

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Attorney General.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 914, Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Attorney General.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, Katie Boyd Britt, Tommy Tuberville, Tim Sheehy, Kevin Cramer, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno, John Cornyn, Marsha Blackburn, James Lankford.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Todd Blanche's Department of Justice continues to let criminals off the hook so long as they are loyal to Donald Trump. Yesterday, Trump's DOJ forced a judge to throw out the charges against eight members of the radical extremist Oath Keepers, who were convicted of seditious conspiracy for plotting the January 6 insurrection—horrendous. Doesn't get any more un-American than this. Doesn't twist America's values into a tortured knot.

Trump already gave the insurrectionists clemency. Now he is wiping their records clean, but there is no erasing what the Oath Keepers and the rest of the mob did at Trump's command on January 6.

I saw them in this building. They were not on a tour. They were aimed at destruction to maim and even in a few cases murder. We can't afford to forget what happened that day.

Now, Trump has sent the country a clear message: There are no consequences for sedition, no punishment for attacking police, no repercussions for ransacking the Capitol to steal an election, so long as you do it in Trump's name.

No wonder his numbers are so terrible. No wonder the American people are turning against him. No one in our history has done things as bad as this.

Trump won't just give you clemency for committing a crime on his behalf; he will give you a reward. The whole purpose of Trump's \$2 billion MAGA slush fund is to funnel taxpayer dollars to the Oath Keepers and other Trump cronies. Just the other day, Trump himself defended his slush fund describing it "a reimbursement for the pain that [January 6th insurrectionists] suffered."

Donald, what pain have these insurrectionists suffered? You let them off scot-free.

Republicans don't get to yap about being the party of law and order when they are handing out pardons and cash rewards like candy to convicted cop beaters—convicted cop beaters. Do Senate Republicans want to give a promotion to Blanche, the same guy who came up with the idea of these reparations for rioters?

There is still no legal guardrail stopping Trump and Blanche from giving payouts to January 6 insurrectionists at the taxpayers' expense. That is unacceptable. The only thing these criminals deserve is a cold cell, not America's hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now Trump is going to Nevada today to tout his disastrous economic record. His going is an insult to every Nevadan reeling from higher costs.

If there is one place where Americans know how to spot a losing hand, it is Las Vegas, Donald Trump. They see your losing hand. Nevadans know better than anyone that Trump's economy has gone bust. Does Trump want to brag about how Nevadans are paying 4 bucks and 80 cents for a gallon of gasoline because of his war? Will Trump tout how more than 36,000 Nevadans have lost their health coverage because Trump cut a trillion dollars from our healthcare system to give billionaires another tax break? Nope.

While grocery prices continue rising, will Trump explain to the more than 78,000 hungry Nevadans who have lost food assistance that his policies are working exactly as intended? Or maybe Trump wants to thump his chest about the \$3,100 extra Nevadans are spending because of Trump's failed policies that have wiped out any extra tax refund they saw this year.

Trump can't bluff his way out of the economic disaster he has unleashed on the American people. Nope. He can have all the bluff and bravado and lies he wants. It is not going to wash because people are experiencing the hurt that Trump has inflicted on them.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran, Trump seems to think that opening his mouth and opening the Strait of Hormuz are the same thing. Once again, Trump is making big claims that a deal to reopen the strait is imminent. How many times have we heard that?

Whenever Trump says there is a deal, it means one of two things: Either the strait is still staying closed or it opens for a couple of days and then it closes again. None of his deals have come to fruition, and gas prices continue to rise.

At this time, there are rumors he is willing to give up even more control of the strait to Iran to open. If that is true, Donald Trump has put himself in such a difficult position in Iran, blundering his way into a war with no goal, with no preparation, with no future.

He is stuck. He is going to try to get out of it, but mark my words, he will surrender to Iran, in a sense. He will

have to sue for peace, and the Iranians will emerge stronger and America weaker. It is his only way out. Once again, Trump is doing all of these things.

Which one will it be this time, Donald, when it comes to the strait? How many days after you say the strait will open up will it close again? When are you going to get out of the way and let real diplomats negotiate an end to the war that ensures the free flow of shipping through the strait?

Americans can't fuel their cars on wishful thinking and empty promises, and Senate Democrats have now forced 13 votes on the Iran War Powers Resolutions to end Trump's disastrous war. We will keep forcing votes as long as it takes until Senate Republicans help us bring our troops home, end this war, and bring costs down.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on the CR, Senate Democrats have been unequivocal: We want to work across the aisle to keep the government open. The CR gives us the maneuvering room we need to hash out a budget that makes life more affordable for the American people and reins in the Trump administration's chaos and corruption.

Throughout these negotiations, Senate Democrats are fighting for working families. And thanks to Senator PATTY MURRAY's efforts, we have fended off Trump's harmful effort to hold hostage Federal grants that would support communities stretching from one end of the Nation to the other.

Trump has this amazing philosophy: If you are a red State, you deserve the taxpayers' money. If you are a blue State, you don't. And he totally skews our grant-giving to help his friends and to punish his enemies when it has no basis in law, fact, justice, fairness.

The American people are counting on Congress to come together and deliver, and that is what Senate Democrats are fighting to do every day.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Schwartz nomination and the en bloc nominations.

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

DEMOCRAT PARTY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today's Democrat Party has been taken over by extremists. It is happening all across the country. Extremists are winning Democrat primaries all across the country, from east to west.

The minority leader, who spoke a little earlier today, seems to be very happy about it. Just yesterday, when talking to the press, the minority leader said this. He said these extreme candidates make their party stronger.

Well, Senator SCHUMER may be thrilled with the direction that his party is taking, and now look what happened last night in Michigan. The Democrat candidate for Senate winning the primary yesterday in Michigan is truly an extremist—radical, extreme, dangerous, and, in my opinion, scary. He has been endorsed by Senator BERNIE SANDERS, and just recently he hit the campaign trail with a leftwing activist, a political activist who blamed 9/11—we are almost near the 25th anniversary of the attacks on 9/11 on the United States of America—blamed those attacks on America and the American people.

This is a Democrat Party that has a manifesto and a mantra. They have a radical set of beliefs, and they are clearly those of the Democrat nominee in Michigan.

The driving force in the Democrat Party today wants to abolish prisons. The driving force in the Democrat Party today has endorsed any and all efforts to release dangerous prisoners from the jails onto the streets of communities all across the country. The driving force in the Democrat Party is calling to defund the police. The driving force in the Democrat Party is calling to eliminate Immigration and Customs Enforcement in this country. They don't want borders, don't think we ought to have borders. They want ICE completely eliminated. Democrats want to go back to the dangerous Biden years when it comes to protecting our borders, and 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into this country. The Democrats want millions and millions more to come into America.

What do they want to do in terms of funding for these things? Well, the Democrats want to have hard-working taxpayers pay for healthcare for all the illegal immigrants who come here. Radical ideas like that were once the fringe of the Democrat Party. No longer. No, no. That fringe now controls the Democrat Party.

As a senior Senator who is a Democrat said, who sits right over there—he said it is a sign that the Democrat Party is “alive and well.” Senator SCHUMER said yesterday it makes their party stronger. It doesn't make America stronger. It makes America weaker. It makes America more vulnerable.

That is where we are today. Democrats seem willing to tear up the Constitution and tear down America. If you listen to some of these candidates, it sounds like they hate America. They want America to fail. That seems to be what they are aiming for.

Well, Republicans are not going to allow that to happen—no. We are going to continue to fight the extremists, and we are going to continue to fight for freedom, for liberty, and for continued American greatness.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Now, Mr. President, on a separate matter, Senate Republicans are confirming individuals who will keep the American people safe.

Last week, I met with Todd Blanche. He has been nominated to be the next Attorney General of the United States. I support him. He clearly is the right man for the job, and it is time for the Senate to move forward and confirm him.

Todd Blanche has led an impressive legal career. He belongs in this job. He brings to the job a decade of experience at the very Department of Justice. That includes his current service as the Acting Attorney General. Under his leadership, the Department of Justice is focusing once again on its core mission, and that is the mission of fighting crime and upholding the rule of law.

Today, Americans are safer. Murder rates have fallen dramatically under this administration. So have deaths from drug overdoses. And Mr. Blanche has fought forcefully for the safety and security of the American people.

Today, the Department is prosecuting drug cartels. It is dismantling gangs of violent criminals. Mr. Blanche has also been a key leader in Republicans' war against fraud. He helped establish a new Division in the Department of Justice to do exactly just that, and it is already, today, succeeding.

Mr. Blanche knows what it takes to lead the Department of Justice. It takes integrity. It takes accountability. And he is going to lead with both of those characteristics. That is why his nomination is supported by former Department of Justice officials, by so many attorneys general from States, and by law enforcement.

Former Attorney General Bill Barr is one such supporter. He recently praised Todd Blanche in an editorial in the Wall Street Journal. He said:

Throughout his career [Todd Blanche] has shown the personal determination, discipline and thick skin [that the] position demands.

That is exactly right. Todd Blanche is dedicated to the rule of law. He is fearless, he is focused, and he is fair. As Attorney General, he is going to provide candid advice even when it is not easy. He is going to stand up for the United States, and he will keep America safe and protect the American people. It is time to confirm him as Attorney General.

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

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

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to deliver up to 15 minutes of remarks before we proceed to the vote.

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

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, there is a lot going on in the country right now—actually, a lot going on around the world. And I rise today not to address specifically the cost-of-living challenges that so many working families are struggling with. That is certainly a topic of news these days—rightfully so. I am not here to focus on what families of deployed servicemembers must be feeling right now, although that is certainly worthy of our thoughts and consideration and empathy, particularly the family members and the loved ones of the 18 servicemembers that have lost their lives in this unauthorized war with Iran that the President has brought us into.

I want to focus on something that about a year ago was really dominating the evening news and a lot of our social media feeds—immigration, and specifically this administration's cruel, often violent tactics as part of their mass deportation agenda.

Families are still being torn apart. Tens of thousands of immigrants are currently being detained in detention centers around the country. Loved ones of those killed by Federal agents in broad daylight are also still hurting, including the family of Johan Sebastian Guerrero, the 25-year-old father and immigrant from Colombia who had work authorization, who was driving in his car last month when a Federal agent opened fire, shooting him in the head and killing him.

I hope you remember the story. It wasn't that long ago. If you followed the story, you will know that his partner and his 3-year-old daughter, still dressed in her Bluey pajamas that morning, were there at the scene because it was so close to their home.

According to witnesses, Johan's last words were:

I tried to stop.

I raise this because whenever there is a tragedy like this that happens, under this administration, we quickly hear from Department officials, from the White House, and MAGA supporters that all these victims had to do was to follow instructions, as if it was their fault they were being shot and, in some instances, killed. Well, that is exactly what Johan was attempting to do. Yet he was killed anyway.

I know we don't have all the details of exactly how this tragedy unfolded. In large part, we don't have all the details because some people say “Well, let's go to the video; let's go to the body cam footage and see exactly what happened,” but despite receiving billions and billions of taxpayer dollars, which included funding for body cameras, these officers weren't wearing any.

But there are a couple of things that we know for certain. First of all, Johan Sebastian Guerrero's daughter should still have her father. Second—and this is publicly reported—the man who took his life should never have been given a badge and a gun. And that is not just