and immediately in favor of protecting Ukraine and standing up for American principles; Senator WICKER, our Armed Services Committee chair; and others, a few of whom I mentioned.

It was under Republican leadership and support that the Senate passed the Ukraine Invasion War Crimes Deterrence and Accountability Act into law. And that law states explicitly that it is "under the direction of President Putin" that the Russian military has committed war crimes, including targeting of civilians, killing noncombatants, deportation of civilians, and hostage-taking.

Recently, it was reported that the Russians have made some incremental gains in the past few months. But the reality is that the Russian troops are creeping forward at the cost of thousands of Russian casualties. According to some reports, Russia has suffered up to a million casualties in the Ukrainian battlefield.

Putin is completely indifferent to the suffering of his own people and the violence he is inflicting on innocent people in Ukraine. And after the thousands of Iranian drones launched every week by Russia at Ukrainian civilians, they don't really point to military effectiveness. They point to military desperation on the part of Russia.

Ineffective on the battlefield, the Putin war plan is to target civilians and try to wear down Ukraine's morale. But I can tell you, last week, I was on a bipartisan delegation led by Senator ROUNDS and Senator SHAHEEN at the Halifax Security Conference, and we heard directly from Ukrainian members of Parliament. They are fighting. It is hard, but they are not giving up. The question before us is not whether Ukraine will persevere; it is whether the U.S. support will persevere.

I believe—I think many of us in this body believe—that we must stand firm against Putin and his lawless aggression. And if he is successful in Ukraine, he will be emboldened to continue his march through Moldova and America's

Baltic and Nordic allies on Russia's borders: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

Some asked if we can afford to continue to support Ukraine. My view: We can't afford not to. But also, when you look at the economic cost, which is real, it is modest. It is about 0.2 percent of our gross domestic product. Is that such a large amount of money that we can't invest it for the security of our country and our allies in Western Europe, which we fought for in World War II?

The question before this U.S. Senate right now is not whether Ukraine is going to hang in there and fight. They proved again and again that they will hang in and fight. If Ukraine won't falter in that fight, the United States must also persevere.

In addition to us continuing our support, there are three pieces of legislation that we could take up on this floor that would make a significant difference right away: No. 1 is the bill led by Senator GRAHAM and Senator BLUMENTHAL. It has 85 cosponsors, and it would impose sanctions to stop customers like India and China and Brazil from buying Russian oil. And the argument Senator GRAHAM makes that I think is very compelling is, you go after the customers, and you squeeze the finances of the Russian war machine. We have 85 cosponsors. Let's take it up, and let's pass it.

The second bill—the State Sponsor of Terrorism bill designation for Russia—is related to the fact that Russia did something that is absolutely unconscionable: They kidnapped children. Over 20,000 kids have been taken hostage and delivered to other families in the occupied territories and in Russia itself. That is so unimaginable. Let's go at that directly.

Third, let's take up legislation here similar to legislation pending in Europe where Russian assets—about \$5 billion in this country, about \$300 million in the European Union—are seized and are used for the reconstruction of Ukraine since the aggressor, Russia, is the acting party that did all that damage.

I believe we must renew our commitment to the Ukrainian people. I believe we must stay the course. This year, we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, when the United States advanced a foreign policy principle that borders cannot be changed by force. We have seen decades of unprecedented prosperity, and we have seen decades without another World War conflagration.

We have an opportunity today to stand up and protect that legacy for this century by recommitting to the Ukrainian people that we will stand in support of that principle, in support of their freedom, and in support of our security.

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 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. 475, Susan Courtwright Rodriguez, 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 Susan Courtwright Rodriguez, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 63, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 631 Ex.]

YEAS—63

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

NAYS—34

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Schiff
Baldwin	Kim	Schumer
Bennet	Lujan	Slotkin
Blumenthal	Markey	Smith
Blunt Rochester	Merkley	Van Hollen
Booker	Murphy	Warner
Cantwell	Murray	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Ossoff	Warren
Duckworth	Padilla	Welch
Fetterman	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Sanders	
Heinrich	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	McConnell	Shaheen
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). On this vote, the yeas are 63,