

track record as a prosecutor in California, as well as Hawaii, as well as the Department of Justice, is exceptional.

He has successfully taken down drug traffickers, human smugglers, and corrupt officials. He has proven to be especially experienced in investigating and prosecuting fraud.

Mr. McDonald is a noble public servant, and I strongly support his nomination. He is going to be a dedicated fighter of fraud. America needs a fighter of fraud on the job immediately.

And let me remind you why we are here doing this in the first place. It is because in cities and States across the country, criminals are stealing staggering sums of money from hard-working American taxpayers.

The American people are being robbed, and they know it. They see waste. They see fraud. They see abuse. They see corruption. And people are sick and tired of it.

Americans are fed up with welfare criminals and the elected officials who tolerate them. Democrats in the big cities and liberal States look the other way, and the criminals know it.

Remember the fraudulent daycare center in Minnesota? No children were actually enrolled. It was a front. It was set up to syphon money from the Federal Treasury. State officials in Minnesota looked the other way, and criminals became more and more emboldened.

Democrats are complicit in turning the U.S. Treasury into an automated teller machine. The Treasury has become an ATM for crooks, for criminals, and for corruption.

The fraud epidemic in Minnesota happened when Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were in the White House. The current Governor Tim Walz is still in office today. And recall he was Kamala Harris' Vice Presidential nominee in the 2024 Presidential election. Fraud spread like wildfire on their watch.

In one particular outrageous scheme, criminals falsified diagnoses of autism. They bribed parents with thousands of dollars of government money to use their children's names on falsified documents. The records show that many parents actively negotiated to be paid even higher rates for the bribes. The parents who were in on the scams even threatened to move their children to competing fraudulent providers unless they received even more money—and these were children without autism; they didn't need treatment.

Let me show you how bad this was. In 2018, the Minnesota Medicaid Program, which was designed to help children with autism, spent a grand total of \$6 million. That was in the year 2018. Five years later, due to massive criminal fraud and as elected officials looked the other way, the pricetag ballooned from \$6 million to \$193 million. Evidence of fraud doesn't get much clearer than that.

Of course, Minnesota isn't the only liberal State with substantial fraud. There is also widespread fraud in Cali-

fornia's Medicaid Programs. CBS News just last week reported that over a third of hospice providers in Los Angeles "trigger multiple red flags for fraud." These are people who are supposed to be taking care of people in their final days of life—people with cancer and debilitating diseases. There are multiple red flags for fraud, and California officials look the other way.

A vote for Mr. McDonald is a vote to attack this fraud epidemic head-on. It is a vote to prosecute criminals, and it is a vote to protect hard-working American taxpayers.

I want to congratulate Mr. McDonald on his nomination. We need him on the job immediately, and I look forward to voting for his confirmation.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, on a separate matter, for 5 weeks now, TSA agents have not gotten paid. Most continue to show up for work anyway. These TSA agents are struggling. They need to provide for their families. But as a result of the Democrats' shutdown, some TSA agents are calling in sick or are seeking new employment.

On Sunday, 2 days ago, nearly 3,500 TSA agents were absent from work. More than 400 have quit. They have done that since the shutdown of February 13. It is worse when you look city by city. In Atlanta, GA, 42 percent of the TSA agents didn't show up for work on Sunday. In Houston, 40 percent were absent. In New York City and Philadelphia, one in four TSA agents was absent. This is the reason we see the very long lines at the airports.

Immediately funding the Department of Homeland Security is the only way to end the shutdown. We need to make sure it is funded. The Democrat shutdown is dangerous and disgraceful, but once again, Democrats are proving on this very floor that they care more about illegal immigrant criminals than they do the safety and security of the American people.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF COLIN MCDONALD

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Colin McDonald to be Assistant Attorney General for the National Fraud Enforcement Division. Before Mr. McDonald's hearing, I had many questions about this newly created division. I still don't have answers.

But one thing is clear: Mr. McDonald is more committed to scoring political points for President Trump than he is to fighting waste, fraud, and abuse—much of which is being perpetrated by this administration. Mr. McDonald supervises the so-called Weaponization Working Group, which he coled with disgraced nominee Ed Martin prior to Mr. Martin's demotion due to alleged improper handling of grand jury materials.

According to Mr. Martin, the goal of this working group is to "name" and "shame" the President's political opponents, even if they haven't committed a crime.

The working group also employs Jared Wise, who stormed the Capitol on January 6 and was charged with assault after encouraging rioters who were attacking law enforcement by yelling, "Yeah, f*** them! Yeah, kill 'em!"

During his hearing, Mr. McDonald repeatedly refused to confirm whether he ever witnessed members of the Weaponization Working Group violate the Justice Department Manual or the law. He also refused to condemn Mr. Wise's continued employment.

President Trump has more than doubled his net worth since returning to office, and fraudsters who made massive contributions to the President have regularly been rewarded with pardons. Mr. McDonald refused to condemn these and other pardons or commit to cracking down on the ongoing pay-for-play pardon scheme. He has demonstrated that he is unwilling to stand up to President Trump and his administration of grifters.

I oppose Mr. McDonald's nomination. I urge my colleagues to join me.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:10 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:03 p.m., recessed until 2:10 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF COLIN MCDONALD

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today, we are voting on Colin McDonald. He is nominated to serve as Assistant Attorney General, the Assistant Attorney General over the Justice Department's National Fraud Enforcement Division.

Historically, the President and the Attorney General have organized the Justice Department to address the pressing needs that face our Nation, and I commend President Trump and Attorney General Bondi for doing so now—right now—to address the ongoing crisis of Federal program fraud.

You think about the ongoing crisis of Federal program fraud—think Minnesota; think Medicaid fraud.

Republicans and Democrats can and should agree that fighting fraud, particularly fraud on the American taxpayer, is important work, and that is true now more than ever.

The Judiciary Committee held multiple hearings on recent fraud in Minnesota. Since then, other fraud schemes have been identified around the country. These shocking fraud schemes target Federal programs that were designed to help people with autism, to help the elderly, and to help small businesses. However, the victims

of Federal program fraud are not just the intended recipients of program funding; the American taxpayers, who entrusted us in the government with their hard-earned money, are victims as well.

The Trump nominee, Mr. McDonald, understands this, and he will fight all fraud against all victims. In his hearing, this is what Mr. McDonald committed to: “prosecute criminals who exploit the generosity of our country by stealing from taxpayer-funded programs. Every dollar stolen is a dollar that didn’t put bread on the table, that didn’t reach the hospital bed, that didn’t meet the needs identified by Congress. Fraudsters should never be allowed to rip off the United States of America.”

I agree with Mr. McDonald.

What happened in Minnesota and around the country is unacceptable, and we, as elected officials, need to support the Justice Department in stopping this fraud. Confirming Mr. McDonald today as head of the National Fraud Enforcement Division is the very critical first step.

Mr. McDonald is the right person to lead this effort. He spent his entire career in public service as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of California. As a prosecutor, Mr. McDonald handled an array of criminal offenses, and he specialized in investigating and prosecuting fraud, money laundering, unlawful transactions, and tax crimes. He has tirelessly worked to protect the rights of victims. He has never shied away from hard cases; he runs toward those hard cases. At every turn, he has advocated with candor and the highest ethical standards. In doing so, he gained the respect of his colleagues, his opposing counsel, and even the judges he appeared before.

I believe the American people will be in good hands with Mr. McDonald working on their side, and I encourage my colleagues to support this nomination.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Colin McDonald, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

VOTE ON MCDONALD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the McDonald nomination?

Mr. RISCH. 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 executive clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Graham	Moreno
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	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McCormick	Young
Ernst	Moody	
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 nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

WELCOMING ALAN ARMSTRONG TO THE SENATE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, 2 hours ago, Markwayne Mullin was sworn in as the Secretary of Homeland Security. I am grateful that he is there and is taking on that role. We finished that vote last night, and at the end of that vote last night, he walked over to his desk, which is right over there, and signed paperwork to resign from the U.S. Senate.

This morning, the Governor of Oklahoma announced his selection for the interim Senator to be able to come in. It is solely the Governor’s decision to be able to make this decision, and I think he has made a great decision on this.

The Governor signed paperwork this morning in Oklahoma and announced that he was appointing Alan Armstrong, who is the just-past president and CEO of the Williams Companies, a third-generation Oklahoman and Tulsan to be our next Senator for the State of Oklahoma.

He and his wife Shelly have been married for 40 years. They have four grown children. They have three grandchildren. He has just stepped down and retired from his position in leadership at Williams and was looking forward to spending a lot more time with grand-

children, and the Governor contacted him and said: Hey, would you, instead, consider giving the next 9 months to the United States of America and to the State of Oklahoma to be able to serve as the junior Senator for Oklahoma.

I am grateful that he said yes because I think he will do a terrific job in this role. He comes with a tremendous amount of business experience coming in, but people lose track of the fact that he was president and CEO of one of the largest natural gas and mid-stream companies in the country; in fact, one of the largest companies in the world to be able to handle the movement of clean, natural gas all over the country.

There are literally families all over America that are depending on the services that Williams provides for them every day. They may not know the name Williams, but the reason that their stove works, their heater works, or their hot water tank works is because Williams is actually providing the access to be able to get that energy to that spot at that moment.

He graduated from the University of Oklahoma years ago and graduated as a civil engineer who went to work for Williams almost four decades ago as just a civil engineer. He literally worked his way up the ranks, serving in multiple different roles in the Williams Companies until he finally attained president and CEO where he has led the company since 2011, just stepping away to, as I said, get more time with grandchildren until he got that call just about a week ago.

So I am grateful that he is coming. I am looking forward to my colleagues having the opportunity to be able to meet him and to be able to integrate him into this body of 100 Members.

He will join as rank No. 100 and will serve here through the rest of this year, but I am very grateful that he has chosen to set aside his private life to be able to step into a season of public service.

So I look forward to my colleagues, in just a few moments, getting a chance to be able to meet the newest Senator to join us, the soon-to-be Senator Alan Armstrong.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a certificate of appointment to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Senator Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma. The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate.