

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I am pleased to say that the text of the continuing resolution has been released. It is a strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I hope it will receive overwhelming support from both parties in the Senate.

I am deeply grateful to Appropriations Chair COLLINS for her work to produce this legislation, in consultation with Members of both parties, and I also want to thank Senator MURRAY, vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, for her efforts to get this done.

I look forward to passing this bill in the next few days.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week, we will move our fifth block of civilian nominees, which includes 74 well-qualified individuals. By the end of the week, we will have cleared 95 percent of the civilian nominees who are eligible for floor consideration—95 percent.

At this same point in President Trump's first term, there were 155 unconfirmed nominees on the calendar. This year, that number is on track to be about 10. It is the best confirmation track record in a quarter century.

As I said, we will have confirmed 95 percent of the civilian nominees available for confirmation, meaning that we are doing better at this point than we were during President Obama's first term, President Trump's first term, or President Biden's.

It didn't always look like we would be able to achieve this. From the very beginning of his second term, Democrats met President Trump's nominees with a historic level of obstruction. And when I say historic, I do mean historic.

Up until extremely recently, President Trump was the only President on record—the only President on record—not to have had any civilian nominees approved by unanimous consent or voice vote. That used to be the standard way of approving these nominations.

During President George H. W. Bush's 4 years in office and President Clinton's first 4 years, both Presidents had 98 percent of their civilian nominees—98 percent—confirmed through unanimous consent or voice vote. President George W. Bush and President Obama both had 90 percent.

And then we get to President Trump's first administration. Democrats introduced an unprecedented new level of partisanship into the historically bipartisan confirmation process, forcing time-consuming votes on civilian nominees who would once have gone by unanimous consent or by voice vote.

But despite this—despite this new level of partisanship—both President Trump in his first term and President Biden had more than half of their nominees confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote.

And then we get to President Trump's current administration. As I said, until recently, he had not had one single nominee confirmed by unanimous consent or voice vote—zero. So the fact that we are standing here today with a civilian nominations calendar about to be essentially cleared is pretty impressive.

But we have been on a mission to ensure that the President has his nominees in place so that he can do the job the American people elected him to do. That included taking action to restore the Senate tradition of en bloc confirmation of largely noncontroversial nominees. And, most of all, it included putting in the work—lots of work in committees, lots of work on the floor, and lots of votes—lots and lots of votes.

That has paid off. We have confirmed 52 article III judges, 91 percent of the U.S. attorneys that have made it out of committee this Congress, 23 Cabinet members, and the list goes on.

And we are going to continue to ensure that nominees are confirmed in a timely fashion and that the President is able to have his team in place.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 910.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant executive 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. 910, Erica Schwartz, of Florida, to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Jim Banks, Bill Cassidy, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Cynthia M. Lummis, Jon Husted, John Hoeven, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, Bill Hagerty, Kevin Cramer, Chuck Grassley, Ted Budd.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE RESOLUTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider the en bloc nominations listed in S. Res. 817.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 817, the nominations listed therein are pending en bloc.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion, having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant executive 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 and the provisions of S. Res. 817 (119th Cong.), do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Executive Calendar Nos.: 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 739, 740, 746, 747, 748, 749, 757, 759, 761, 762, 764, 766, 781, 782, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 826, 832, 834, 835, 836, 837, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 899, 900, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909 en bloc.

John Thune, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Tim Sheehy, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Boozman, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Pete Ricketts, Tommy Tuberville, Alan Armstrong, Joni Ernst, Eric Schmitt, Bernie Moreno, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, John R. Curtis.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, make no mistake, Todd Blanche has no intention of stopping Trump's corruption. He has spent his career enabling it.

Instead of seeing Todd Blanche's so-called deal for the sham that it is, Senate Republicans are, once again, taking Trump's personal attorney at his word. All Blanche's deal does is accept the reality that Trump's MAGA slush fund is never getting through the courts. Blanche's so-called deal does nothing—nothing—to stop the IRS sweetheart deal that lets Trump and his family cheat their way out of tens of millions of dollars in taxes.

Let me repeat that. Blanche is still perfectly fine with giving Trump a permission slip to commit tax fraud to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

Is the Senate GOP willing to go along with Trump's tax fraud? Blanche certainly is.

Senate Republicans keep pretending that Blanche made real concessions on the slush fund. The truth is he just gave up a fight he had already lost in court.

And there is no guardrail preventing Trump and Blanche from using taxpayer dollars to give cash payouts to violent January 6 insurrectionists, MAGA billionaires, and the Trump family.

Trump won't even hide his intention to resurrect his MAGA cash rewards program. Just last night, Trump said: "A lot of people like" the slush fund. Those were his words. He said it. He said it "would be a reimbursement for the pain that" January 6 insurrectionists "suffered."

Where is the reimbursement for the economic pain Trump has inflicted on the American people with his rampant corruption and his disastrous agenda?

No one wants this slush fund, other than Trump and his cronies. There has never been a more clear-cut case of self-dealing in American history. Trump sued himself, settled with himself, and then gave himself tax immunity for life and \$2 billion to either pocket—in his own pocket—from the Federal Treasury or pass out to bad people, all at the taxpayers' expense.

Senate Republicans, if you truly care about ending this corruption, then work with us to ban it by law. Don't put the architect of Trump's grafts in charge of the Department of Justice.

(The remarks of Mr. SCHUMER pertaining to the introduction of S. 5212 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, finally, on the CR, Senate Democrats have been crystal clear: We want to fund the government, avoid a shutdown, and pass strong, bipartisan appropriations bills that deliver for the American people.

The CR released yesterday is a responsible pathway to do just that. The bill allows us to continue negotiating a

budget that won't leave working families behind. I applaud Senator MURRAY for her tireless work and her success in preventing Trump's dangerous effort to politicize Federal grants from taking effect, as we fight to block it altogether.

Throughout these negotiations, Senate Democrats are fighting for the American people. We will continue fighting for a budget that helps Americans get ahead and thwarts Trump's corrupt, costly, and chaotic agenda that is stretching Americans thin.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, when I think about the issue of public health, I remember a time in my childhood when one of my friends didn't show up for school. I asked people: Where did she go?

They shook their heads and said: Polio.

When she finally returned, she couldn't walk without heavy leg braces. I will never forget the agony I saw in her eyes.

Sadly, in my childhood, that story was common. For decades, a kid could go to school healthy and be paralyzed before the end of the day.

But suddenly—suddenly—it all changed. Dr. Jonas Salk created the polio vaccine. Dr. Sabin came up with a form that didn't require a needle. By 1979, polio was eradicated in America. A disease that would strike fear in the hearts of everyone was a distant memory.

I think there is a special place in history reserved for researchers and scientists like Dr. Salk and Dr. Sabin, who devoted their lives to saving others—people like Norman Borlaug, Edward Jenner, Madame Marie Curie, and Albert Calmette.

There is another person whose name could be on that list as well—someone who has saved millions of lives, both in America and around the world, through his lifetime of public service. His name: Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Dr. Fauci worked for the National Institutes of Health for 54 years, 38 of which he served as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. He has advised seven Presidents, of both parties, and seen our Nation through countless public health crises—from SARS to avian flu, swine flu, Zika, Ebola, and on and on.

Aside from his work against COVID-19, Dr. Fauci may be best known for his work on HIV/AIDS. Dr. Fauci's tireless efforts on HIV/AIDS, both domestically and worldwide, through the creation of PEPFAR—the President's Emergency

Plan for AIDS Relief—is the main reason why this horrible disease is no longer a death sentence. In recognition of his achievement, Dr. Fauci was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2008, our Nation's highest civilian honor, by then-President George W. Bush.

Dr. Fauci is an example of American excellence, a brilliant scientific mind, and yet the Republican Party has chosen to make this doctor who has saved countless lives a political target.

Last week, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs subpoenaed Dr. Fauci, in front of the Congress, for a hearing with the express goal of humiliating and vilifying him. For nearly 3 hours, my Republican colleagues berated, cursed, and insulted a man who has dedicated his life to protecting the health of American families.

This behavior is below the dignity of the Senate. Put simply, it was an embarrassment.

If my colleagues had genuine concern for America's public health, they would turn their attention instead to the destruction wrought by this administration's anti-science agenda.

Listen to this rollcall. Measle cases are at a 35-year high in the United States of America. Whooping cough has resurged. Our response to the hantavirus and cyclospora outbreaks has been abysmal. And hundreds of thousands of people have died due to the administration's vaccine skepticism and public health cuts.

If my Republican colleagues want to hold hearings, perhaps they should hold one on the impact of President Trump's cuts to NIH research funding, which has slowed research into heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's; or they can investigate how the FDA has lost 20 percent of its staff under this administration, deeply damaging food safety efforts. If they were truly concerned for America's health, they would hold hearings on the fact that ACA premiums are doubling for many families across the United States because of the Republicans' Big Beautiful Bill.

These are the real health crises of the day—all entirely of this administration's own making. But my Republican Senate colleagues have chosen to ignore real life-and-death issues to relitigate COVID conspiracy theories—not in an effort to find out what might have gone wrong or how to prepare for the next pandemic, instead, to try and tear down a man who has devoted his entire life to lifting others up.

Dr. Fauci deserves an apology for the way he was treated by my colleagues, and the American people deserve better than the pitiful display we saw in the Senate last Wednesday.

HEALTHCARE

Now, Mr. President, across Illinois, families are opening up their mail and confronting a painful reality: Healthcare has become very difficult to afford.