

transnational criminals, and adversarial nations that wish to do us harm. She must also represent America to our allies as a trustworthy partner.

Unfortunately, through her own words and actions, Ms. Gabbard has demonstrated she is not up to the task.

She took the word of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad against the assessments of our own Department of Defense, State Department, and intelligence community when she denied that Assad used chemical weapons against his own people.

She knowingly met with a Syrian cleric who had vocally threatened to conduct suicide bomb attacks against the United States.

She sought to blame the United States and NATO—the United States and NATO—for Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

She publicly praised and defended Edward Snowden when he compromised our Nation's most sensitive collection sources and methods and then ran off to hide in China and Russia. Those compromises put at risk not only our intelligence but our men and women in uniform in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just last week, even with repeated inquiries from our Republican colleagues, she refused to call Snowden a traitor.

Speaking of China, when asked about TikTok at her confirmation hearing, she refused to acknowledge the threat posed by China owning a social media company that reaches 170 million Americans.

All the way up until she was nominated to be DNI, she publicly advocated for the wholesale elimination of FISA 702, a tool we use actively in the intelligence domain, a tool that contributes literally 60 percent of the information that makes up the President's Daily Brief. That Daily Brief would also fall under her responsibility should she be confirmed.

The environment facing a new DNI today is complicated and fraught with challenges. Not only have the traditional threats persisted from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, but we have seen increased threats from terrorism, cyber actors, and transnational criminal organizations.

All the while, the intelligence community itself is under attack. Some of our own senior and experienced law enforcement and intelligence professionals are being asked to take political litmus tests, and those who are seen as insufficiently loyal are being fired or forced to resign. Whole Agencies are being eliminated and funding impounded, in flagrant defiance of the Constitution, which only gives the Congress—us here in this body—the power of the purse.

Unvetted, unqualified individuals illegally burrow into classified and sensitive information. This very action is jeopardizing our national security and violating Americans' privacy. These DOGE bros seem to have no restriction

on them at all, and I have seen no evidence that Ms. Gabbard is prepared to deal with this onslaught.

Therefore, I must oppose her nomination and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Idaho.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in a moment, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I rise to encourage my colleagues to support this motion.

As Secretary of HHS, Mr. Kennedy would oversee our Nation's expansive healthcare system, from sources of coverage to advancement of public health. Mr. Kennedy's decades of experience and deep drive to advocate on behalf of consumers will set a patient-centered tone at the Department.

As he has demonstrated in both public and private settings, Mr. Kennedy is committed to reorienting our healthcare approach and restoring faith in our institutions. His passion for addressing America's chronic disease epidemic will save lives, reduce costs, and establish a foundation for a healthier, stronger country. His dedication to transparency will empower patients to make more informed decisions about their healthcare and form a responsive rapport with Congress. As Mr. Kennedy stated during his hearing, "if Congress asked me for information, you will get it immediately."

Over the course of his vetting process, Mr. Kennedy met with dozens of Members on both sides of the aisle, spoke with bipartisan Senate Finance Committee staff, appeared before two committee hearings, and answered over 900 questions for the record, not to mention presenting thousands of pages of documents.

Mr. Kennedy has gone through the same Office of Government Ethics process as all nominees who come before the Finance Committee and has received support for his efforts. Similar to all other nominees, we have a letter from the Director of the Office of Government Ethics stating:

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

He even amended his ethics agreement, going beyond what was required by the Office of Government Ethics, in response to the request from one of our Finance Committee members.

I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing this nomination so we can begin to make our country healthier.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know I spoke a little while ago on Tulsi Gabbard, but I feel so strongly, I just wanted to make one last plea to my Republican colleagues.

In a moment, the Senate will vote to confirm Tulsi Gabbard as the next Di-

rector of National Intelligence. Every single Democrat, I am really proud to say, will oppose this awful nomination because we simply cannot, in good conscience, trust our most classified secrets to someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for conspiracy theories.

It is hard to believe, of all the talented and capable people, that this is the person nominated. It is a person who has said things like: The Ukraine invasion was caused by the United States, not by Putin. It is somebody who has denied Assad's use of chemical weapons, despite all of the intelligence. It is someone who echoes Russian propaganda and falls for crazy conspiracy theories.

I say to my Republican colleagues, please think once again about this nomination. This endangers our security. And my guess is, if a secret ballot were cast on Tulsi Gabbard, maybe she would get 10 votes. You all know how bad she is.

And so I know that people feel they want to please the President in his nomination, but there are certain times you have to buck and stand up and say: No, this is just a very bad choice for America. And the nomination of Ms. Gabbard is simply one of those.

I plead with my colleagues—I know it is the last minute—to think twice, to vote no, as we all will vote, because this is such an awful nomination, who will endanger our national security and our intelligence operations throughout the country and the world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

And let me put it very bluntly to my colleagues: A vote for Robert Kennedy for this position is a vote for a sicker America. And there is irony in that judgment, considering Mr. Kennedy is the figurehead of a mass movement known as Make America Healthy Again. But on issue after issue, Mr. Kennedy refused to stand up for policies that will keep Americans healthy and out of the hospital.

From vaccines to affordable health insurance, to lower drug prices, to women's reproductive healthcare, Mr. Kennedy—through several hearings—ducked and dodged and weaved instead of answering the basic questions that came from Senators of both parties. When he did answer, he demonstrated a shocking lack of knowledge about the

Federal health programs he would be charged with running and a willful desire to mislead Senators about his views on science matters like vaccine safety.

The only conclusion I am left with is that he stands steadfastly by the outlandish views he has expressed over his two-decade career as an anti-vaccine crusader, and he is fully prepared to implement the Republican healthcare agenda.

That agenda boils down to putting Big Pharma and insurance companies back in charge, while leaving millions of American families to fend for themselves without affordable care.

And I want to be clear about this. Going back to my days as director of the Gray Panthers, which is what I did before I went into public service, I can just tell you, this is the least qualified nominee to ever be nominated for a position of this importance. So for the next day and night, Senate Democrats are going to be on the floor telling the American people why.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle still have an opportunity to turn away from this dangerous path. If they do not, my view is their legacy will be tarnished by setbacks in science that will echo in America for decades.

As I mentioned, I spent countless hours as a young man working with seniors to navigate the newly created Medicare Program and help them avoid predatory insurance company tactics that remain all too common today. To me and many other Americans, healthcare, colleagues, is the most important issue, because if you and your loved ones don't have their health, everything else goes by the boards.

The reality is we need to make sure that Americans have the best and most affordable healthcare possible, rather than having a handful of healthcare companies gobble up the entire market for health insurance, pharmaceuticals, hospitals, and even doctors.

The results have been great for shareholder profits and disastrous for American families. Costs keep climbing. The act of getting a doctor's appointment or filing an insurance claim seems to have become an Olympic sport in much of America. The system delays and denies care and rakes in profits, while patients are left wondering how they are going to get the care they need.

So the question before the Senate now is whether we want America's chief health officer to be somebody who is going to take on those corporate interests, somebody who is going to fight tooth and nail to lower costs and improve care, somebody who is going to work to protect and improve the Federal healthcare programs that tens of millions of Americans rely on and not gut them.

Everything I have seen and heard from Mr. Kennedy over these last few weeks has led me, colleagues, to conclude he is not the person that America needs. Americans have little reason to

take Mr. Kennedy at his word. They do, however, have every reason to believe Mr. Kennedy will continue to embrace and amplify anti-vaccine programs, every reason to believe that he will back up Donald Trump's abortion bans. Every reason to believe that he will be a rubberstamp for the Republican health agenda that would rip away the healthcare of so many Americans.

Over the course of the rest of the day and through the night, Democrats are going to show the American people why these concerns are so serious.

I yield the floor, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this nomination.

VOTE ON GABBARD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gabbard nomination?

Mr. WYDEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 50 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Mullin
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
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
Curtis	McCormick	Wicker
Daines	Moody	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—48

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

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

WAIVING MANDATORY QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Kennedy 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 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. 17, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Tommy Tuberville, Kevin Cramer, Ashley B. Moody, Mike Crapo, Markwayne Mullin, David McCormick, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, John Barrasso, Jim Justice, Jon A. Husted, Bernie Moreno, Tom Cotton, Tim Sheehy, Rick Scott of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, 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.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 51 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—47

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.