

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	

Warner Warren Whitehouse
Warnock Welch Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Crapo McConnell
Hirono Moran

Markey Rosen Van Hollen
Merkley Sanders Warner
Murphy Schatz Warnock
Murray Schiff Warren
Ossoff Schumer Welch
Padilla Shaheen Whitehouse
Peters Slotkin Wyden
Reed Smith

NOT VOTING—2

McConnell

Moran

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). 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.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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. 613, Justin R. Olson, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, John Cornyn, Jim Banks, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Kevin Cramer, David McCormick, Jon A. Husted, Dan Sullivan, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Justin R. Olson, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 31 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Fischer	Moreno
Barrasso	Graham	Mullin
Blackburn	Grassley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hagerty	Paul
Britt	Hawley	Ricketts
Budd	Hoeven	Risch
Capito	Husted	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young

NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper
Baldwin	Duckworth	Hirono
Bennet	Durbin	Kaine
Blumenthal	Fetterman	Kelly
Blunt Rochester	Gallego	Kim
Booker	Gillibrand	King
Cantwell	Hassan	Klobuchar
Coons	Heinrich	Lujan

out power and turning homes into freezers. The results—specifically directed at civilians, directed at mothers and children—have been deadly. Putin knows that he has failed to achieve his objectives on the battlefield, so he continues trying to achieve it through civilian torture—even today.

Indeed, Putin has failed in his two overriding goals. First of all, he has not weakened NATO. Under Putin's watch, NATO has expanded and awakened. Secondly, he has not brought Ukraine into Russia's orbit. Ukraine and its people have overwhelmingly moved philosophically further from Russia and toward the civilized democracies of this world.

Putin is failing, but he still peddles the lie that Russian victory is right around the corner. And some American voices are repeating this misinformation. They are echoing this. And we have heard this for years. Yet, in spite of his years of failure, Vladimir Putin persists for the moment in killing Ukrainians and causing the deaths of Russians and his allies.

We must show him it is time to stop, and that is what I am urging our government to do and this Senate to do. The West should unite around security guarantees and a framework for a just end to this war.

NATO will continue purchasing American-made weapons for Ukraine. The United States can and should get Ukraine more offensive and defensive aerial capabilities. Congress should take up the Russian sanctions bill. We know it has overwhelming support on this side of the aisle, on that side of the aisle, and at the other end of the building. What are we waiting for? Let's do it.

Secretary Hegseth and I have worked together to expedite weapons development. Already, we are seeing progress there. This week, the U.S. Air Force live-tested a new, low-cost, air-launched cruise missile called ERAM, and we did so just 16 months after the initial contract—impressive. We can do better than that, but that is impressive. The missiles are now headed to Ukraine. We continue to work to stand up a pipeline of novel capabilities, built by American industry and built by American manufacturing workers, with which we can arm our ally Ukraine.

For years, the Russian military has flung itself against the rock of a country it covets and a country it dwarfs in size but moving more slowly than nearly any military in a century. We need to show Vladimir Putin that it is time to stop. We must not let him off the mat. We must increase the pressure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ADVANCED AI CHIPS

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to take up and pass S. Res. 598.

Last May, President Trump announced a deal to green-light several

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Justin R. Olson, of Indiana, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, this month we will reach the fourth anniversary of Vladimir Putin's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine.

As we all know, Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, a KGB alumnus, an oppressor of the Russian people, and we also are finding out more and more that he is really bad at fighting a war.

For 4 years, Putin has insisted that Russian victory is just around the corner. That is his dream, but it is a lie. The facts show that Putin is nowhere close to winning. Here are the facts: During the year 2024, Russia captured 0.6 percent of Ukrainian territory. Last year, it captured 0.8 percent. So 2 years of massive, tragic bloodshed caused by Vladimir Putin has resulted in 1.4 percent of enemy territory taken.

So he is bad at tactics, he is bad at strategy, but he sent millions of Russian men into battle in his unprovoked and illegal invasion, inflicting 1.2 million casualties on his own people, on his own Russian people—1.2 million Russian casualties. He may have at one time been a successful KGB torturer, but he is a failure at today's attempt to overrun his neighbor by force.

The Russian dictator is actually breaking records for his inability to achieve battlefield gains. Since 2024, his most significant offensives have scraped a meager 16 yards to 75 yards of ground per day—less than the length of a football field. This is among the slowest military campaigns since World War I. This would be embarrassing if it weren't so tragic for the civilized world and so tragic for the Russian people, not to mention the Ukrainian people.

Since Putin's military campaign is failing, he has now doubled down on his attacks on civilians—armed civilians. As we all know, a bitter cold snap has descended on Ukraine, and the maniacal Vladimir Putin has turned this winter into a weapon. He has systematically targeted energy sites, wiping