

We must expose the previous administration's mistakes so we can learn from those, and together we can ensure that the awful tragedy that happened on November 26 will not happen again.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ELLA COOK AND MUKHAMMAD AZIZ UMURZOKOV

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am here with Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator BRITT from Alabama to recognize the victims of a terrible, heartbreaking mass shooting that took place at Brown University in Providence over the weekend.

Two young people were killed and nine were wounded when a gunman opened fire on a classroom full of college students studying for their final.

We will mourn the victims at a later date, but we will soon, all of us, humbly request a moment of silence for sophomore Ella Cook of Alabama and freshman Mukhammad Aziz Umurzokov of Virginia. These two talented, promising young people had their lives tragically cut short.

We are thinking of them and all the victims and to the broader Brown University community. We send our love and support to their families and loved ones. They are dealing with the unimaginable, and we will continue to support them.

Before I ask us to observe a moment of silence, I would like to turn to my colleagues for some brief remarks.

I yield the floor to Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am honored to join our senior Senator as he calls for a moment of silence to share in the sorrow of the families who lost their young college student children to this tragedy.

I would only ask that all of us, including anyone listening, just hold off and give these families a little bit of grace and peace as they deal with this loss. They were expecting to see these kids for the Christmas holidays. There are other kids who are in the hospital—in some cases, in fairly critical condition. Those families are not going to be spending Christmas around the tree at home; they are going to be spending Christmas in a State away from home where their children are in a hospital room, trying to be there for them.

So there is a good deal of suffering and a good deal of sorrow. I think it is important that people not add to that with a lot of unfounded opinion and speculation about what took place. Let the investigation proceed. We will

know what we need to know in due time. In the meantime, please give these families grace as they go through their grief.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I join my colleagues from Rhode Island in coming today to honor the victims at Brown University, for those who lost their lives and those who are fighting for theirs right now in a hospital room.

We lift up their families in prayer. We ask for privacy and peace as they grieve the unimaginable.

Just over the last 24, 36 hours, I have been inundated with text messages and calls specifically talking about what an incredible young woman Ella Cook was. She was everything that is great about our State—bold, courageous, convicted, thoughtful, kind. She made her mark at Mountain Brook High School. She was making her mark at Brown University. The calls that I have gotten have been not just from Alabama but literally from people across the country who encountered her.

While her life was cut way too short—and I cannot imagine the pain and grief that her parents are feeling right now and her little brother and her little sister and her extended family—it is clear that she made an impact, that her time on Earth was such a positive force for good that the ripple of her life will be felt for generations to come.

As we lift their families up in prayer—the Brown community, people across this country that are grieving—I hope to echo my colleague's statement that we can all do that together.

I yield the floor to the senior Senator from Rhode Island for a moment of silence.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, again, we will have more time to speak about these young people, but for now, I would request a moment of silence for the Brown University community, the city of Providence, and all of the victims of these tragic events, particularly the families of Ella and Mukhammad.

(Moment of silence.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Rhode Island.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REED. Madam President, we are about to consider the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act. I rise to express my support for this legislation, and I am very pleased that we will, I think very shortly, be voting on final passage of this bill.

First, I would like to acknowledge Chairman WICKER whose leadership has been crucial for the success of this bill. The hallmark of the Senate Armed Services Committee has long been bipartisanship, and I am glad we have continued that tradition for the 65th consecutive year.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Armed Services Com-

mittee who helped produce this bill. We were able to adopt hundreds of amendments during the committee markup and dozens more through the floor process and floor debate.

I appreciate our colleagues in the House who worked with us these past months to produce a strong bipartisan bill.

This is a forward-looking Defense bill, and I believe we can all support it. I am confident it will provide the Department of Defense and our military men and women with the resources they need to meet and overcome the national security threats we face.

This year's Defense bill addresses strategic competition with China and Russia and confronts threats posed by Iran, North Korea, violent extremists, and also national phenomena like climate change. It authorizes significant investments in artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, and hypersonics, and it modernizes our ships, our aircraft, and our combat vehicles.

Most importantly, this NDAA delivers key wins for our servicemembers and their families. It authorizes a 3.8-percent pay raise and provides improved housing, barracks, additional childcare assistance, and expanded programs to address traumatic brain injuries because we understand that the key asset that we have that provides our military superiority is the men and women in the uniform of the United States.

This bill reaffirms America's global role by extending the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative and committing the Department of Defense to continue to support Ukraine. They are fighting our fight, and we must help them.

It strengthens our alliances in Asia by fully funding the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and providing new authorities for cooperation with Taiwan.

Importantly, the bill prohibits reductions in our force posture in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. To remain a force for peace and stability in these areas, we must have effective force levels, and this legislation provides for that.

And importantly, this NDAA compels the Secretary of Defense to follow the law and submit to Congress a number of reports that he has deliberately withheld. Specifically, the bill cuts off portions of the Secretary of Defense budget until he submits the execute orders and unedited videos of the boat strikes related to ongoing operations in South and Central America.

The bill asserts congressional authority over several other areas the Secretary has been negligent in. These provisions are a ratification of our constitutional duty to raise an army, to supervise an army, and to ensure that the laws of the United States are followed scrupulously.

Overall, this is a very strong bill that represents compromise on both sides, and I would urge my colleagues to vote for it.

Finally, I would like to take an opportunity to recognize the phenomenal

staff who have made this bill possible. I want to specifically recognize the director of the Democratic staff Elizabeth King and the director of the Republican staff John Keast. They have led their staffs and worked together with utmost professionalism.

I would also like to thank the members of the Armed Services Committee staff that have helped me directly: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jenny Davis, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Kevin Gates, Creighton Greene, Gary Leeling, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Mike Noblet, Chad Johnson, John Quirk, Andy Scott, Cole Stevens, Meredith Werner, Isabelle Picciotti, Brittany Amador, Sofia Kamali, and Noah Sisk.

Also, let me thank the floor staff and the leadership staff. You have been part of this process for the last several months, and you have done a remarkable job. We thank you for that very, very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

TRIBUTE TO GENE DODARO

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise to recognize the extraordinary public service of U.S. Comptroller General Gene Dodaro, who will retire this month after a remarkable 52-year career at the Government Accountability Office. Comptroller General Dodaro spent more than half of his career in leadership roles, including 9 years as Chief Operating Officer, before his confirmation in December of 2010 as Comptroller General. During his tenure, he has shaped GAO into the high-performing organization that we rely on every day here in Congress.

Comptroller General Dodaro helped build an impressive team of scientists, cyber security analysts, and other experts to provide reliable and timely information to Congress on rapidly developing fields like artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

He has worked with Congress, across multiple administrations, on major management reform initiatives, and he directed the first-ever audit of the consolidated financial statements of the Federal Government.

I can speak personally about the indispensable role that Comptroller General Dodaro and the GAO staff have played in providing support to me and to my staff, especially in my work on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. It is not just me that can attest to Comptroller General Dodaro's leadership. GAO is consistently ranked as one of the best places to work in Federal Government, a testament to the professionalism, the reliability, and the honesty that he has embodied as Comptroller General.

It is absolutely critical that the next Comptroller General embody these same values. They must be professional and fair, willing to call balls and strikes, regardless of which party occupies the White House. They must uphold the values of independence and

nonpartisanship, and they must be ready to manage a diverse and multidisciplinary workforce.

Congress relies on the GAO to help safeguard taxpayer dollars from fraud, waste, and abuse across Federal programs, often seeing a return on investment of over \$100 for every dollar invested in the GAO.

They provide expert testimony on a range of issues, and the reports identify problematic and operational improvements to the Federal Government. I look forward to working with Leader THUNE, my HSGAC counterpart Chairman PAUL, and the other members outlined in statute to initiate the appointment process and identify a suitable candidate to fill the very big shoes of Comptroller General Dodaro.

He leaves a legacy of tremendous credibility, integrity, and independence at the GAO, and I think it is critical that we work together in a bipartisan fashion to preserve an indispensable role that GAO plays as part of the legislative branch, helping to protect taxpayer dollars and hold the executive branch accountable.

I commend Comptroller General Dodaro for his decades—his decades—of outstanding public service, and I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Comptroller General Dodaro for his dedicated service to us and to the American taxpayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled vote start immediately.

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1071, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disinter the remains of Fernando V. Cota from Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Texas, and for other purposes.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pete Ricketts, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, John Barrasso, Dan Sullivan, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, Deb Fischer, Thom Tillis.

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 1071, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disinter the remains of Fernando V. Cota from Fort

Sam Houston National Cemetery, Texas, and for other purposes, 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 Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 647 Leg.]

YEAS—76

Alsobrooks	Graham	Mullin
Baldwin	Grassley	Murkowski
Banks	Hagerty	Ossoff
Barrasso	Hassan	Peters
Blackburn	Hawley	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Ricketts
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Risch
Boozman	Hirono	Rosen
Britt	Hoeben	Rounds
Budd	Husted	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Justice	Scott (SC)
Coons	Kaine	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kelly	Sheehy
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Slotkin
Cotton	King	Sullivan
Cramer	Klobuchar	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Curtis	Lujan	Tuberville
Daines	Lummis	Warner
Durbin	Marshall	Whitehouse
Fetterman	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	McCormick	Young
Gallego	Moody	
Gillibrand	Moreno	

NAYS—20

Bennet	Markey	Schatz
Booker	Merkley	Smith
Cantwell	Murphy	Van Hollen
Cruz	Murray	Warren
Duckworth	Padilla	Welch
Kim	Paul	Wyden
Lee	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—4

Ernst	Schiff	Warnock
Moran		

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 20.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Message to accompany S. 1071, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disinter the remains of Fernando V. Cota from Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Texas, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill.

Thune motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with Thune amendment No. 3961 (to the House amendment to the bill), to change the enactment date.