

that the research on them is done and done well.

When his nomination for the role of Secretary at HHS was announced, Mr. Kennedy stated:

We have a generational opportunity to bring together the greatest minds in science, medicine, industry, and government to put an end to the chronic disease epidemic facing Americans.

I agree with him. We have got to get into the business of making America healthy again.

Mr. Kennedy's dedication to this commitment has been apparent throughout the nomination process. He will bring a fresh perspective to healthcare, prioritizing consumer choice, information transparency, and early interventions to strengthen the well-being of all Americans.

He has been responsive to a wide variety of questions from Members on both sides of the aisle, appearing before two committees and answering hundreds of questions for the record, not to mention going through the extensive vetting process of the Finance Committee, which I chair, which is the most extensive vetting process that any candidate for a position in this administration goes through in the Senate.

While some of my colleagues continue to question his financial agreements, Mr. Kennedy met and then exceeded the requirements set forth by the Office of Government Ethics. Mr. Kennedy has participated in one of the most extensive processes, as I have said, that our Senate puts a nominee through and has succeeded in meeting those standards, and I encourage my colleagues to support his nomination.

#### HEALTHCARE FUNDING

Mr. President, now, before I close, I want to respond briefly to the comments that we have heard today here on the floor and all day yesterday in a long, long Budget Committee hearing to set up the first reconciliation legislation to come before the Congress.

It was said today that Republicans are going to take Medicaid away from children; they are going to take healthcare away from seniors. It was said yesterday that we were going to go after pretty much old people, young people, middle-aged people, and every other kind of people because we are going to destroy the support base that they have here in the Federal system.

The fact is, this is the politics of fear, the politics of claiming things that are going to happen which are not going to happen.

The reality is that yesterday's Budget Committee meeting was not on healthcare. There was nothing done in the meeting yesterday that would have done any of the things that you have heard on the floor today. What we did do yesterday was to set up a process so we can provide some significant extra spending authority to our government to close the border and deport the violent criminals who have come into our country in the millions in the last few

years. We had another provision in it to give significant new resources to our national defense so that we can build back our Department of Defense and the ability of our armed services members to have the technology and the equipment and be capable of responding to threats to our Nation.

And, finally, we restarted and charged up our use and engagement in producing America's energy in America so that we can get back into the business of being independent and not relying on other nations for our energy policy.

Those are the three things that we focused on in the committee yesterday. And, by the way, each one of those was a little bit costly, and every one of those was offset so that there was no increase in Federal spending.

Mr. President, I think we need to argue over facts when we get into these debates. We are going to have a tremendous number of debates. And, yes, we will debate on healthcare at some point, but yesterday and what we did yesterday was focused on the border, on national defense, and on reboosting our energy production in America.

I encourage a strong "yes" vote for Robert F. Kennedy to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute for an opportunity to respond to my colleague from Idaho.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would only say to my friend from Idaho that he says this is not going to happen, that people are going to be safe and seniors on Medicaid and the like will be safe—I would just say to my colleague, it starts today—today—in the other body of Congress, I would say to my colleague. The process of setting in motion these cuts to essential healthcare services begins today. We can read about it in the publications about the congressional schedule.

I look forward to working with my colleague when we can find common ground, but on this point that it is not going to happen and everybody is going to be safe, the efforts to cut these vital programs, including Medicaid, begins this morning in the other body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have 30 seconds to just respond.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would simply say that we hear this every time we look at trying to address the spending excesses in our government.

And I will just say to my colleague and to everyone: We are not going to take healthcare away from children. We are not going to take healthcare

away from adults, from seniors, or from middle-aged people. We are not going to attack the benefits that people get under Medicare.

And, frankly, we will reform some of the spending, yes, but we will not do all of the terrible things that are being spun up to try to attack this effort to control the excessive spending in our government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the fact that we are here right now—that we are even here right now—voting on this wildly unqualified conspiracy theorist to trust with one of the most life-or-death jobs, HHS Secretary, charged with protecting the health of every single American should be an affront to every Senator and the millions of Americans that will be impacted by this horrific nomination.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I implore you, think one more time, one last time, about this vote. My colleagues on the Republican side, you know the consequences of what you are doing. My colleagues on the Republican side, you know how dangerous this is. My colleagues on the other side, you know you are not putting your constituents, their health, their families first when you vote yes.

To quote my colleague the junior Senator from Texas just a few years ago, he said:

We need an expert, we need a scientist, we need someone who knows something about healthcare leading the Health and Human Services Department.

Well, which is Robert Kennedy? An expert? A scientist?

Or what about the senior Senator from Louisiana, the chair of the HELP Committee and a well-respected medical professional himself? A few years ago, here is what he said:

Previous HHS Secretaries have had a pharmaceutical industry background, been a State health commissioner, run health systems, have been governors—somebody who has had a background in actually administering the programs that HHS administers.

I ask my colleagues: Which of these qualifications does RFK possess?

You know the answer: None of them.

The question in front of this body today—the question in front of this body—is not simply to confirm RFK to run the Nation's Health Department. The question before us is very simple: Which is more important to you—the health and well-being of your constituents or blindly obeying orders, knowing full well the dangerous impacts your vote will enable?

I plead with you one more time: Rethink this issue. This is dangerous. This is wrong—very wrong.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON KENNEDY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 52 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 (Mr. SHEEHY). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider will be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Under the previous order, the cloture motion with respect to the Rollins nomination is withdrawn.

The cloture motion was withdrawn.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Rollins nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Brooke Rollins, of Texas, to be Secretary of Agriculture.

NOMINATION OF BROOKE ROLLINS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the nomination of Brooke Rollins of Texas to be Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

I met Mrs. Rollins during President Trump's first term when we worked together to pass the largest criminal justice reform legislation since the 1990s, the First Step Act.

Now, she is focusing on her agricultural roots, having grown up participating in 4-H and FFA.

I am encouraged by her attention to detail and hard work, something I am sure will serve her and America's farmers well.

Mrs. Rollins is taking on a large role, leading 100,000 employees, making policy decisions that will affect family farmers across the country, and impact the efficiency and transparency of government.

In her confirmation hearing, Mrs. Rollins assured me that she would, to the best of her ability, respond to my letters and make the Department of Agriculture a place where whistleblowers can come forward confidently.

I look forward to working with this highly capable nominee to advance policies that will help Iowa farmers, including the enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act and advocating for new markets for our ag products.

VOTE ON ROLLINS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rollins nomination?

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, 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 72, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 53 Ex.]

YEAS—72

Baldwin	Gallego	Mullin
Banks	Graham	Murkowski
Barrasso	Grassley	Ossoff
Bennet	Hagerty	Paul
Blackburn	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Hawley	Ricketts
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Britt	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Budd	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Husted	Schiff
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cotton	Klobuchar	Sheehy
Cramer	Lankford	Slotkin
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Durbin	McCormick	Warnock
Ernst	Moody	Welch
Fetterman	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Moreno	Young

NAYS—28

Alsobrooks	Kim	Schatz
Blumenthal	King	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Smith
Cantwell	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Hirono	Padilla	Wyden
Kaine	Reed	
Kelly	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). 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 action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will re-

sume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

REMEMBERING PAUL GALLO

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, it is with a sense of sadness but also an honor to celebrate the life of someone who truly made a profound impact on my home State of Mississippi: Paul Gallo. My State mourns Paul, who died January 19, 2025, after a brave fight with cancer.

Known across the airwaves as the host of "The Paul Gallo Show," Paul was far more than just a broadcaster. If there is anyone who can be considered a Mississippi icon, it is him. He earned that status over decades as a steady voice for news and opinion in my State.

I will never forget the first time I had the honor of being on "The Paul Gallo Show" as a newly elected State senator. Paul treated me with kindness, fairness, and respect, qualities he extended to everyone he encountered, whether they were politicians, movers and shakers, or simply everyday listeners. He made you feel like you were a part of every conversation, someone you could rely on and someone you could trust.

In the 1990s, Paul helped transform a longtime vision into reality with the creation of SuperTalk Mississippi, a statewide network that gave Mississippians a platform to be heard, uniting our State through shared conversation.

Paul, the son of the Mississippi Delta, was a true believer in Mississippi. He recognized its potential and its strengths, but he wasn't afraid to address its challenges head-on. He shaped the conversations that mattered to the people of Mississippi, no matter where they lived across the State.

Throughout his career, Paul was a voice for change. He spoke out on critical issues affecting our communities and held our leaders accountable. His dedication to the people of Mississippi and his unabashed commitment to doing right by them was evident in everything he did.

Beyond his broadcasting career, Paul and his colleagues at SuperTalk Mississippi became champions for the Palmer Home for Children. Their tireless efforts have raised millions of dollars to support children in need, giving them a better chance at a brighter future. Paul's compassion for the people of Mississippi, especially its children, was unwavering.

My heart goes out to his wife Patsy, their children, grandchildren, the entire SuperTalk family, and the countless listeners whose lives he touched.

Paul's impact on Mississippi will be felt for generations through the stories he shared, the people he connected with, the policies he has influenced, and the legacy he leaves behind.