

simple statement: When we help American citizens, we expect that money to stay in this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NOMINATION OF JOHN DELEEUEW

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to speak about the opposition to the nominee before us that we are going to vote on soon, Mr. John DeLeeuw. It is not necessarily about Mr. DeLeeuw's qualifications; it is about the dangerous precedent we are making as we confirm someone to replace an independent NTSB board member who was removed by the President without cause, while they are actively challenging this removal in court. And it is about a needless jeopardizing of public confidence in NTSB's critical work, which I will speak about in a minute, particularly as it relates to the House not taking up the ROTOR Act on suspension yesterday, a bill that we passed by 100 votes here in the U.S. Senate.

It has been less than 2 years since this body unanimously confirmed Alvin Brown to be on the NTSB. The Senate's overwhelming support for Mr. Brown should not be surprising. As a former mayor of Jacksonville, FL, and a former senior adviser to the Department of Transportation, Mr. Brown's background and experience qualified him to be on the NTSB.

My colleague Senator SCOTT of Florida introduced Mr. Brown at his nomination hearing before the Commerce Committee, praising his "excellent record of service" and noting that he would "do excellent work on behalf of the American people in this role." Senator SCOTT's prediction that Mr. Brown would focus on the NTSB and safety—shortly after he was sworn in, he began conducting critical work on the NTSB investigation into the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which killed six people and caused billions of dollars in damage.

He was also leading the NTSB response to the March 13, 2025, highway accident on Interstate 35 in Austin, TX, that killed 5 people and injured 11 more. But seeking to unravel Congress' will and insert its own will, even though we voted on this gentleman and he is serving the NTSB focusing on safety, the White House basically is trying to remove Mr. Brown and replace him with Mr. DeLeeuw. As I stated earlier, Mr. Brown has filed a lawsuit challenging his removal. This remains in the courts and pending; the Supreme Court is prepared to rule this year on this decision to bring legal clarity to Mr. Brown's case.

So I ask my colleagues, why are we rushing to confirm Mr. DeLeeuw to a seat that isn't even really vacant under current law? Why would we needlessly create confusion, especially when the Supreme Court is expected to rule on this issue very soon? And why would the Senate allow the executive branch to undermine the confidence and the

independence of the National Transportation Safety Board?

As we pointed out, moving ahead with this nomination before us—Mr. DeLeeuw's—is especially problematic when the White House has still not nominated a single member of the opposing party to any independent board or commission, including the NTSB. I guarantee you, that is not the way the FTC, the FCC, the NTSB should run. You are undermining the confidence in these Agencies and the fact that we have both Democrats and Republicans who are supposed to serve on them.

This is not about might makes right. This is about policy and expertise and having both Democrats and Republicans on commissions so that you can continue the focus of bipartisan adherence to these principles that each Agency is supposed to profess confidence in and move forward on. So do we want an FCC that is driven just purely by politics, an FCC that is purely driven by the President's will or desire? Do we want an NTSB decided by the President of the United States? I guarantee you we don't because, yesterday, he couldn't deliver a vote on the House floor that would have gotten us the ROTOR Act—100 votes in the U.S. Senate and he couldn't do that. But he is going to tell us over our processes and over historical precedent about how Democrat and Republican nominees should be appointed. He is throwing the Democrats off, appointing his own person, and then basically leaving into question how strong is the NTSB really going to be on safety.

Congress established the NTSB in law as an independent Agency. It reauthorized the Agency as recently as 2024. So, if all of a sudden, everybody here didn't want to have appointments to the NTSB by the normal process, well, you had a big chance to say you didn't like that, but nobody did. In fact, we renewed it, so we should now not be rewarding the President's unlawful removal of Vice Chair Brown by rushing to confirm a nominee in a position that is not really vacant. I call on my Republican colleagues not to go down this path. Instead, uphold the constitutional duty to provide checks and balances and protect the American people.

ROTOR ACT

Mr. President, now, as I was mentioning—yesterday—an unbelievable failure of the House of Representatives to pass what this body did as one of the elements in response to the horrific crash on the Potomac when an Army helicopter collided with a commercial jet—carrying 67 individuals total that were involved in this accident. No one survived. So the Senate, starting this work, has really pushed the ROTOR Act out with 100 votes. It literally said the military has to, in this instance, provide the same kind of signaling and information that would allow this airspace to work—100 votes out of the U.S. Senate. And as my colleague Senator CRUZ from Texas tried to get this legislation passed as part of the NDAA, ev-

erybody said, "OK. You know what? We'll do this, but we just don't want to do it on this NDAA bill."

OK. That should have raised suspicion right then and there because, if this is one of the recommendations by the NTSB—oh, actually, it is not one of the recent recommendations of the NTSB. This recommendation has been out of the NTSB for 20 years—20 years, the NTSB has been saying that they believe that this kind of important pilot awareness in airspace, around airports, needs to be better coordinated.

And so for 20-plus years now, the NTSB has been making this recommendation, and smartly, after the tragic accident that took 67 lives, we passed legislation out of here—100 votes—and my colleague Senator CRUZ was promised by the Speaker that he would get this on the consent calendar. Oh, so yesterday, that is what happened—a vote in the House of Representatives on the consent calendar. That means there is not really opposition, and you can just get two-thirds of the body and get the bill expedited, and it would have gone to the President's desk.

But, no, that is not what happened yesterday. At the eleventh hour, people tried to subvert the will of the families that were there to talk about safety, subvert the NTSB from doing its job and advocating on behalf of the ROTOR Act—and all of a sudden, after a vote was called—closed, quickly—one vote short, this bill did not make it to the President's desk.

So I am calling on Speaker JOHNSON to get the 26 Members—who were unable to participate in this vote because of weather in the Northeast—to allow them to come back, schedule another vote, and allow the U.S. House of Representatives to do its job. Get the ROTOR Act onto the President's desk so he can sign it, and we can get safety. And let's move the other reforms that have to happen to the FAA so that we can ensure that our airspace is safe.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). 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. 647, John DeLeeuw, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2026.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Ted Budd, Bernie Moreno, Shelley Moore Capito, Todd Young, Ted Cruz, Roger Marshall, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, John R. Curtis, Steve Daines, Mike Lee, Joni Ernst, Jon A. Husted, Jim Banks, Rick Scott of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory

quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of John DeLeeuw, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2026, 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 Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 40 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Lujan	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock
Galleo	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—5

Fischer	Paul	Wicker
Hassan	Whitehouse	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator BANKS and I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each prior to the scheduled recess.

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

IOWA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, last week, I started my 46th executive year of holding meetings in each of Iowa's 99 counties. During the Q&A's in 13 southwest Iowa counties, we discussed the

need to lower prescription drug costs by reining in pharmacy benefit managers, PBMs for short. We also spoke about the Working Families Tax Cut Act, which puts more money back into Iowans' pockets. For the average Iowa household, that is \$2,063 of your hard-earned money back to you. I look forward to hearing directly from more Iowans throughout the year as I continue with all the meetings in each of our 99 counties.

On February the 3rd, President Trump signed into law the fiscal year 2026 funding package that included a very important priority of mine, legislation called Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act. This law is meant to simplify the process so that kids with complex medical needs can get the specialized healthcare that they need in a timely manner.

I would like to spend a few minutes explaining the importance of this new law and how we got to this point. Kids with complex medical needs often face redtape, face delays, and face frustrations when getting their specialized medical care.

The Federal Government defines kids with complex medical needs as having a life-limiting illness, a rare pediatric disease, or one or more chronic conditions that impact multiple organ systems and reduce cognitive or physical abilities.

This can be kids with cancer, cystic fibrosis, or congenital heart disease. These kids, on average, see 5 to 6 specialists and up to as many as 20 or 30 allied health professionals. You can see, managing these types of medical needs takes patience and help because parents are often overwhelmed at the scope of that care and overwhelmed how to navigate the system to get that care for their special needs kids.

The specialized medical care for kids with complex medical needs tends to come from only a few providers, and here is the rub: often out of State at a pediatric hospital.

This requires coordination with in-state and out-of-State providers and State Medicaid officials to allow this care to happen. The process to get care is difficult and full of redtape, delaying care that these kids desperately need and, in some cases, not receiving care at all.

To solve this problem, in 2018, I introduced the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care bill. Our aim was simplification of this redtape process. This law will give States the ability to use a streamlined screening and enrolling process for out-of-State specialized pediatric care providers that need to enroll in the State's Medicaid Program. We do this while also retaining safeguards to protect program integrity.

When I first started on this law in 2018 during the 115th Congress, we had eight bipartisan sponsors. In this, the 119th Congress, it garnered 46 bipartisan sponsors and became one of the most cosponsored Medicaid bills before the Finance Committee.

Over the past few years, we built support from well over 200 organizations dedicated to pediatric care. I also worked with my colleagues, including those on the Finance Committee, and I want to give a special shout-out to Chairman CRAPO of the Finance Committee for his partnership in getting this law passed.

The passage of the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act is a win for kids with complex medical needs and also very helpful to the families that care about their children.

It is a win for kids like Charlie, a brain tumor survivor who also spoke before the Finance Committee in 2023 about the importance of this legislation.

It is a win for kids like 3-year-old Edwens from Perry, IA, whose family travels out of State so he can receive pediatric gene therapy at the M Health Fairview Hospital in Minnesota. Only a few medical centers provide this kind of care in the country for Edwens' rare disease. There are many other kids whose lives will improve because of this law.

Another person I can think of when I talk about this law is the late Katie Beckett. Katie was from Cedar Rapids, IA. She was born in 1978, and at 5 months, she contracted a brain infection that required a ventilator to breathe.

After many years in the hospital, Katie was unable to leave because Medicaid rules didn't allow her to receive care outside of the hospital, even though it was possible for her to get care at home being with family and, of course, having this treatment at home be very cost effective to the taxpayer. In the early 1980s, President Reagan heard about Katie Beckett's story, and he removed redtape for Katie through a Medicaid waiver.

I had a colleague from Iowa in the House of Representatives at that time, Congressman Tom Tauke of Iowa, who was the main mover to get the President to grant this waiver, and I will never forget Tom Tauke's hard work in this area.

Since then, Katie Beckett waivers have resulted in more than a half a million disabled kids being able to receive care at homes with their families rather than being forced into hospitals and institutions.

This law also established the Family-to-Family Health Information Centers. Today, these centers in each State are helping families and their kids navigate the complex system of services and support. This is the kind of empowerment Washington ought to promote—public policy that illuminates opportunities instead of keeping people in the dark.

In my time in the Senate, we have seen medical advancements for kids with complex medical needs, and Congress has responded by giving these kids and their families the proper medical resources. One of these resources was the Family Opportunity law that