

chance to act on that bill today. I expect an overwhelming majority vote in favor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho.

SANCTIONS

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President and fellow Senators, I come to the floor here to support the bill we are going to vote on here pretty quickly, and that is on a Russia and Iran sanctions bill. It is no secret that this thing has been worked on for a long, long time. It is also no secret that this is a bipartisan effort—I think you heard both sides speaking about this—and there is good reason for that.

At nearly 4½ years, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has dragged on far too long. We all want to see this war end.

Now, with Russia's forces taking heavy losses on the battlefield and its economy showing signs of strain, Putin's war machine is in crisis. It is time to ramp up the pressure on Russia and finally bring this conflict to an end. To help accomplish this, this bill would impose sanctions against two of our foremost adversaries at the current time—Russia and Iran—as they deepen cooperation and coordination against U.S. interests.

Along with many provisions in this final bill, I have worked to secure language that will target Russia's illicit shadow fleet ships that are used to prop up its energy sector and fund its war against Ukraine. This has been a very, very significant, ongoing problem. If you can stop them from shipping the oil, you can stop the money flow.

This bill gives the President the tools and the leverage he needs to finally bring a lasting peace to Ukraine and work toward ending the fight in the Middle East.

For many reasons, peace and stability in Europe are in America's interests. Russian aggression threatens this stability, and it can't be tolerated.

I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation and send it to the President's desk as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

SANCTIONS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks, I commend each of my colleagues who has come to the floor to speak on the Russia sanctions bill and how important it is that we get this passed. This is a measure I have supported, and I am so pleased we are finally taking the vote and taking action on that.

FRAUD

Mr. President, what we have been hearing a lot about in our office and what Tennesseans are talking about is this issue of fraud. What we have seen is how some of these Democratic-run State governments have just gone crazy with committing fraud. There is fraud in Medicaid and immigration and elections.

Elected officials have a responsibility to prevent fraud. Voters expect them to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. They expect them to uphold the principle of "one person, one vote." Instead, we have seen Democrats put fraudsters and illegal aliens and their issues ahead of any concerns that are expressed by taxpayers and by American citizens.

We should all be grateful that President Trump and his administration are bringing this malfeasance to an end. Here are some examples:

Last week, Health and Human Services froze \$1 billion in Medicaid payments to California and Minnesota for allowing fraud to flourish in their States. Now, of course you heard the hue and cry about "This was not fair," but fraud has been persistent in their Medicaid Programs.

Under Gavin Newsom's watch, government spending in California has surged from \$209 billion a year to more than \$350 billion. Those are your tax dollars that you are sending to the Federal Government. The Federal Government sends them to California and to Minnesota, and what do they do? They waste them. They allow fraud to take up those dollars that hard-working taxpayers have earned and sent to the Federal Government.

Looking at how this Medicaid spending has exploded is unbelievable. The California State auditor has repeatedly flagged billions of these expenditures as questionable payments, including to potential fraud operations, but State Democrats have continued to push the money out the door.

The administration noted that \$221 million of the frozen funds would have gone to people with "unsatisfactory immigration status." That is illegal aliens, individuals that are not here legally.

That is the California Medicaid situation.

Governor Walz in Minnesota has similarly overseen billions of dollars in fraud—especially through their State's Medicaid Program. Fake childcare centers, fake autism therapy services, fake senior care facilities—all of it fake—billion millions for nonexistent services.

This fraud could help explain why Minnesota has the second highest per-enrollee Medicaid spending under Obama Care—the second highest.

California and Minnesota are far from alone. Dr. Oz, who serves as CMS Administrator, recently warned that Chinese organized criminal groups in New York have stolen millions of dollars through fraudulent Medicaid billings. Here is an example of what is happening in New York State: Within a single 1-mile radius in New York City, 64 adult care centers billed to Medicaid, which distributed—get this—\$2.1 billion in 1 neighborhood. That is 64 adult care centers within a 1-mile radius. These centers must be door to door—so many of them.

When I talk to Tennesseans, they cannot believe that this is tolerated,

that it is allowed to happen. Where were the people that were supposed to be in charge? Why are these criminals allowed to continue to steal from the American taxpayer? The simple answer is that Democrats have allowed these schemes to happen. For whatever reason, they just look the other way.

It is indefensible, so our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have tried to duck accountability. During a recent Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing on Medicaid fraud, just one of the committee's seven Democrat members showed up—just one. They don't want to know about it.

While encouraging fraud in government programs, blue States have opened the door to fraud in Federal elections.

Last week, New Jersey disclosed that the State registered 6,600 noncitizens to vote due to a "glitch." Among them, at least 400 cast ballots in Federal elections. This should come as no surprise. New Jersey is 1 of 14 States that do not require any ID whatsoever to vote, and it refuses to compare its voter rolls with the Federal SAVE database at the Department of Homeland Security, which verifies every person's immigration status.

States that do use the SAVE database, including Texas and Ohio, have discovered thousands of noncitizens on their rolls.

President Trump recently announced that DHS estimates that approximately 278,000 noncitizens are registered to vote nationwide, a figure that is likely an undercount because blue States refuse to cooperate with the administration's anti-fraud efforts.

While Democrats are encouraging fraud, Republicans are working to root it out. Just this month, I joined several of my Republican colleagues in launching the Senate Anti-Fraud Task Force, which will work hand in hand with the administration to examine waste, fraud, abuse in Federal programs.

I also introduced the Fraud Accountability Act to make clear that fraud counts as a deportable offense under the Immigration and Nationality Act and that any deportable offense can lead to denaturalization.

Republicans are also continuing to fight to get passed the SAVE America Act, which would require individuals to present an ID to cast a ballot and prove U.S. citizenship to register to vote. It would also require States to remove noncitizens from their voter rolls. This legislation is good old common sense. If we need to break it apart and pass it piece by piece, then that is what we should do. The goal is to get it across the finish line.

My Election Security Partnership Act, which I led alongside the late Senator Lindsey Graham, would incentivize States to submit their voter registration lists to DHS to identify ineligible voters, including noncitizens.

The era of rampant fraud is over. It is coming to an end. Republicans are delivering accountability.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

NOMINATION OF WALTER CLAYTON

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I speak today in support of Mr. Jay Clayton's nomination to be the next Director of National Intelligence.

Earlier this month, Mr. Clayton appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee, where he answered hundreds of written questions for the record and provided detailed testimony on his approach to serving in this new role. As part of these discussions, Mr. Clayton assured the committee that he would assist our efforts to return the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to its original size, scope, and mission.

He also pledged to work with the committee to secure the essential funding the intelligence community needs. Based on the shortcomings that my committee staff identified, I project that any supplemental appropriations bill or reconciliation bill must include around \$40 billion for our intelligence Agencies. I look forward to working with Mr. Clayton to meet this vital need.

Given his past professional experience, Mr. Clayton is well qualified to serve as the Director of National Intelligence. As the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, Mr. Clayton went after some of the worst of the worst national security threats. He has overseen numerous high-profile cases, including the indictment of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro and the prosecution of an Iran-backed terrorist connected to multiple attempted terror attacks in the United States. Time and again, Mr. Clayton has worked hand in glove with our intelligence Agencies and counterterrorism personnel to put these savages behind bars and keep America safe.

Based on Mr. Clayton's testimony and the many conversations I have had with him over the last few months, I can say with confidence that his reputation for leading with integrity precedes him. I am pleased to support his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of his confirmation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I speak today in opposition to the nomination of Jay Clayton to be Director of National Intelligence. He has repeated baseless conspiracy theories about American elections, refused to acknowledge who won the 2020 election, and participated in an abusive investigation of American journalists while providing false testimony to Congress about that investigation.

It has been clear for months that, under this administration, the main qualification to be DNI is the willingness to use the position to spread conspiracy theories about elections and to help Donald Trump make it harder for Americans to vote. Even before his nomination, Mr. Clayton decided he would show how eager he is to serve as Trump's election conspiracy wingman.

Now, he is the U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York. Yet we all saw him on television talking about elections in California and insisting, without any evidence, that America was doing a "terrible job" with election integrity. I was especially alarmed by his conspiracy mongering about vote-by-mail. That is how my home State of Oregon has been voting successfully for years.

On June 8, just a few days before he was nominated, Mr. Clayton was on television talking about how "one group" was using vote-by-mail "dishonestly." That is ridiculous. The first two Senators elected by mail were a Democrat and a Republican.

Vote-by-mail benefits rural voters who live far away from polling stations. Vote-by-mail benefits older people who may not be able to drive. It has never been partisan—certainly not until Donald Trump, aided by people like Jay Clayton, made it a part of the attack on American democracy.

Mr. Clayton didn't offer a shred of evidence to support his conspiracy theories, so I asked him point-blank: Who were these mythical election bandits? In his responses to written questions, he said he was only asking questions. That is the stock-in-trade for conspiracy theorists. The moment they are asked to provide some evidence—any evidence—for claims, they fall back on: I was just asking questions. That is my excuse.

It is fundamentally dishonest. It is also behavior that shouldn't be tolerated in someone responsible for providing Congress and the public assessments based on actual intelligence.

Now, as we all saw during his disastrous nomination hearing, Mr. Clayton also refused to acknowledge the simple fact about Joe Biden winning the 2020 election. Everybody knows the truth here. The only reason to avoid the question is to satisfy the Trump ego. But that is what Mr. Clayton did, signaling to Donald Trump and the whole country that he is never going to stand up to Donald Trump—not ever.

I am also deeply concerned about Mr. Clayton's role in the abusive subpoenas issued to the journalists at the New York Times. Mr. Clayton is the U.S. attorney for the Southern District. He signed the subpoenas. He is responsible for this effort to intimidate the press. He is also responsible for the numerous mistakes and errors committed by the attorneys under him, which even included a subpoena to a journalist's mother. This whole mess came out in a court hearing last week, where not only did the judge criticize the govern-

ment attorneys, but the government itself—the government itself—acknowledged its numerous errors and mistakes before eventually withdrawing the subpoenas.

All that is bad enough, but it also raises serious questions about Mr. Clayton's testimony to the Intelligence Committee that I sit on.

Eight days before that court hearing in which the government acknowledged its mistakes, Mr. Clayton testified repeatedly that the government had followed all the required procedures.

That was obviously false. The only question is whether Mr. Clayton knew it, at the time, that his testimony was false. If he didn't know, then he had no idea what his own office is doing, despite having signed the subpoena, which isn't a great justification for somebody to lead the intelligence agencies.

If he did know, then he may have willfully misled Congress. This is a vitally important question that the Senate should continue to look at, rather than rushing to confirm Mr. Clayton.

Now, there are other examples of how Mr. Clayton is willing to say anything in defense of Donald Trump. In May, he went on television and defended the decision to immunize Donald Trump and his family from a tax audit. He said: It was a "pretty good deal for the government."

Well, it was certainly a good deal for Donald Trump and the family, but it wasn't so great for everyday Americans who don't control the IRS. And it wasn't a good deal for government either.

In fact, a judge recently found that the so-called "settlement" was "improper," had "no viable basis in law or fact," and was an abdication of the government's "responsibility to zealously defend the interests of the United States."

Yet Mr. Clayton was happy to go on television and defend the corruption.

Finally, as U.S. attorney, Mr. Clayton has been the lead of the administration's investigation into Jeffrey Epstein. He was responsible for the inexcusable release of information on Epstein's victims.

As for his other actions related to the investigation in the Epstein files, he has refused to say. Someday, there will be transparency about how this administration handled the Epstein case, and Mr. Clayton's full role—his full role—is going to come out.

Jay Clayton has no business being confirmed for this role. He has repeatedly demonstrated his eagerness to support Donald Trump's conspiracy theories and corruption. He participated in the abuse of the justice system to try to intimidate the press, and he has provided false testimony to Congress during his own confirmation hearing.

Tonight, I urge Senators to oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.