

release the victims' information while going to great lengths to redact the names of the coconspirators.

So I ask unanimous consent that this letter from Jeffrey Epstein's survivors, detailing the grave harms of the DOJ's careless release of victims' identities, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EPSTEIN SURVIVORS ISSUE JOINT STATEMENT
CONDEMNING DOJ'S INCOMPLETE EPSTEIN
FILES RELEASE

"This latest release of Jeffrey Epstein files is being sold as transparency, but what it actually does is expose survivors. Once again, survivors are having their names and identifying information exposed, while the men who abused us remain hidden and protected. That is outrageous. As survivors, we should never be the ones named, scrutinized, and re-traumatized while Epstein's enablers continue to benefit from secrecy. This is a betrayal of the very people this process is supposed to serve.

Virginia Roberts Giuffre alone reported many abusers connected to Epstein's network, yet the public still does not have the full truth about who enabled him, who participated in his exploitation, and who has been shielded for years. Hundreds of women have come forward with additional reports like hers. The scale of this failure is staggering and indefensible.

The Justice Department cannot claim it is finished releasing files until every legally required document is released and every abuser and enabler is fully exposed. We need to hear directly from Attorney General Pam Bondi when she appears before the House Judiciary Committee on February 11. Survivors deserve answers, and the public deserves the truth.

This is not over. We will not stop until the truth is fully revealed and every perpetrator is finally held accountable. As we have always said, this is not about politics. We hope Democrats and Republicans will stand with survivors in continuing to demand the full release of the Epstein files.

We look forward to hearing from Attorney General Pam Bondi on February 11."

Annie Farmer
Ashley Rubright
AW
Danielle Bensky
Jane Doe
Jane Doe
JD
Jess Michaels
Lara Blume McGee
Liz Stein
Marijke Chartouni
Marina Lacerda
Rachel Benavidez
Sky & Amanda Roberts
Sharlene Rochard
Teresa J. Helm
Wendy Pesante

Mr. SCHUMER. Enough is enough. Congress spoke with one voice when it passed the Epstein Files Transparency Act. The deadline has long passed, and the Trump Justice Department is still breaking the law. Senate Democrats are exhausting every possible avenue to force the administration to do what it is already legally required to do: release the complete files and deliver transparency and justice, finally, to Epstein's victims. If the administration will not follow the law, which it

isn't, the Senate must act. No one, not even the President, is above the law.

The question before Senate Republicans, today, is simple: Will they enforce the law that they helped to pass or object and help keep the Epstein files hidden?

So, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 597; that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, this is another reckless political stunt designed to distract Americans from Democrats' dangerous plan to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Now, that is a move that is, No. 1, going to delay the Federal Emergency Management Agency preparedness the country needs right now. No. 2, it is going to disrupt air travel. No. 3, it is going to degrade the Coast Guard's ability to interdict deadly drugs. No. 4, it is going to make us more vulnerable to cyber attacks.

Therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I compliment the minority leader for coming forth and saying what the Senate has agreed to do, which is to force the Epstein files to be released, which must be backed up by the force of law because we know that the administration failed to release half of the paperwork—some 3 million pages. We know that they blocked out whole pages in order to disguise, apparently, the protection of powerful men they don't want drawn into this discussion.

Then they proceeded to not redact the names of victims, as the law required. Let us not forget what this entire Epstein scandal is about. It is about powerful, wealthy men grooming, abusing, and raping young women and men. That is what it is about.

I cannot understand for the life of me why the Republican leadership just objected for us to seek enforcement of the law that we passed unanimously here. Why is the Republican leadership protecting powerful men? Why are they protecting the administration allowing 3 million pages to be held on to? Why are they allowing page, after page, after page to be blacked out to protect those powerful men? Why will they not respond to the fact that when these files were released, they did exactly the opposite of the law and failed to redact information about the victims, re-victimizing so many?

This is 1,000 percent unacceptable, and it is unacceptable to our values as a nation, our values which talk about equal justice under law. That is why, by unanimous consent, we said those

files must be released. But it is meaningless if the administration simply chooses not to comply and then my Republican leadership colleagues proceed to block the ability to enforce what the Senate agreed to pursue: accountability, justice for the victims, transparency over this horrific scandal.

Mr. President, I hope my Republican colleagues will reconsider their objection because what they have just done is wrong, morally wrong and wrong under the values of equal justice under law, wrong under the values of justice for those who have been victimized, wrong under the value of accountability for the perpetrators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote.

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

NEW WORLD SCREWORM

Mr. CORNYN. I would like to talk about a topic that may seem irrelevant to the average person at first glance, but it actually affects all of us a great deal more than we might imagine. A tiny but vicious parasite known as the New World screwworm is infecting cattle across Mexico, and it is getting closer and closer to the United States by the minute. Of course, many know that Texas ranks first in the Nation for cattle production. We proudly represent nearly 15 percent of total cattle production in the United States, generating more than \$11 billion in cash receipts, so the Texas cattle industry is obviously very concerned about the spread of the New World screwworm.

This parasite lays its eggs in the wounds of warmblooded animals, particularly livestock. The larvae burrows into the openings creating infections that, left untreated, can cause animals to die within 1 week. We do not have vaccinations, unfortunately, to prevent screwworm infections. So outbreaks in cattle herds require labor-intensive daily inspections of livestock to make sure they have not been infested.

Now, some may be wondering: That sounds pretty horrific, but what does it have to do with me? Well, the truth is, this little pest, this vicious pest, touches all of our lives one way or the other. If the New World screwworm spreads to Texas infecting cattle and killing livestock, the already high price of beef will continue to increase. And, of course, as we are all focused on kitchen table issues and affordability, that is the last thing we need. That means that anyone who enjoys a steak or a hamburger will be staring at higher prices in their local restaurant or at the drive-through at their favorite fast-food chain or at the grocery store. Anyone planning a nice Valentine's Day dinner in a few weeks should listen up and perhaps budget accordingly.

Unfortunately, the New World screwworm is quickly spreading. Since 2023, there have been outbreaks of this

deadly insect in Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. Costa Rica declared the New World screwworm a national emergency in 2024. That same year, the fly made its way to Mexico which, of course, given our proximity to Mexico, has raised concerns among Texas cattle ranchers that it may soon make its way across the border and lead to an outbreak in our State and not stop there.

At the end of last year, a case of New World screwworm was reported less than 400 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Fortunately, President Trump and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins have made defeating the New World screwworm a priority. Our Federal Government's response to this threat spans multiple avenues, including emergency response plans, sterile fly production and dispersal levels, as well as targeted initiatives in surveillance and research. I have been working closely with the USDA and other stakeholders to promote these efforts, and I have introduced legislation to authorize funding to deal with these measures.

First of all, the USDA is partnering with State and local governments to ensure that the United States is prepared for a potential outbreak. This means working across Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies to update emergency response plans, ensuring that responders are trained and ready.

They are also supporting hands-on training and simulations at all levels of government to practice rapid, coordinated responses in the event of an outbreak. They are ensuring that we have effective treatments available for both animals and humans so that veterinarians and healthcare professionals can act quickly, if necessary. This parasite doesn't just affect cattle. It affects human beings, too, and it is a horrific, horrific thing.

Secondly, USDA is investing significantly in the renovation and construction of new sterile fly facilities in both the United States and Mexico to stop the screwworm. We know that the use of sterile flies was effective during the last outbreak of the New World screwworm in North America, which happened in the 1960s.

The sterile male fly mates with female flies who mate only once during their lifetime, so by releasing large numbers of sterile male flies, the population can be stopped in its tracks. This approach worked to eradicate these deadly infestations in the '60s, and I am hopeful it will work again. I am confident it will, once implemented, now in the 2020s.

The USDA is investing \$21 million to help renovate and convert an existing fruit fly facility in Metapa, Mexico. Once complete, this facility is expected to produce an additional 60 to 100 million sterile flies per week. With continued support from technical experts at USDA, Mexico expects production to begin as early as the summer of 2026.

Last November, the USDA opened a sterile fly dispersal facility in Tampico, Mexico. This facility allows USDA to disperse sterile flies aerially across northeastern Mexico, including Nuevo Leon.

In addition to revamping and developing facilities in Mexico, the USDA is also working to ensure that we have a sterile fly facility here in the United States. Planning is currently underway with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct a domestic sterile fly production facility in south Texas. This facility has a projected capacity of 300 million sterile flies per week. It will be the only U.S.-based sterile fly production facility and will work in tandem with facilities in Panama and Mexico to help eradicate this pest and protect American agriculture.

But Secretary Rollins' efforts haven't stopped there. USDA is also investing in surveillance capabilities to try to monitor the spread, as well as research to identify new solutions. The USDA has deployed over 100 traps and lures across high-risk areas in the border States and is leveraging thousands of insect traps all along the southern border. Tens of thousands of flies from traps in all locations have been submitted to our National Veterinary Services Laboratories for identification, thankfully with zero New World screwworm detections so far.

In Texas, the USDA examines all wildlife for signs of an infection. To date, more than 6,600 wild animals across 28 species have been examined—here again, thankfully, with no evidence of New World screwworm found.

Finally, the USDA has announced a New World Screwworm Grand Challenge, which will prevent the pest's northward spread and safeguard America's food supply by investing in projects that enhance sterile fly production, develop new traps and lures, and develop increased understanding of potential treatments that could be stockpiled and used here in the United States, if necessary.

So while the New World screwworm poses a direct threat to cattle ranchers, for all of us who enjoy a good hamburger or steak, I think this should be encouraging news. So the fly has yet to land here in the United States, but it is close, and we are taking active steps to prevent its continued northward spread.

I am confident that under Secretary Rollins' and President Trump's leadership, we will be prepared to meet this nasty parasite if it arrives in the United States. Texas cattle ranchers and beef lovers alike can rest assured knowing that Secretary Rollins and President Trump and the U.S. Congress are on the job.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF BRIAN CHARLES LEA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Brian Lea to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee.

Over the course of his legal career, Mr. Lea has demonstrated his clear

partisanship. In his current role with the Justice Department, he has defended the Trump administration against several lawsuits challenging the administration's grant funding policies. Federal courts have repeatedly found those policies to be arbitrary and capricious.

In private practice, Mr. Lea represented the Republican National Committee and defended tobacco companies. In addition, Mr. Lea lacks legal experience in Tennessee. He was not licensed to practice in the State until shortly before his nomination, and he has never appeared in Tennessee State or Federal court.

This nominee's record reflects how the Trump administration selects nominees based on their perceived political loyalty—and how the administration expects judicial nominees to continue to support its actions if they are confirmed to the Federal bench.

I oppose Mr. Lea's nomination and ask my colleagues to join me.

VOTE ON LEA NOMINATION

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

Ms. HASSAN. 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.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 30 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moreno	

NAYS—46

Alsobrooks	Hassan	Padilla
Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rosen
Blunt	Kelly	Sanders
Booker	Kim	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schiff
Coons	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Shokin
Durbin	Merkley	Smith
Fetterman	Murphy	Van Hollen
Gallego	Murray	
Gillibrand	Ossoff	