



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

No. 15

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 24, 2025.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

Dr. Benny Tate, Rock Springs Church, Milner, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Our most kind and gracious Heavenly Father, I simply want to begin by thanking You for this wonderful opportunity to pray in this sacred place.

Lord, as we come before You today, we thank You for Your faithfulness to our Nation for almost 250 years. The Scripture teaches us blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

God, I thank You for Your presence, preservation, and protection throughout these many years. May we always remember that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

The nation that is a city upon a hill is truly salt and light to the world, making whatsoever and whosoever around them better and brighter.

Lord, our only hope is You. May everyone serving and every Member under this Capitol dome heed the words of President Abraham Lincoln who simply prayed and said:

I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.

Our only hope, God, is through the power of Your spirit. Only there can our land be healed.

We love You, we exalt You, we praise You, and we pray this prayer certainly respecting all faiths, but we pray this prayer this morning in the name above every name, and that is the name of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, the lamb of glory.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 13 of rule I, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE HOUSE DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 4(b) of House Resolution 5, One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members to the House Democracy Partnership:

Mr. BUCHANAN, Florida, Chair
Mr. SMITH, Nebraska
Mr. LAHOOD, Illinois
Mr. DUNN, Florida
Mr. FITZPATRICK, Pennsylvania
Mr. HERN, Oklahoma
Ms. TENNEY, New York
Mrs. LUNA, Florida
Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida

Mr. STEIL, Wisconsin
Mr. KELLY, Pennsylvania

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 4 of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-196), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission:

Mr. ADERHOLDT, Alabama
Ms. SALAZAR, Florida

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE UNITED STATES GROUP OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 1928a, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Mr. TURNER, Ohio, Chair
Mr. DUNN, Florida
Mrs. WAGNER, Missouri
Mr. FITZPATRICK, Pennsylvania
Mr. GUTHRIE, Kentucky
Ms. VAN DUYNE, Texas
Mr. CONNOLLY, Virginia

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2(a) of the National Cultural Center Act (20

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

U.S.C. 76h(a)), amended by Public Law 107-117, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

Mr. MCCAUL, Texas
Ms. LETLOW, Louisiana
Mrs. BEATTY, Ohio

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the revised statutes (20 U.S.C. 42-43), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution:

Mr. SMITH, Nebraska
Mr. GIMENEZ, Florida
Ms. MATSUI, California

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2 of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715a), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission:

Mr. WITTMAN, Virginia

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE COMMISSION ON REFORM AND MODERNIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 9803(d)(1)(C) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law No. 117-263), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State:

Mr. MILLER, Ohio

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIR OF THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 4(c) of House Resolution 5, One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member to serve as Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission:

Mr. SMITH, New Jersey

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE JAPAN-UNITED STATES FRIENDSHIP COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2903, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Japan-United States Friendship Commission:

Mr. SMITH, Nebraska

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6913, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

Mr. SMITH, New Jersey, Co-Chair

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE BRITISH-AMERICAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276L, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. LATTA, Ohio, Chair

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 9455(a), clause 10 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Air Force Academy:

Mr. PFLUGER, Texas
Mr. CRANK, Colorado

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 14 U.S.C. 1903(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy:

Mrs. MCCLAIN, Michigan
Mr. RUTHERFORD, Florida

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's ap-

pointment, pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 51312(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy:

Mr. VALADAO, California
Mr. SUOZZI, New York

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 7455(a), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy:

Mr. WOMACK, Arkansas
Mrs. BICE, Oklahoma

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 8468(a), and the order of the House of January 3, 2025, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy:

Mr. ELLZEY, Texas
Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 13 of rule I, the House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. on Tuesday, January 28, 2025.

Thereupon (at 9 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 11 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-142. A letter from the Under Secretary, Comptroller, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter reporting violations of the Antideficiency Act, for FY 2021 and 2022, National Guard Personnel, Army (NGPA), Army Case 23-01, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1351; Public Law 97-258, Sept. 13, 1982; (96 Stat. 926); to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-143. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the National Health Service Corps Report to Congress for 2023, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 254i; July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title III, Sec. 336A (as amended by Public Law 107-251, Sec. 307(b)); (116 Stat. 1649); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-144. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration's Report to Congress on the Mental Health Crisis Response Partnership Pilot Program, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 290bb-37(d)(2); July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title V, Sec. 520F (as amended by Public Law 117-328, div. FF, title I, Sec. 1122(a)); (136 Stat. 5651); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-145. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Calendar Year 2020-2021 Scientific and Clinical Status of Organ Transplantation Report, in accordance with Section 376 of the Public Health Service Act, as codified at 42 U.S.C. 274d; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-146. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Report to Congress on Promoting the Integration of Primary and Behavioral Health Care (PIPBHC) Grant Program, FY 2023; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-147. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Health Resources and Services Administration's Report to Congress, Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program for 2023, pursuant to section 781(h) of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-148. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Report to Congress: Suicide Prevention Resource Center FY 2023-2024, pursuant to Section 520C(d) of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-149. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Report to Congress on Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant Program, FY 2023, pursuant to Section 520E-2(f) of the Public Health Service Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-150. A letter from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Controls on Certain Laboratory Equipment and Related Technology to Address Dual Use Concerns about Biotechnology [Docket No.: 250108-0012] (RIN: 0694-AJ95) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-151. A letter from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Implementation of Additional Due Diligence Measures for Advanced Computing Integrated Circuits; Amendments and Clarifications; and Extension of Comment Period [Docket No.: 250108-0013] (RIN: 0694-AJ98) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-152. A letter from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the Office's Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2024, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1115(b); Public Law 111-352, Sec. 3; (124 Stat. 3868); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

EC-153. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting notification that the Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management

(BLM), is proposing to accept a gift of lands in Washington County, Utah, from The Wilderness Land Trust, pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1135(a); Public Law 88-577, Sec. 6(a); (78 Stat. 896); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-154. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting FY 2018 and 2019 Report to Congress on the Administration of the Indian Health Service Tribal Self-Governance Program, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 5394; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-155. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Giddings, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2367; Airspace Docket No.: 24-ASW-17] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received January 17, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-156. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Pontiac, IL [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2366; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AGL-24] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received January 17, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-157. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Gaylord, MI [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2369; Airspace Docket No.: 24-AGL-25] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received January 17, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-158. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revocation of Class E Airspace; Follett, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2024-2431; Airspace Docket No.: 24-ASW-19] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received January 17, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-159. A letter from the Manager, Legal Litigation and Support, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extension of Compliance Date To Designate a U.S. Agent for Service for Individuals With Foreign Addresses Who Apply for Certain Certificates, Ratings, or Authorizations [Docket No.: FAA-2023-1194; Amt. 3-3A] (RIN: 2120-AL85) received January 17, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-160. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison, Office of the Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Certain Partnership Related-Party Basis Adjustment Transactions as Transactions of Interest [TD 10028] (RIN: 1545-BR07) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-161. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final regulations — Classification of Digital Content Transactions and Cloud Transactions [TD 10022] (RIN: 1545-BM41) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-162. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final regulations — Guidance under Section 2801 Regarding the Imposition of Tax on Certain Gifts and Bequests from Covered Expatriates [TD 10027] (RIN: 1545-BJ43) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-163. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Update on Application of Section 530 (Rev. Proc. 2025-10) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-164. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Department's IRB only rule — I.R.C. Section 3509—Determination of Employer's Liability for Certain Employment Taxes (Rev. Rul. 2025-3) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-165. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Office of Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final regulation — Resolution of Federal Tax Controversies By the Independent Office of Appeals [TD 10030] (RIN: 1545-BP72) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-166. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Section, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Department's final rule — Rules Regarding Certain Disregarded Payments and Dual Consolidated Losses [TD 10026] (RIN: 1545-BQ72) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-167. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Micro-captive Listed Transactions and Micro-captive Transactions of Interest [TD 10029] (RIN: 1545-BQ44) received January 22, 2025, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-168. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Report to Congress on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Section 1332 State Innovation Waivers, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 18052(a)(4)(C); Public Law 111-148, Sec. 1332(a)(4)(C); (124 Stat. 203); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BRECHEEN (for himself, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. GILL of Texas, Mr. OGLES, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mrs. HINSON, Mr. ROSE, Mr. PALMER, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. GUEST, and Mr. GOSAR):

H.R. 719. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to limit demonstration

projects related to abortion under Medicaid and CHIP; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BRECHEEN (for himself, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. OGLES, and Mrs. HARSHBARGER):

H.R. 720. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit treatment of certain distributions and reimbursements for certain abortions as qualified medical expenses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BUCHANAN (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, Mr. CAREY, Mr. LAWLER, Ms. CHU, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. GOMEZ):

H.R. 721. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the adjusted gross income limitation for above-the-line deduction of expenses of performing artist employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURLISON (for himself, Mr. STRONG, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, Mr. BOST, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. BRECHEEN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. CLINE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. ISSA, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. GUEST, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. COLLINS, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. MCCORMICK, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. CRANE, Mr. HARRIS of Maryland, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. ESTES, Ms. FOXX, Mr. EZELL, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. FULCHER, Mr. ELLZEY, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. BIGGS of Arizona, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. OGLES, Mr. CLOUD, Mr. OWENS, Mr. FALLON, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. MESSMER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLYDE, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ROSE, Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. BIGGS of South Carolina, Mr. MOORE of West Virginia, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. MAST, Mr. PALMER, Mr. CRANK, and Mr. MCGUIRE):

H.R. 722. A bill to implement equal protection under the 14th article of amendment to the Constitution for the right to life of each born and preborn human person; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COLE (for himself, Ms. FOXX, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. CARTER of Texas, and Mr. MANN):

H.R. 723. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to prohibit a State from receiving or using funds or certain donations from private entities for the administration of an election for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. DAVIDSON (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. MILLS, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. OGLES, Mr. PALMER, Mr. PERRY, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. VAN DREW, Mr. CLYDE, Ms. GREENE of Georgia,

Mr. GILL of Texas, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. FALLON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina, Mr. MCGUIRE, Ms. FEDORCHAK, Mr. CLINE, Mr. FRY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. ROSE, and Mr. MASSIE):

H.R. 724. A bill to require the Congressional Budget Office to make publicly available the fiscal and mathematical models, data, and other details of computations used in cost analysis and scoring; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. DOWNING (for himself and Mr. ZINKE):

H.R. 725. A bill to take certain mineral interests into trust for the benefit of the Crow Tribe of Montana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DOWNING (for himself and Mr. ZINKE):

H.R. 726. A bill to amend the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010 to make improvements to that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. SELF, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. ELLZEY, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. BABIN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, and Mr. MOOLENAAR):

H.R. 727. A bill to amend title IV of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit sale or transactions relating to human fetal tissue; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GARAMENDI (for himself, Mr. TURNER of Texas, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. ANSARI, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CORREA, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, and Mrs. HAYES):

H.R. 728. A bill to amend the Head Start Act to include TANF, SSI, SNAP, WIC, and federal housing assistance as eligible public assistance; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina (for himself, Mr. CLYDE, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. GILL of Texas, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. CLOUD, Ms. HAGEMAN, Mr. DAVIDSON, and Mr. ONDER):

H.R. 729. A bill to prohibit chemical abortions performed without the presence of a healthcare provider, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HOULAHAN (for herself and Mr. BAIRD):

H.R. 730. A bill to coordinate Federal research and development efforts focused on modernizing mathematics in STEM education through mathematical and statistical modeling, including data-driven and computational thinking, problem, project, and performance-based learning and assessment, interdisciplinary exploration, and career connections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. BACON, and Mr. LAMALFA):

H.R. 731. A bill to exempt hazardous fuel reduction activities from certain environmental requirements for a 10-year period; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. JACOBS (for herself, Mr. WHITESIDES, Ms. FRIEDMAN, and Ms. RIVAS):

H.R. 732. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to implement certain recommendations made by the Comptroller General with respect to disaster recovery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. KIM (for herself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BURCHETT, and Mr. LAWLER):

H.R. 733. A bill to provide for a review of sanctions with respect to Hong Kong; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MOORE of Alabama:

H.R. 734. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 with respect to the issuance of quality control guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. MOORE of West Virginia (for himself, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, Mr. COLLINS, Mr. MCDOWELL, Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. JACK, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. RULLI):

H.R. 735. A bill to authorize the President to take certain actions relating to reciprocal trade, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. NUNN of Iowa (for himself, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Mr. EMMER, and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 736. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to modify the deadline for filing beneficial ownership information reports for reporting companies formed or registered before January 1, 2024; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. NUNN of Iowa (for himself and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina):

H.R. 737. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to issue reports with respect to extraordinary measures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SALINAS (for herself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. VARGAS, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. TLAIB, and Mr. POCAN):

H.R. 738. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 739. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to expand the use of salad bars in schools; to the Committee on Education and Workforce.

By Mr. DUNN of Florida (for himself, Mr. OGLES, Mr. RULLI, and Mr. MESSMER):

H.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Phasedown of Hydrofluorocarbons: Management of Certain Hydrofluorocarbons and Substitutes Under the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act of 2020"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H. Res. 65. A resolution reaffirming the freedom to decide and expressing continued support for medication abortion access; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MENG (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. NORTON, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. LIEU, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CASE, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. OMAR, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. COHEN, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H. Res. 66. A resolution affirming the role of the United States in improving access to quality, inclusive public education and improving learning outcomes for children and adolescents, particularly for girls, around the world; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. TONKO, Ms. BONAMICI, and Ms. NORTON):

H. Res. 67. A resolution recognizing the roles and the contributions of Americas Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and their critical role in providing quality health care for the public and the Nation's Armed Forces for more than 150 years and through multiple public health emergencies and beyond; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. ANSARI, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AMO, Mr. AUCHINCLOSS, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CASTEN, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. CHU, Mr. CISNEROS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CORREA, Mr. COSTA, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. CROW, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DEXTER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. ELFRETH, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. FOSTER, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACOBS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. IVEY, Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LATIMER, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MAGAZINER, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. MCBATH, Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGARVEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MENG, Mr. MORELLE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. OMAR, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr.

QUIGLEY, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Ms. ROSS, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. STANTON, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. SUBRAMANYAM, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. TONKO, Mr. TORRES of New York, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WHITESIDES, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. KHANNA, and Mr. MIN):

H. Res. 68. A resolution expressing strong disapproval of the President's announcement to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. THANEDAR (for himself, Mr. FALLON, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. KIM, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mrs. MCIVER, Mr. MULLIN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. ROSS, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. LAWLER, and Mr. LATIMER):

H. Res. 69. A resolution celebrating Hindu Americans, condemning attacks on Hindu places of worship, Hinduphobia, and anti-Hindu bigotry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. BRECHEEN:

H.R. 719.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BRECHEEN:

H.R. 720.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BUCHANAN:

H.R. 721.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1 section 8

By Mr. BURLISON:

H.R. 722.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section VIII of the United States Constitution

By Mr. COLE:

H.R. 723.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 4, Clause 1

By Mr. DAVIDSON:

H.R. 724.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Constitutional citation: Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: "Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof."

By Mr. DOWNING:

H.R. 725.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. DOWNING:

H.R. 726.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida:

H.R. 727.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress is granted the authority to introduce and enact this legislation pursuant to Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 728.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina:

H.R. 729.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the authority to extend protection to unborn children and their mothers under the Commerce Clause of Article 1, Section 8. This authority also comes from the Equal Protection Clause and Due Process Clauses of Section 1 and the Enforcement Clause of Section 5 of the 14th Amendment.

By Ms. HOULAHAN:

H.R. 730.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 8 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 731.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. JACOBS:

H.R. 732.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mrs. KIM:

H.R. 733.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. MOORE of Alabama:

H.R. 734.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. MOORE of West Virginia:

H.R. 735.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. NUNN of Iowa:

H.R. 736.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. NUNN of Iowa:

H.R. 737.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of

the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. SALINAS:

H.R. 738.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 739.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. DUNN of Florida:

H.J. Res. 30.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 45: Mr. NORMAN.

H.R. 248: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, and Mrs. HAYES.

H.R. 469: Mr. LAWLER.

H.R. 649: Ms. MALOY.

H.R. 703: Ms. FEDORCHAK.

H. Res. 63: Mr. CLINE.



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 171

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

No. 15

Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Hegseth, of Tennessee, to be Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today is the 52nd annual March for Life right here in the Nation's Capital. Folks from all over the Nation and world are in Washington to offer a joyful witness to the beauty and dignity of every human person. They will march in the cold in solidarity with babies in the womb. They will march in solidarity with mothers who deserve better than abortion—mothers who deserve love, support, and encouragement. They will march with a hope that the day is coming when all people will see babies as the blessing they are, the day when abortion is unthinkable. The signs the marchers carry reveal the hearts of each one.

A popular sign each year reads "Love them both." The pro-life movement desires to affirm and restore the bond between mother and child. This sacred bond exists even before a baby is born. So I say thank you to the pro-life marchers. I say thank you for your faithful example of what it means to be pro-life. God bless you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KRISTI NOEM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, over the next couple of days, the Senate will consider two more of the President's nominees: Kristi Noem to be Secretary of Homeland Security and Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense.

A former House Member and current Governor of the great State of South Dakota, Kristi brings both experience and commitment to her new role.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Department of Homeland Security right now is securing our Nation's border. Four years of recordbreaking illegal immigration at our southern border has left our country vulnerable to a whole host of security concerns, from terrorist entries to cross-border criminal activity, like drug trafficking.

Fixing this crisis and restoring respect for the rule of law is one of President Trump and Republicans' top priorities, and it is going to require a decisive and committed leader at the Department of Homeland Security. I believe Kristi has everything it takes to undertake this task.

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

We are also considering the nomination of Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense. A veteran of the Army National Guard who served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Hegseth will bring a warrior's perspective to the role of Defense Secretary and will provide much needed fresh air at the Pentagon. Gone will be the days of woke distractions. The Pentagon's focus will be on warfighting. Mr. Hegseth will concentrate on restoring American strength and repairing the deficiencies in our readiness.

As our first President said more than 200 years ago, "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace." In a world that has grown increasingly unstable over the past few years, our priority has to be ensuring that the U.S. military is prepared to meet and defeat any threat.

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Holy God, who calls out to us, help us to listen. May we hear Your voice in the beauties of the Earth and the glories of the skies. Whisper Your messages in the glory of a sunrise and the splendor of a sunset. Remind us of Your sovereignty in the orderly transition of the seasons.

Speak, Lord, for we wait to hear Your voice. Speak to our Senators. Teach them Your plans and priorities. Show them Your paths. Remind them of the power of unfettered faith, hope, and love, as You awaken their sympathy for those who live without joy.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S343

I will continue to ensure that the Senate works as quickly as possible to get President Trump's team in place.

MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. President, before I close, I also want to mention the March for Life, which will be held today in Washington, DC. As they do every year, tens of thousands of Americans from all across the country will flood the streets of Washington to witness the goodness and value of every human life.

The March for Life is just one small facet of the pro-life movement, but it is a key facet because we need this public witness. Abortion happens behind closed doors, and so it can be all too easy to forget that it is happening, to forget that every day in this country, babies are being killed by abortion.

The pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute reports that there were more than 1 million abortions in 2023 alone—1 million. That is a lot of lives lost, it is a lot of love lost, and we need to be reminded of this.

So I am tremendously grateful for the tens of thousands of marchers in Washington, DC, today who are here to remind us of the terrible cost of abortion and of the infinite value and worth of every human being. I am looking forward to addressing the March for Life in person later today. I want to give a special shout-out to those who have traveled from South Dakota to be here in Washington.

To all pro-lifers, those here in Washington today and those around the country, I want to say thank you. There is no greater work than standing up for those who cannot stand up and defend themselves. I am grateful for everything you do for moms and for their babies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative 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.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, a few days ago—I think you were in the chair, and I was here—we saw the minority leader stand at that podium and pledge to cooperate with Republicans when nominees, he said, were highly qualified and bipartisan. It took less than 72 hours for the minority leader to violate that pledge.

Senate Democrats seem to be back to their old, tired habits of obstructing and opposing. Look at the confirmation process that we finished yesterday for the Central Intelligence Agency Director, John Ratcliffe.

Senator MARK KELLY of Arizona, a Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, gave Director Ratcliffe a ringing endorsement. Director Ratcliffe “is qualified for the job. He’s

a serious guy, and he’s got the background. I’ve got confidence he’ll do a good job.”

Yet Senator SCHUMER held up the confirmation process for 2 solid days.

Despite the delay, the Senate overwhelmingly confirmed this highly qualified Director—Director Ratcliffe—by a vote of 74 to 25. Twenty-one Democrats voted in favor of his confirmation, yet a 2-day delay.

I want every American to know what is happening here in the Senate. The far-left Members of the Democrat caucus are intentionally delaying the confirmation of President Trump’s national security team. It is not advice and consent. It is the Democrats’ playbook for trying to deny President Trump his Cabinet.

The Senate is preparing to vote this weekend on more highly qualified nominees. One of them is South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem.

Governor Noem is the nominee to be Secretary of Homeland Security. She will secure the border.

In the first 3 days of the Trump administration, illegal encounters dropped nearly 35 percent compared to the final 3 days of the Biden administration. Nearly 4,000 illegal immigrants tried to cross in President Biden’s final days in office. Under President Trump, the numbers plummeted, and they will continue to plummet. The impact of the Trump policies is real, and this is only the beginning.

Working with Kristi Noem, the Senate is going to secure the border. Governor Noem understands what is needed to tackle the border crisis. As she said in her hearing, she will ensure our Border Patrol agents and our Immigrations and Customs Enforcement group have all the tools, the resources, and the support that they need to carry out their mission efficiently and effectively.

As Governor, she sent South Dakota National Guard troops to Texas to help secure the border—Governor, National Guard troops to help in Texas. Oh, she is going to be aggressive in her mission to stop this flood of illegal immigrants.

I believe she is an excellent and well-qualified choice. After a thorough vetting process, Governor Noem received bipartisan support in the Homeland Security Committee. There are 15 members of the committee. Thirteen voted in favor of her; only two opposed. That is overwhelming and bipartisan.

Senator GARY PETERS of Michigan—he is the lead Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee—he voted yes. Will Senator SCHUMER needlessly slow down a confirmation vote that his lead Democrat supports, just to obstruct President Trump?

When it comes to confirming Governor Noem, there is no time to waste. Few Agencies are more important to this Nation, to our safety, and to our security than the Department of Homeland Security. Any delay denies our country a Homeland Security Secretary at a time when open borders en-

danger every American in this country today—potential risk to their safety as well as their security.

Here in the Senate, Senate Republicans are working around the clock to confirm qualified nominees like Kristi Noem, like Scott Bessent for Treasury, like Sean Duffy. We will be in the Senate voting as long as it takes. How long it takes in the Senate is up to the Democrats to decide.

Our committees are approving additional nominees on a bipartisan basis and at a rapid clip. We need to confirm them on the Senate floor without delay, and that is what Republicans intend to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The Democrat leader is recognized.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, Mr. President, yesterday, 51 Republican Senators voted to advance one of the most erratic, unqualified, and unfit Cabinet nominees we have ever seen in modern times. Pete Hegseth is possibly just a few hours away from becoming the next Secretary of Defense, overseeing the greatest military in the world. He has neither the character, the experience, or the judgment required by the job.

If there is one word that should never describe a Secretary of Defense in this important position, it is “erratic,” but that is the one word that describes Mr. Hegseth best.

Before we vote today, I hope my Republican colleagues think carefully, one last time, about the risks to the American people and, particularly, to the men and women in our Armed Forces, of confirming somebody like Mr. Hegseth. I hope my Republican colleagues understand the danger of entrusting our military to someone whose background has not been fully vetted.

We know much of his past remains uninvestigated. We know Mr. Hegseth refused to meet with Democrats on the Armed Services Committee, save for the ranking member. How can that be? It is such an important job and he is afraid to meet with Democrats on the committee? He is going to have much tougher adversaries than that in places like China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. How could he avoid that?

We know that new allegations keep coming up—as recently as last night—compounding the word “erratic” when it describes his behavior.

This is not the way to vet a nominee in such an important position as Secretary of Defense. When you are the one responsible for leading our Armed

Forces, erratic behavior isn't just a character flaw. It could mean the difference between entering or avoiding a military conflict, between life and death for our troops. We all want what is best for our troops.

We all know that voting for Secretary of Defense is one of the most important votes we are going to take all year. It mystifies me that of all the people President Trump could have nominated as Secretary of Defense, he picked someone as flawed—as deeply flawed—as Mr. Hegseth.

Is Pete Hegseth really the best we have to lead the greatest military in the world? Is this man with a history of excessive drinking really the guy you want on the other end of the phone at 2 a.m. in a crisis in control of the nuclear codes? Is this man with a mile-long list of allegations of abusing, degrading, and harassing women the one we want leading our men and women into battle? Is this man who failed to manage the finances of veterans' nonprofit groups, who drove his organizations into debt to the point where he could not even pay creditors, the person we want in charge of the Pentagon's budget?

I want this last point to sink in.

DOD is a colossal organization. It is a workforce of 3 million people, an annual budget of over \$850 billion. Is Pete Hegseth really the person we want overseeing an organization as complex as DOD? A man who couldn't even manage the finances of a small nonprofit, yet they pick him. It is unbelievable.

He was pressured to resign from these small nonprofits. And now he is supposed to run the Department of Defense with its millions of people under his jurisdiction and billions and billions of dollars.

The odds are not low that he would mismanage the Pentagon's budget if he mismanaged small organizations.

Worst of all, his erratic behavior can rear its ugly head because we know when people who have a history of erratic behavior go into high-pressure situations, it often makes them more, not less, erratic.

I refuse to believe that Pete Hegseth is the best the Republicans can come up with for Secretary of Defense. There are surely other individuals—plenty of others—the President could nominate that would be conservative voices. We would disagree with their views, but at least we would have to admit they are qualified.

I can think of some Republican Senators who would certainly make a much stronger candidate than Mr. Hegseth.

I hope my Republican colleagues think carefully today about the consequences of this vote. I hope they do the right thing and recognize there are much, much better choices for Secretary of Defense than Hegseth. The credibility of the Senate—I think the credibility of the Republican majority—is on the line with today's vote.

The well-being of our troops stationed around the world is on the line with today's vote. The very security of the American people, of our kids and families and neighbors and friends, is on the line with today's vote.

In short, we should not, cannot, must not elevate someone as erratic as Pete Hegseth to Secretary of Defense. We can and must—must—do better. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

Finally, I want to turn briefly to the subject of Mr. Vought. No nominee is more threatening or antithetical to the needs of working people than this godfather of the ultraright—Russell Vought is the godfather of the ultraright—chief cook and bottle washer of Project 2025.

When Americans voted for Donald Trump, they were very clear they want inflation to go down. They want more affordable prescription drugs. They do not want Project 2025 running the show. But that is precisely what will happen when the vote comes to Director of OMB.

If you are one of the tens of billions who benefits from Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Russell Vought is a nightmare scenario. If you want lower drug prices, you can forget about it if Russell Vought is running the show at OMB. If you want lower energy costs, if you want the U.S. to stand up to China, if you want America to create better clean jobs, Russell Vought is very, very bad news.

If you are part of the ultrarich in this country, if you are an oil executive or own a drug company, Russell Vought is your golden ticket. If there is any golden age coming under Donald Trump, Russell Vought proves it is only a golden age for those at the very, very top. As for everyone else, Donald Trump and Russell Vought say you are on your own.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Pete Hegseth is just not qualified to be in charge of the Department of Defense. He would oversee almost 3 million employees around the world and an annual budget of over \$800 billion. But his only management experience today is running two very small veterans' organizations with, let's just say, mixed results.

Even if he had done extraordinarily well in that job, you do not put a person in charge of a small shop suddenly in charge of 3 million employees. He ran organizations with just a few dozen employees and tiny little budgets and neither of them were anything like the Defense Department in size and scale.

And so on what basis are we supposed to trust that Pete Hegseth can manage not just the largest employer in the country but one of the largest employers on the planet?

Much like the rest of Donald Trump's Cabinet, the main criteria for Hegseth's nomination was his loyalty to Donald Trump. I am not saying loyalty to the President is some sort of disqualifier. You want your Cabinet to be loyal. But it can't be the only thing. You also have to be good at this. It is not like you couldn't have found a MAGA world person that was a three-star or a four-star or someone who had run a big enterprise or someone who had been a Governor or someone who had done big things and demonstrated they could run big complex organizations. That is what this is.

This isn't about woke or not woke or foreign policy. This is about: Gosh, this is a big job; and to the extent that the U.S. Senate is in the personnel business to provide our advice and then our consent to a President providing us with a nominee, it is very hard to get to yes on someone who has just never run anything particularly large or complicated.

In 2017—and this is his main qualification—he says:

I think President Donald Trump is the final defensive line for America.

And as Trump ran for reelection, he said that there would be a “national divorce” if Democrats won and that “the military and police . . . will be forced”—“the military and the police . . . will be forced to make a choice [and] yes, there will be some form of civil war.”

This is the guy we want to run the Defense Department who a couple of years ago suggested if Democrats win, there might be a civil war.

It is not just that Hegseth is a Trump acolyte getting a plum job in the administration. There is plenty of that happening. It is also that he has no real understanding substantively of the job that he would be doing. Leading the Department of the Defense is not just a bureaucratic exercise. Day in and day out, month after month, you are issuing billions of dollars in contracts and making decisions that are not at all obvious and super complex and sensitive. There are tradeoffs and compromises, and you have to know how, as they say, the building works.

So your knowledge and your experience really matter here, which is why it was so alarming that he wasn't able to name a single member of ASEAN when asked by my colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH. It wasn't a “gotcha” question. That is pretty basic stuff. ASEAN, which stands for the Association of Southeastern Asian Nations, is an essential part of the strategy in the Indo-Pacific. These are key partners the Defense Secretary directly engages with. Hegseth didn't even know the first thing about them and named a bunch of countries that don't even belong to the organization.

Later, when he was asked by Senator SLOTKIN whether he would carry out an illegal order from Donald Trump, like using the military against civilians, he refused to give a straight answer. There are a lot of close calls when you are Defense Secretary, but whether or not to turn the military on the public, even if they are Democrats, is not a close call. That is a simple: No, I wouldn't do that. I will not carry out an illegal order. No, the United States military is not in existence for the purpose of carrying out orders against United States citizens exercising their constitutional rights.

Leading our Armed Forces is not a part-time gig. The Pentagon is not a cable news set where you can roll up on a Saturday and say clever things. You can't improv your way out of global conflicts.

The people who lace up and go into battle deserve better than that. They deserve someone who understands the world and all of its complexities and recognizes the weight of their decisions, especially when the chips are down. And Pete Hegseth is not that person.

I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and vote no on his confirmation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I realize that some Republicans were hoping we would cut this process short, but I have no problem coming to the floor and having a lengthy discussion about Mr. Hegseth's nomination to be Defense Secretary. I am eager to talk about it.

The only person who doesn't seem to want to talk about the Hegseth nomination is actually Mr. Hegseth himself, because I have been trying for weeks to schedule a meeting with Mr. Hegseth prior to his confirmation vote. I genuinely want a chance to ask him directly about my concerns with his character and fitness, yes, but also about the serious challenges facing our Nation, whether it is competition with China or aggression from Russia.

As vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I help write the bill that funds the Defense Department every year. And that bill only passes with bipartisan support. I don't think it is asking a lot to be able to meet with the person nominated to lead that Department.

I have had the opportunity to meet with 10 of President Trump's Cabinet nominees, and I look forward to meeting with more before they are confirmed by the Senate. Conducting these meetings is the absolute bare min-

imum, given the role of each Senator and the constituents they represent. But Mr. Hegseth refused to meet with me and has refused to meet with many of my Democratic colleagues.

I think most Americans would agree you shouldn't get the job if you decide you can skip the job interview. Every nominee—every nominee—should be willing to meet with Senators, regardless of their party, to answer basic questions about how they would approach their role if confirmed. It is honestly beneath the dignity of the role he aspires to for Mr. Hegseth to refuse to meet one-on-one with most Democrats.

What is he afraid of? Are the questions we have to ask really that hard? I mean, if Mr. Hegseth is afraid of me, how is he going to stand up to China?

Meeting with Members on both sides isn't just some formality. If you are confirmed, it is part of the job. So this is a serious concern and one of the many concerns I have now with Mr. Hegseth's qualifications, his positions, and his character.

Let's be perfectly clear about the stakes here. We are talking about who we will put in command of the most powerful military in the world. There is nothing on Mr. Hegseth's resume that remotely suggests he has the experience for that role. I have deep appreciation for his service to our country; I do. But let's not kid ourselves here. I don't see how being a FOX TV host prepares you to lead 3 million servicemembers and civilians. I don't see how bankrupting a veterans' nonprofit through wasteful spending qualifies you to manage a budget of nearly \$900 billion.

Moreover, we really, truly have no sense of what his understanding of military policy is or what his strategic priorities would be. Thanks to Senator DUCKWORTH, we know he is someone who can't name a single country in ASEAN. That ignorance is alarming. Senators only had 7 minutes during his confirmation hearing to ask questions. Many asked the questions we knew our Republican colleagues would not regarding Hegseth's questionable character and fitness—important questions, absolutely. But because we had to spend so much time understanding if he even could do this job at the most basic level, we had precious little time to ask him about how he would do his job.

How would Pete Hegseth ensure that our servicemembers and their families have the resources they need at home and abroad? How does he plan to reduce costs and development times for key military capabilities that are critical to our national security? How would he invest in our defense industrial base and public shipyards, like the one in my home State of Washington? How does he view the pacing threat in the Indo-Pacific? And how would he work with our partners and our allies to prepare for a potential conflict? Does he have any thoughts on that at all?

This is just not a serious candidate who has thoughtful positions on the challenges we face.

You know what position he is serious about, what he has stated over and over again?

I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles.

He said that last November.

Or:

We need moms. But not in the military, especially in combat units.

That is infuriating and disqualifying. I don't have to try very hard to imagine how that kind of condescending attitude will go over with our women in uniform.

And after decades of comments like this—denigrating the role of women in the military in ways that simply do not square with reality—Mr. Hegseth's recent about-face on this topic is just not convincing. He has also made clear he has little regard for the Geneva Conventions.

Maybe this is a bit old-fashioned of me, but I think we should have a Secretary of Defense who is firmly against war crimes; not one who has spoken in favor of torture like waterboarding, in favor of people convicted of war crimes, and questioned whether we should follow the Geneva Conventions.

And let's not forget, in addition to having no real qualifications and many alarming positions, Mr. Hegseth has many red flags that raise serious concerns about his character and his conduct. There is the report that he and his management team pursued women on his staff. There is the report that he took his employees to a strip club and got drunk. There is the report that he got drunk in uniform and had to be carried out of a strip club. There is the report that he chanted "Kill all Muslims" while he was drunk.

And beyond reporting, there are the police records backing up the account of a woman who told the nurse she may have been drugged and then raped by Pete Hegseth. We couldn't hear from that woman because Mr. Hegseth reached a financial settlement, and he has now threatened to sue her for speaking out. And we almost didn't hear about that incident at all since he didn't even disclose it when he was vetted.

But there are other people we have now heard from. We know his mother once wrote to her son directly criticizing him as an abuser of women. We know his former sister-in-law, in a signed affidavit, has shared she saw Mr. Hegseth drink to excess and understood his ex-wife feared for her safety with him. And we know that same ex-wife told the FBI that "he drinks more than he doesn't."

That is an awful lot of smoke for us to be ignoring the fire.

There is absolutely no world where someone who has a history of running up debts at nonprofits should be responsible for overseeing half of our discretionary spending. There is no world where someone with a history of failing

to address his irresponsible alcohol use should be given one of the most stressful jobs imaginable and should be making life-and-death decisions on a daily and an hourly basis. There is no world where we should have a predator running the Department of Defense that is responsible for the well-being of millions of women and men in uniform.

I don't get how that is complicated.

Mr. President, let me just end on this. There is no world where the person in charge of our military should see his fellow Americans as the enemy. But Mr. Hegseth has made clear that is his view. Regarding Democrats and Republicans, he has written—and this is him:

The other side—the Left—is not our friend. We are not esteemed colleagues, nor mere political opponents. We are foes. Either we win, or they win. We agree on nothing else.

That is an especially dark view of our country. Our military uniforms do not say “Democrat,” they do not say “Republican.” They just don't.

You cannot be an effective commander if your people don't trust you. But how are troops supposed to trust you to keep them safe in combat if you think half the Nation is an enemy? How are Muslim servicemembers supposed to trust you if you think their religion is a threat to our country? How are women servicemembers supposed to trust you if you think they should be at home?

I don't have an answer to that. Maybe Mr. Hegseth doesn't either. Maybe that is why he won't meet with me. Then again, maybe it is because he thinks I am his foe because I am a Democrat, or maybe he doesn't think I should have a say in the military issues because I am a woman.

Mr. President, I do have a say, and I say someone like Mr. Hegseth is grossly unqualified to take on one of the most important jobs in the world. And I will be voting against him. I urge my Republican colleagues to seriously consider the message it will send to confirm someone for Secretary of Defense who has failed time and again to meet the most basic standards of conduct our women and men in uniform are required to live up to.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it has been 4 days. It seems like it has been longer than that, but it has been 4 days since President Trump took the oath of office as the 47th President of the United States. We have seen a flurry of activity since that time, which you would expect from President Trump. He has been waiting for that day for

some time now and has worked really hard to get there. But from securing our borders to securing protections for women in sports, it is abundantly clear that President Trump is not letting any dust gather under his feet.

I am particularly pleased to see him dismantling the Biden-Harris administration's DEI regime throughout the Federal Government. Some people may be asking: Well, why would the President waste his time on that? What could be wrong with having a diverse workforce?

Well, the truth is that, while DEI—or diversity, equity, and inclusion—may sound like a benign or a nice thing, the dystopian reality is that there is nothing inclusive about DEI programming. On the contrary, it is quite divisive. In practice, DEI initiatives do the exact opposite of what they purport to do, and they fly directly in the face of everything that America stands for.

On Monday of this week, we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. In what was perhaps Dr. King's most famous speech, the “I Have a Dream” speech, he said:

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but [rather] by the content of their character.

To me, that is the ideal.

At the heart of the civil rights movement was a desire for everyone, regardless of race or gender, to compete on a level, merit-based playing field.

What is so misguided about these DEI initiatives is that they do the exact opposite of what Martin Luther King spoke about. Instead of judging people on the content of their character, the DEI regime would have us assign points to people based on characteristics like skin color and gender and give preferential treatment to people on that basis. These are immutable characteristics, not something any of us can control. So it is profoundly unfair to decide that one person in a job candidate pool gets more weight put on their application because of something that was an accident of their birth. I think most people, if they understand what DEI is all about, would agree that this amounts to an unfair hiring practice. It treats people differently based on gender or the color of their skin or some other immutable characteristic.

President Trump's Executive order does not just affect Federal hiring; it also directs Agencies and Department heads to eliminate DEI practices in grants and contracts as well.

I think this would be a great opportunity for the Department of Government Efficiency to take a look at it as well, as there is a lot of room to eliminate waste and inefficiency in Federal grants and contracts.

According to the Government Accounting Office—GAO—the Federal Government spent \$759 billion on Federal contracts in 2023, which represents roughly 12.5 percent of Federal Government spending for that fiscal year. A significant number of these contracts

are for the Department of Defense. With billions of dollars and our national security on the line, it is critical that these contracts are awarded to contractors on merit, not based on some DEI-centered criteria. We owe it to the taxpayers to be selecting the best and the brightest and the most effective people for a job, not picking the consulting firm that simply racked up the most DEI points.

One of the downstream effects of DEI requirements in Federal contracts is they create an incentive structure for these divisive practices to bleed into the corporate world. This goes all the way back to then-President Richard Nixon, who implemented affirmative action requirements for private companies that contract with the Federal Government.

Since that time, there have even been instances of companies committing outright fraud in order to qualify for contracts that were prioritized for minority-owned businesses by claiming that an employee is a 51-percent owner in order to qualify for minority-owned status and thus get preferential treatment.

Now, some of the folks in the media not surprisingly are framing this action by President Trump as a reversal of the progress we have made in America in the civil rights era, but nothing could be further from the truth.

What we have to keep in mind is that the reforms of the civil rights era were enacted to address particular problems that our Nation was going through at that time; namely, segregation and widespread racial discrimination. Of course, these practices of racial discrimination that were so widespread during that time were far from our finest moments as a nation. I am thankful—thankful—that our country has been able to move forward from that era, and I applaud the men and women who went to great lengths and risked everything to help us turn the page on that chapter as a country.

But today, with rights granted to everybody, regardless of race, color, or creed, by law, we have a different situation where the law and the policies that were intended to end racial discrimination have evolved into the modern DEI apparatus, creating a new kind of discrimination—something we sought to avoid but which has now crept back into our country.

So the policies that were enacted to address one problem back during the civil rights era have been turned on their head—not to accomplish their original purpose but to do something entirely different, which is to enact preferences based on race, gender, and other immutable characteristics.

In fact, while the Civil Rights Act was being debated right here on the Senate floor, one of its architects, Senator Humphrey, expressed direct opposition to what is now part of the DEI bureaucracy. He said:

If the Senator can find in Title VII any language which provides that an employer

will have to hire on the basis of percentage or quota related to color, race, religion, or national origin. I will start eating the pages one after another, because it is not there.

So I think it is fair to say that President Trump's actions earlier this week are not a reversal of the progress we have made since the civil rights movement. They are better understood as the righting of the ship back to what Congress and the Nation intended to accomplish: a nation where all people have a chance to succeed or fail based on their merit and not on race.

So this action by President Trump, rather than reversing progress, is a return to the ideal that the United States of America should have always stood for but unfortunately did not, which is the equal dignity and equal treatment of every American under the law. That is our goal, and I am glad to see that President Trump has returned us to that original ideal since the civil rights era rather than to somehow paper over this effort to treat people differently based on their race, gender, or other characteristics.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO TYLER YORK

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, for the entire time that I have been a Member of the U.S. Senate, I have had the privilege of having on my team a Kansan who invests his time, his energy, his passion—he gives his heart for helping my constituents, for helping our constituents, for helping Kansans and Americans.

Tyler York has worn many hats in my office. He was a district representative, a caseworker, a videographer, and a legislative adviser. Tyler and I first met when he was completing his degree at Kansas State University and I needed some help and he helped me in 2010 on my Senate campaign. As a result of being a recent graduate of Kansas State University, Tyler was open to new opportunities and got the job driving me across Kansas. And during a 2-hour drive on I-70 from Manhattan to the airport, it became apparent to me that this young man was someone I wanted on my team and I benefited from his service every day.

At least, in this instance, I was right about him.

Tyler York joined my newly formed Senate team in Washington, DC, doing both constituent services and legislative work. A Kansan through and through, after a few years in Washington, DC, like many, Tyler decided to continue his work as a district representative to get back home to Kansas.

Tyler quickly became integrated, became a part, became familiar with the communities in South Central Kansas. And whether he was meeting with local leaders, making community visits, or assisting Kansans with problems they were having with the Federal Government, you could always count on Tyler to be diligently working with a smile on his face to solve a problem, to help people, to get things done.

Through his time assisting folks with Federal issues, doing what we all here call casework, Tyler became our go-to guy for issues related to many things, including the U.S. Post Office. As many of my colleagues know, we had lots of casework involving the challenges of the U.S. Post Office getting the mail delivered. Ready, willing, and able, he stepped up to every task. Tyler worked, especially in rural areas, to improve the consistency and the quality of the Postal Service. His work on this issue and others certainly did not go unnoticed.

I would like to share some of the comments I received from community leaders once they learned that Tyler was moving on. Lona DuVall, president and CEO of Finney County Economic Development Corporation shared:

We so appreciated Tyler York's role in expanding Senator MORAN's southwest Kansas presence. Senator MORAN recognized that our region was growing and we had needs that differed in many ways from other areas of the State [of Kansas], and he chose well in appointing Tyler, a native of our region, to create southwest Kansas office.

Tyler did a great job of providing connectivity between our region and the Senator's office in Washington, DC, and we will be forever grateful for Tyler's leadership in representing [us for] our region's needs at the Federal level. We wish Tyler only the best in his future endeavors.

Steve Dyer, former president of the Garden City Chamber:

Tyler's dedication to serving Kansans on behalf of Senator MORAN was always evident. He was responsive to our needs, always prompt and available, and he worked his tail off to ensure that our voices were heard, our questions were answered, and our needs were met.

And then Megan Barfield, president and CEO of the Great Bend Kansas Chamber of Commerce:

I have had the privilege of knowing Tyler for 5-plus years now during my time at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. He's always presented himself as one of the most engaged and truly genuine people I know. I had little experience in legislative affairs coming into my role, and I could always call on Tyler and trust him with whatever questions or direction I needed. Great Bend and Barton County thank you and we will miss you, Tyler.

Much of Tyler's most important work happened during times of hardship and adversity. In March of 2017, a wildfire burned across western Kansas, stirred up by high winds and fueled by dry prairie grasses. The fire lasted nearly a week and burned more than 450,000 acres across Kansas. Farms, ranches, businesses, and homes were lost to the fires. And this fire occurred

around Ashland, KS, in the county that is Tyler's hometown and home county and it was one of the main victims of that fire. So his hometown, his neighbors, the people he grew up with were in jeopardy.

It was a devastating time for the community, but they had a great ally in Tyler. They knew him and they trusted him. In the weeks following the fire, Tyler worked nonstop connecting first responders, landowners, and local leaders with Federal emergency resources. He kept me informed and updated on the situation on the ground and helped create legislation that changed the way the Federal Government delivers aid to help pay for fencing and the loss of cattle. That legislation became law and made a significant difference then and continuing.

He took great care of the people of Ashland, not just because it was his job, but because he truly, truly cared about them.

Tyler's help also extended beyond the borders of Kansas to the country of Afghanistan. Following the U.S. military's abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, we began receiving calls—as I recall, we received more than a thousand inquiries from Kansans asking what I, what we could do to help people who were stranded in Afghanistan; people who helped our soldiers, our interpreters, people who had a religion different than what the Taliban's beliefs are. A thousand-plus Kansans said: We need your help to get somebody out of Afghanistan that we know.

Tyler quickly became personally invested in these cases. This was a very difficult time for all of us and Tyler worked day and night making phone calls, contacting embassies. He was one of those individuals who took the people's problems, which in this case were life and death, to heart.

It was a difficult time for Tyler and for our office, as he wanted to have success in getting every individual that he learned about out of Afghanistan. He helped rescue 23 people, including children, from Kabul, Afghanistan in 2021.

One set of Kansans Tyler helped was the family of U.S. Army veteran Fatima Jaghoori. She had this to share about Tyler:

Tyler truly embodies the American spirit, helping others see the vision of American Dream by building ties with community members, listening to Kansans and working tirelessly for Americans. In one of the most uncertain times in history, Tyler acted to ensure all Kansans were heard, welcomed, and supported. Words cannot express my gratitude for Tyler [and for Senator MORAN]. Tyler is the compass, pointing at the direction to be a great American and a greater man. Tyler became friends of those people he helped escape from Afghanistan. He became a part of their families.

I know that this job often took Tyler on the road, driving around Kansas and missing valuable time with his family—with Alyssa, his wife. I want to express my gratitude to Tyler's family for supporting him in his work and for

being gracious when he had to miss dinner or an important event because he was pulled away for work.

Tyler spent his entire career on Capitol Hill in my office, and for that, I would like to express my gratefulness to him. While I am saddened that his time working for me has concluded, I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work with him and beside him over the last 14 years.

He kept good stats on the work that he did. It is quite impressive: 4,091 meetings; 2,053 individuals, families, and organizations he has assisted with casework; 761 reports or memos drafted; 105 counties visited—that is every county in Kansas; 11 years of working to pass legislation to reform the post office; 3 new USDA programs developed as a direct result of the 2017 fires in Clark County.

In the next phase of his career, Tyler will still be helping Kansans as an executive officer with the Wichita Area Builders Association in supporting homebuilders, their customers, and the regional industry in South Central Kansas.

Tyler, with your invaluable experience, joyful attitude, and your constant drive to improve not only yourself but those around you—and I include me as being improved by your presence in my personal and professional life—you are and will be dearly missed. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors, and I look forward to hearing of your continued service to our State and its people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I want to extend my thanks to my colleague from Kansas for sharing that wonderful reflection on Tyler's exceptional work for the people of Kansas and for the people of the United States. We are blessed to have wonderful people to work with in this job.

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Mr. President, I rise right now and today for the purpose of joining my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in opposing Mr. Hegseth's nomination as Secretary of Defense.

I appreciate Mr. Hegseth's military service, indeed, when evaluating his nomination—his service was what I appreciated most about his background—but unfortunately it is clear that Mr. Hegseth does not have the skills, experience, record, or character to lead a Department that has a budget of more than \$800 billion, is the largest employer of men and women in our country, and is tasked with safeguarding our Nation's security and freedom.

We take pride as Americans in the fact that our military is the very best. The standard of excellence and professionalism set by the men and women of our Armed Forces is central to our military's success and to our country's success. This high standard of competency and character, of both unmatched ability and uncommon virtue

is why America's Armed Forces command the respect of our friends, the fear of our foes, and the abiding faith of freedom-loving people everywhere.

America boasts the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. The heroes who serve in our Armed Forces deserve a leader who is worthy of that greatness, and Mr. Hegseth is plainly not up to that task.

Like many of my colleagues, I have concerns regarding Mr. Hegseth's character—the documented accusations about his excessive and uncontrolled drinking, his sexual harassment, sexual assault, and now accusations of being abusive to his ex-wife.

It is ironic that Mr. Hegseth and some of my colleagues have dismissed these concerns as partisan because, sadly, if this weren't a partisan confirmation process—for example, if my Republican colleagues were considering hiring Mr. Hegseth to join their staffs—we would all agree that these accusations would immediately be disqualifying.

Mr. Hegseth dismisses these multiple accusations from disparate people as a “coordinated smear campaign.” I don't think that the concerns of his former colleagues, friends, and family should be quickly dismissed as smears. Many other of the nominees who are being considered by this body aren't facing similar accusations even though there are people who vehemently oppose their confirmations, which begs the question of why Mr. Hegseth continues to face multiple similar accusations from different sources.

But, for a moment, let's do as Mr. Hegseth asks and put aside these accusations. Let us say for a moment that those who occupy the highest positions in public life shouldn't be above reproach, although indeed they should. Let us say that our servicemembers do not deserve a leader whose strength of character matches their own, although I believe they do. And let us say for a moment that character does not count, although indeed it surely always does. Let us, in short, ignore everything that Mr. Hegseth demanded that we ignore in his hearing. Even if we did that, I would submit that based on experience alone, Mr. Hegseth is mainly unqualified for the job as Secretary of Defense.

The Secretary of Defense is responsible for a budget of more than \$800 billion and is responsible for 3.4 million employees who serve on every continent across the globe.

To lead the Defense Department is a daunting task that requires leadership and managerial skills of the highest order. However, Mr. Hegseth's managerial experience begins and ends with his leadership at two small nonprofits, and his tenure at both resulted in concerns about his financial mismanagement at their helm. If Mr. Hegseth could not and did not effectively manage organizations with around 100 employees, surely no one can actually believe that he is ready to manage one of 3.4 million people.

We live in a dangerous and uncertain world. Iran and its proxies continue to menace our forces in the Middle East. Vladimir Putin is on the march in Europe. North Korea persists in testing our allies and testing its missiles. China—China—looks with a conqueror's gaze toward Taiwan.

To my Republican colleagues, I understand that you wish to support President Trump, but Presidents are sometimes wrong. We are talking about our Nation's vital security. We are considering the confirmation of the person who will be entrusted to marshal our resources as the enemy approaches, attacks our cyber defenses, or invades an ally. It matters—it matters—that we have the right person in this job. It matters that we get this one right.

Surely, there is someone in this great country of brilliant and brave people of all political stripes who is more capable and who has the experience and character necessary to forge under pressure the judgment that will keep us safe and free.

This is America. We have the finest fighting force ever assembled. We have more strength and power than any fighting force has had in human history. In the past, when we have looked for leaders of our Armed Forces, we have searched for our country's best and brightest, the most gifted minds of America's boardrooms, the brightest stars to come out of West Point, the most revered public servants to serve in these Halls. We did not need then nor do we need now to turn to the green rooms of cable TV networks for the Secretary of Defense.

Tomorrow marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge—a campaign in which my father served. In freezing temperatures, outnumbered and often undersupplied, our forces held the line against Hitler's onslaught. Our soldiers won because they were brave, they won because they were skilled, and they won because they were well led. Surely, the Armed Forces of the United States of America—the victors of the Ardennes, of Gettysburg, of Midway, and of 1,000 places in between and since—surely, they need a leader who they can have full faith in. Surely, America's best deserves the best.

Government's most important task is to keep America safe, secure, and free. It is a complex, fast-moving, and evolving challenge. It is a job that at times presents its occupant—the Secretary of Defense—no good or easy options. It is, in short, a deadly serious job where both success and failure have enormous ramifications. It is a job that depends on experience and character—the prerequisites for good judgment like no other.

No Senator should vote for someone who they can only hope will learn on the job—not for the Secretary of Defense. No Senator should vote for a nominee in the hope that he will display more personal discipline once he

gets the job. There are strong, experienced, and able members of the President's party whose views align with his who could be exceptional leaders of the Department of Defense. Mr. Hegseth is not one of them. I urge my colleagues to reject this nominee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join many of my colleagues in expressing grave alarm over the choice of Pete Hegseth to run the Department of Defense.

It is not hyperbole to say that we have never seen a candidate—at least in modern times—to lead our soldiers and our troops who is as dangerously and woefully unqualified as Pete Hegseth.

I think everybody understands his primary qualification. He was on TV during the weekends, when Donald Trump would watch FOX News—period, stop—because as we have learned more about Pete Hegseth—his history of sexual misconduct, his history of public drunkenness, his history of financial mismanagement—it appears as if there must be thousands of other people who were easily more qualified.

But I want to talk today about his qualifications, his views that he has made known on television, that he has expressed to the committee about how he would do the job.

I think his history of personal misconduct, in and of itself, is disqualifying. It is just an embarrassment to the country, at a moment when we want to win more friends and allies. It is just the wrong match for a Department that oversees the moral and professional development of young men and women to have somebody like that, with that kind of history, leading the Agency.

But it is also important on the views that he has expressed on how he would run the Department of Defense, because I fear he will run it into the ground.

First, let me talk about the politicization of the Department of Defense. Listen, I don't like the fact that all across government, the design seems to be that if you don't agree with President Trump's political ideas, that if you don't pledge loyalty to President Trump, you don't have any future in the Federal Government. That is not how we have ever run the Federal Government.

Yes, we have always had a class of political appointees. Yes, you want the people at the very top of each Department to be broadly aligned with your view of the world. But this administration—most recently, by reclassifying thousands of employees in the Federal Government to make them political, to make them immediately fireable—is a fundamental rewrite of the way that we traditionally view government.

We want civil servants, people whose oath, whose loyalty, is to the American public, is to the Constitution, is to the

law, not simply to a political party or to a political ideology.

Kash Patel has made it very clear. He doesn't want anybody in the Department of Justice who doesn't line up with his particular political view of the world. And Pete Hegseth seems to be of the same mind.

He seems to be proposing creating a Department of Defense that abandons its core values and its traditional review processes in favor of a new culture of paranoia and mistrust, amidst unexplained firings for even being perceived as having the wrong political leanings.

Now, this didn't happen inside the Department of Defense, but it is the highest profile firing in the national security chain of command. On Monday—on Trump's first day in office—he fired the head of the Coast Guard, Commandant Linda Fagan, without explanation beyond anonymous statements to the press about vague concerns about Fagan's approach to programs aimed at improving diversity or opportunity within the Coast Guard.

Many of us have had the opportunity to work with Admiral Fagan. She is a straight shooter. She improved morale at the Coast Guard. She has vigorously defended our shores. She has helped increase readiness. There is nothing political—there was nothing political—about Linda Fagan in her career of service to this country to become the first woman to lead the Coast Guard.

Yet she was fired on Monday without explanation, except for these anonymously sourced, vague concerns about her focus on trying to bring more women into the Coast Guard and more cadets of color. It seems to serve a very clear end: to make everybody wonder what that line is.

Nobody knows the line that Linda Fagan crossed, but now that it is blurred, everybody is going to hunker down, buckle down, do nothing at all that may arise the suspicions of the White House.

It seems to me that that is exactly what is going to happen at the Department of Defense. He has promised to fire top-end military leaders who are engaged in his nebulous war on woke.

So if you care about making sure that you have got troops from different backgrounds and different parts of the country, maybe that is a war on woke. If you promote a woman, maybe that is a war on woke. If you care about making sure that your troops don't engage in unethical conduct, maybe that is a war on woke. If you contract with a local business that may not be aligned with Donald Trump, maybe that is part of the war on woke.

We have no idea. And so what will happen inside the Department of Defense is just a constant sense of paranoia, a constant looking over your shoulder, a grinding to a halt of business as normal because nobody knows what is a fireable offense and what isn't.

How do I stay on the good side of Pete Hegseth? What gets me on the bad side?

Second, I want to talk about his views on women in combat. He wrote this in his book:

Dads push us to take risks. Moms put the training wheels on our bikes. We need moms. But not in the military, especially in combat units.

What an insulting thing to say. What a disgusting thing to believe.

“Dads push us to take risks. Moms put the training wheels on our bikes.” My mom taught me to take risks. My dad told me to take risks too. But is there a single U.S. Senator here who believes that our mothers, the women in our lives, aren't risk takers, that they didn't push us to be better?

Pete Hegseth believes—he just believes this—that women hold us back, that women hold men back, that women hold their sons back. And it just doesn't matter that he has walked back these statements. Magically, he had a conversion on the issue of women in the military. Magically, he started saying less offensive things about women right after he was nominated to be Secretary of Defense.

Nobody believes this conversion. This is a conversion for political reasons only. It does not mask the fact that this is what Pete Hegseth believes, that he believes that women are inferior to men—and again, not just that they shouldn't engage in combat; he believes that they are morally inferior, that they have qualities that men don't have.

Many women—most women that I know—who have served bravely and effectively in combat—some serving with us on Capitol Hill—have taken grave offense to Pete Hegseth's unfounded denigration of their service. Many have pointed out the real impacts his ideas will have surrounding women in combat and what those comments could mean for our more general readiness. Why? Because there are 360,000 women serving in the U.S. military today in a variety of capacities. They are essential to keeping this Nation safe. Now every single one of them knows that the man taking over the Department of Defense doesn't think they are worthy to serve and that their prospects for advancement upon his elevation to the Department of Defense are compromised.

Their ability to get fair treatment inside the Department of Defense has been compromised, and it won't shock anybody if we see many of those women leave the service and if we see many fewer women sign up to protect this country. That would come at an enormous cost—an enormous cost—to the security of this Nation.

Third, I want to talk about a topic that I hope this body finds a way to have a nonpolitical, nonpartisan discussion on, and that is the growing problem of extremism in our military.

Now, I think every large organization has to tackle this issue. Anytime you have a big, large organization, you are going to have individuals amongst your ranks that are affiliated with extremists and dangerous causes, so I don't

think this problem is exclusive to the U.S. military.

But people who have military experience are about 6 percent, 5 percent of the overall population. They comprise 15 percent of the people who were pardoned by Donald Trump just 3 days ago—a share three times greater than that of the general population.

We have watched as a disproportionate share of individuals who have engaged in mass shootings have had a military background. Now, a lot of that is connected to post-traumatic stress disorder and our failure to get services to those individuals. That is on us, and we should have that conversation as well.

But Pete Hegseth has said that this issue of whether the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys have influence inside the military—and there are plenty of reports that there are lots of active channels of communication and recruitment between these rightwing groups and the military—he says that problem is fake. It is fake.

Now, I don't know the extent of this problem, but I know it is something we should talk about, and I am very, very worried to have a Secretary of Defense who doesn't believe it is a problem even worth mentioning.

Lastly, I want to talk about what I maybe think is the most dangerous part of Pete Hegseth's views on the military, and that is his history of support for war criminals, his low regard for the Code of Military Justice, and his disbelief—his nonbelief in the concept of international law and the laws of war.

It is pretty shocking that we are even having a debate here about whether the U.S. military should engage in torture or adhere to the Geneva Conventions. For those of us that served with John McCain, I cannot believe what he would think about the decision of a Republican President to appoint a Secretary of Defense who does not believe in the Geneva Conventions and the basic laws of war and claims that it is weak or unmanly to believe that there should be some common set of rules about how we engage in war.

I do think it is legitimate to have a conversation about the rules of engagement. We should always be willing to revisit the rules of engagement. It is entirely possible—plausible even—that the rules that we apply to our soldiers in very difficult, complicated engagements, where they often don't know who is friend or foe, are outdated. We should be willing to have that conversation. But that is not what Pete Hegseth is interested in. He is interested in obliterating the rules of engagement. He doesn't want any constraints on our soldiers.

While it is true that many of the enemies that we fight don't follow any rules at all, it is not good for U.S. security more broadly to give up on international law, the rules of war, and the rules of engagement and just accept a race to the bottom.

At the hearing, Ranking Member REED asked Pete Hegseth about three instances of clemency granted by President Trump in 2019—grants of clemency that the nominee supports.

One soldier, a lieutenant in the Army, had been serving for 19 years in prison and was pardoned after being convicted of two counts of second-degree murder for ordering a soldier to fire on unarmed Afghan motorcyclists in 2012. Another was pardoned after being charged with murder of an Afghan in 2010. Another pardon was for an individual who posed and took photos with a corpse during a 2017 deployment to Iraq.

This problem is minuscule inside our Armed Forces. It really is. Mr. President, 99.99 percent of our soldiers, men and women who fight for us, are never, ever engaged in these kinds of horrific crimes. The reason for that is, A, because we have good, moral people fighting for us, and B, because we have a code of conduct, and that deterrent helps to make sure that the instances of misconduct are very, very small—are infinitesimal. If all of a sudden that code of conduct is obliterated, then it becomes harder for our military leadership to make sure that when we are in war, we are following those rules of engagement.

Remember, our power in the world is our tanks and our soldiers, our airplanes and our aircraft carriers, but it has always been our moral authority. We have never been perfect. We have never had leadership that was perfect. But to voluntarily give up on our belief that U.S. troops are held to a higher standard than our enemies—that shrinks our power in the world that makes enemies run away from us.

In a world today where there is just a dissent from truth, right—that is what Putin wants. Putin wants to obliterate objectivism in this world, to believe that there is no right or wrong, that everything is just an individual's viewpoint. When we retreat from those long-held and consensus-developed ideas about, for instance, not torturing our enemies during times of war, it provides a lift and assist to people like Putin who are trying to make us believe that there is no such thing as right or wrong in the world, that it is all just different shades of gray.

So I understand that much of the debate here will be about this litany of really ugly personal misconduct, and I think that is reason alone to say: You know what, find somebody else.

It is not as if Pete Hegseth is the only person qualified to run the Department of Defense. There are other people who are loyal to Donald Trump, who are conservative, maybe even believe in this campaign against wokeism, but don't have the history of personal misconduct.

But I also think that these questions about women in combat, about the political campaigns that will be run inside the Department that will breed a sense of paranoia, about taking seri-

ously small but growing, real threats to us, like extremism in the military, and then this bigger question of making sure we have fealty to the laws of war and prohibitions against torture—I think all of those really concerning views of this nominee, even if the misconduct didn't exist, would be enough for us to say: Find somebody else. Find somebody else who is just going to do the job instead of trying to bring these political agendas, whether it is misogyny or anti-wokeism or anti-multilateralism, into a job that really should be pretty simple. Lead our troops. Protect the Nation. Lift up America's standing in the world.

I know the cake may be baked at this point, but I just want to make one more plea to my Republican colleagues to reconsider their decision to confirm to lead the Department of Defense somebody who seems just hellbent mostly on pursuing a political—not military—agenda that I truly believe is certain to weaken our Armed Forces and threaten our national security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, a number of serious and concerning issues were raised in Pete Hegseth's nomination hearing last week; and in the Hegseth nomination hearing last week, there were a number of important issues. And I would like to speak to one that is central to both America's national security and American values: the principle that every American has the right to know when their government believes that it is allowed to kill them.

Now I don't believe this ought to be a controversial matter. My constituents don't believe it should be a controversial matter. The Bill of Rights says: No one shall be deprived of life . . . without due process of law.

Government officials have, in my view, a basic obligation to explain any rules that allow them to ever kill an American citizen. And on this, the nominee to serve as Defense Secretary has simply flunked the test. His refusal to answer basic questions before the Senate Committee on Armed Services ought to trouble every single American.

Now, I want to focus on that fundamental question concerning the government's power to kill Americans and why Americans have to keep fighting—and Senators—for transparency.

Over a decade ago, the Obama administration took the position that their analysis of the President's legal authority to deliberately kill Americans was secret, and they refused to share that. As I said at the time, I believe that position was just unacceptable.

And I told the Obama administration: If an American takes up arms against the United States as part of a foreign army or a terrorist group, there are, indeed, circumstances where it is legal to use lethal force against that American, but the limits and the

boundaries of the President's authority to kill Americans must be available to the public so that voters can decide whether that authority has sufficient safeguards.

Now, the Obama administration initially disagreed with me. They were clearly reluctant to acknowledge specific limits on the President's power. To be candid, we had a pretty big public argument about that over a number of weeks. Many other Senators got involved. In fact, Senator PAUL, our colleague from Kentucky, brought the debate to a head with a 13-hour standing filibuster. I remember coming to the Senate floor to join Senator PAUL, and there were a number of Republican colleagues who were there as well.

I think one of the reasons it became such a significant debate in a viral moment is that it was literally exactly what our Founding Fathers envisioned: Members of the Senate coming together to check the power of the Presidency.

In response to this filibuster that Senator PAUL and others were part of, the Obama administration came around to doing the right thing. Attorney General Holder sent Senator PAUL a letter stating clearly that if an American is standing on U.S. soil, not engaged in combat, then the President of the United States does not have the authority to use military force against them.

Now, obviously, there are a host of other important questions about the limits of the President's war powers, but I thought that letter from Attorney General Holder was an important concession, and I am proud that Democrats and Republicans worked together on a bipartisan basis for it.

I was very troubled last week by the answers that Pete Hegseth gave in his nomination hearing before the Armed Services Committee. For example, our colleague Senator HIRONO asked the nominee directly if he would carry out an order to shoot American citizens. Mr. Hegseth could have given the same answer that Attorney General Holder gave us a decade ago, but this nominee just refused to answer the question.

Madam President, it is even more troubling when our colleague Senator SLOTKIN asked an even easier question. Senator SLOTKIN asked: Is there such a thing as an illegal order? The answer to that question should very obviously be "yes." If a President orders the Secretary of Defense to violate the law or the Constitution, that order is illegal. And it is, in my view, stunning that the nominee refused to answer this very straightforward question. Even our youngest soldiers in basic training know that it is their duty to refuse illegal orders. We should at least expect that much from our Secretary of Defense.

So I say to my colleagues, in closing, that it comes down to this: I thought we agreed—Democrats and Republicans, people of a variety of different political philosophies—believe that

what I have discussed are fundamentally important principles to America. We have fought hard in America to uphold them, and we did it together. For the life of me, I don't understand why we are voting today to confirm a nominee who can't tell us pointblank that he will oppose illegal orders and that he will uphold the Constitution of the United States.

For that reason, Madam President—I haven't spoken on the matter until just now—I intend to vote no on Mr. Hegseth's nomination and, frankly, I wish more of my colleagues across the aisle, for the reasons that have been outlined here, were joining me in voting no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, it is nice to see you in the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is nice being in the Chair.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am here to add some thoughts regarding the vote we are going to have on Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense.

Of course, as a Rhode Island junior Senator, I am very cognizant of the important role that my senior Senator JACK REED has had on the committee of jurisdiction, the Senate Armed Services Committee. I want to give him credit for the way he has conducted himself.

What I can bring to this conversation is a little bit about background investigations. I sit on the Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee does more background investigation work than any other because we have so many people coming through—the judges, the U.S. attorneys, every marshal—all of it. So we are very busy on BIs.

I took a deep dive into the Brett Kavanaugh background investigation and put out a report on the flaws and gaps and misdirections that transpired around that background investigation—specifically, that supplemental background investigation, a point I will clarify in a moment.

Let's start with what we do know about the FBI background investigation into Mr. Hegseth. We know that only one Democrat has even seen it, and that is the ranking member on the committee, Senator REED. And we do know that he has publicly said that that background investigation was—to use his word—"inadequate." So Republicans are going forward on the basis of an FBI investigation that a very respected Member of this body has publicly said was inadequate.

What else do we know about it? Well, it has been reported in the press that the chairman has said that it took three briefings by the FBI to get through the background investigation. I don't know why that happened, but we do know that new material emerged in the press about various kinds of misconduct by this individual after the

initial background investigation took place.

So the likeliest scenario to explain why there were three background investigations in the light of the recurring release of further information about his repeated misconduct is that there were supplemental background investigations after the original full field FBI background investigation was completed.

Let's presume that to be true. Again, we can't know this because this is all tied up in so much unnecessary secrecy, in my view. Let's presume that that is the case.

What does that mean? Well, what we discovered during the Kavanaugh background investigation is that the regular FBI full field background investigation takes place under a set of longstanding rules and protocols and procedures. They have forms that they follow. It has been routinized to a fairly significant degree. It is different than a proper FBI investigation. A proper FBI investigation in the criminal law enforcement front has a whole different set of controls and protocols and supervisory roles over that. When you get into the full field background investigation, you are operating under a different set of rules, but you are still operating under rules.

And you can ask the question to the FBI: Was this background investigation conducted fully within the rules and the protocols for background investigations—until you get to a supplemental background investigation.

Now, one of the objections that I had to the way we were treated as we tried to get to the bottom of the Kavanaugh background investigation was that the then-head of the FBI kept repeatedly saying publicly—we were repeatedly told that the supplemental background investigation was done consistent with all of the FBI standard protocols and procedures. What was misleading about that, as we later discovered, is that for a supplemental background investigation, there are no operating procedures and protocols. Wray said that they comported with all of their procedures. Didn't disclose that, in fact, there are no procedures to comport with.

What is the FBI doing in a supplemental background investigation? They are doing only and exactly what the White House has instructed them to do—period, no more, no less, no procedure, no protocol—which raises a huge question about the adequacy of this background investigation to the extent that, in its later stages, it was a supplemental background investigation.

We know that, when the Kavanaugh investigation was going on, Republican Senators were told that there was no corroboration—corroboration being kind of an important legal term here—no corroboration of the charges that had been brought by Dr. Blasey Ford of his attack on her those many years ago—no corroboration.

What we found out, later on, is that the instructions from the White House

to the FBI for that supplemental background investigation related to her charges were: Don't look for, don't find, and don't report to us any corroborating information.

We also found out that they never interviewed either Dr. Blasey Ford about her allegations or Brett Kavanaugh about his conduct.

So there is every reason to believe about this background investigation, as to the supplemental background investigation part of it, that it was woefully incomplete; that it was restricted by the White House to very, very narrow bounds; that we do not know what those narrow bounds are; and that, very likely, neither Hegseth nor the individuals making the charges were even interviewed by the FBI. And we can suspect that because that is precisely what happened in the Kavanaugh background investigation.

So there is a major, major weakness in what is publicly described as an inadequate background investigation, to the extent that those latter two segments of it that caused the three briefings to have to take place were supplemental background investigations precisely and exactly controlled by the Trump White House.

Another point that relates to all of this is that, when these witnesses came forward, the standard counterattack against them was that they were anonymous. Over and over again, Hegseth said in the committee: "Anonymous smears"—"anonymous smears."

These accusers were not anonymous. Not only were they not anonymous, they were willing and presented themselves as willing to be able to come over here and personally brief, in their offices, any Republican Senator. It is not anonymous when you are willing to show up in a Senator's office and give a personal briefing.

What they weren't willing to do was to put their names out there publicly. Now, why would they want to steer away from that? Ask Christine Blasey Ford what her life was turned into by far-right and MAGA attacks on her after she came forward with her charges against Brett Kavanaugh.

Ask the poll workers who were Rudy Giuliani's victims what their lives turned into after he called them out—conduct against them that gave rise to the massive, multimillion-dollar verdict that Rudy Giuliani is still struggling to pay. Evidently, some billionaire paid it off for him. We will see.

But it is perfectly logical for a person to be willing to come forward, like many witnesses are, to identify themselves and to speak privately—the way people often do in a grand jury—to a prosecutor without yet putting your name out there. And, actually, some are not anonymous, but we should reject the notion that these witnesses were anonymous. They were not anonymous. They are real people with real faces who are willing to come in and tell their real stories, and Republican Senators simply refuse to hear them.

That is a different thing than anonymity. They couldn't get through the doors of the offices.

So either our Republican colleagues already know who these people are—so they are not anonymous—or they are perfectly able to find out by getting their names and inviting them in and hearing them out. It seems like a pretty simple ask.

Now, in some cases, for instance, Mr. Hegseth's sister-in-law—ex-sister-in-law, I guess you would say—has actually put her name on her affidavit, describing his abusive and drunken misconduct. So she is not anonymous by any stretch of the imagination. And because the far-right counterattack team likes to attack people who are willing to come forward, they actually outed one of the other witnesses in a story. I won't mention her name because I do not want to make things even worse for her, but they did out her in a right-wing publication.

So you have at least two names that are out there that are clearly not anonymous and, indeed, are public. What happens with them? What happens with them is that they are accused of having evil motive; that they had a motive to lie about Pete Hegseth, and that is what is driving what they have been saying.

Well, guess who is really good at interviewing witnesses and looking at the surrounding circumstances and evaluating a motive—the FBI. The FBI is. So, if the FBI in this supplemental background investigation was instructed not to evaluate motive—just to let that be a political hand grenade to throw with no foundation—then we have an extra layer of problems with this background investigation.

So there is every reason to believe that the background investigation was inadequate and specifically directed by the White House away from relevant evidence, the way the Kavanaugh investigation was directed away from corroborating evidence. Here, it would have been directed away from evidence of motive, and you have got a real problem on your hands.

I urge my Republican colleagues—this is kind of the last call. If this guy gets in and starts to behave the way reasonable people can expect him to behave, you are going to own that. And when you say, "Oh, the background investigation should have brought that up," not if you didn't ask about the background investigation, not if you didn't get a real one, not if you didn't bring the actual witnesses in to hear from them themselves.

We have had another little event recently, which are the pardons of the violent January 6 rioters.

Before those pardons took place, our Republican colleagues said over and over again that that will never happen; that this is a weird Democrat pipe dream. "The very notion of pardoning these violent rioters who hurt police officers—who attacked and harmed police officers—is absurd," said one col-

league. The Vice President said it wasn't going to happen; that it would be wrong.

And after all of that talk and all of that reassurance, what happened? Donald Trump went right out and did it.

So, if you think there are guardrails around this individual, it has already been proven that they are not there. The thing you thought was absurd, the thing you thought would never happen, the thing you said was wrong was done, and if that is not a lesson as we go forward into these other defective nominees, I can't help you; I can't make you vote any other way.

But it ought to be clear that, with future misconduct by this guy, whether he is being drunk on duty or erratic or abusive or inappropriate with female staff and officers or even abusing the power of our military to accomplish political purposes for President Trump, there is really no sign of guardrails to prevent that, and an inadequate FBI report is something that should be cleared up before Republicans are forced to vote on this.

It is in your power to look into these things and get it done. It is not in our power in the minority. We are doing the best we can. So I urge you to consider those dangers as we move forward toward this vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, we are about to have a monumental vote out here on the floor of the U.S. Senate on who will become the next Secretary of Defense for the United States of America.

The defense budget in the United States is \$900 billion. The person who is given that responsibility has to be exceptionally well qualified in order to deal with all of the responsibilities that are tied to those military and personnel decisions which have to be made because there are 3.5 million servicemembers, and there are hundreds of thousands of aircraft, ships, submarines, combat vehicles, satellites, and the nuclear arsenal. And a variety of sources, including his own writings, implicate him with disregarding the laws of war, of financial mismanagement, of racist and sexist remarks about Americans in uniform, of sexual assault, of sexual harassment, and other very troubling issues.

These are perilous times, and the position of Secretary of Defense demands a leader of unparalleled experience, wisdom, and, above all else, character. The Secretary of Defense carries an immense responsibility not only to the American people but to the servicemembers whom they lead.

If confirmed, Mr. Hegseth will have a responsibility to serve our servicemembers in a manner that is fair and non-partisan and responsible. Yet Mr. Hegseth has demonstrated that he is incapable of doing so.

He has said:

I am straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles.

He is opposed to transgender people serving in the military, despite their willingness to serve and sacrifice for our country right now.

He called reproductive justice “absolutely and utterly meaningless” in the military. He opposed Pentagon policies to help servicemembers get reproductive care, including IVF to start a family. These are American servicemembers.

I find Hegseth’s record extremely alarming. He is nominated to lead an Agency charged with defending American freedom abroad. Yet he does not stand for freedom and dignity and respect for the servicemembers of the United States of America in the military. Indeed, Mr. Hegseth’s own writings and alleged conduct should disqualify him from holding any leadership position in the military, much less from being confirmed as the Secretary of Defense for our Nation.

Donald Trump dared to impugn the legacy of the late, honorable Congressman John Lewis by saying, “John Lewis was all talk and no action,” but then Trump nominates a Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, who perpetuates the lie, the racism that Black military officers are only promoted because of their race. Tell that to Colin Powell; tell that to Lloyd Austin, that they were only promoted because of their color. This is not just a failure of leadership; it is a moral crisis that strikes at the heart of who we are as a people.

It is not enough to just oppose Trump’s vision. There are hundreds of thousands of women in the military right now, and 19 percent of our military is African American. These are Hegseth’s own words about this very high percentage of the members of our military right now.

So the criticism of Hegseth is bipartisan. Senators from both sides of the aisle are opposed to this nomination. If you didn’t know anything else about him—if we didn’t have any more hearings, if we didn’t have any more documents, if we didn’t have any other people coming forward—we already have enough evidence and eye-watering detail sufficient to cast a “no” vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate on this nomination. That is because the position of Secretary of Defense is a serious job. We need someone who will bring their A game, 24/7, 365 days a year; and Pete Hegseth is not that person. His lack of experience aside, he has not shown the necessary morality, sense, or judgment to be Secretary of Defense.

Take the issue of nuclear weapons. Is this the person we want advising the President on whether or not he should launch a nuclear weapon against another country and possibly begin the end of life on Earth as we know it?

Secretary of Defense is a very important position. It puts him right at the heart of these nuclear decisions.

This nomination is a joke. Are you kidding me? Pete Hegseth will be there

helping to decide whether or not we launch nuclear weapons?

Let’s be clear. President Trump, as Commander in Chief, has the sole authority to order the launch of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. This is crazy, on its face, that one person can determine whether or not we start a nuclear war, with no consultation with anyone else. That is just absolutely absurd on its face, because no one person, particularly not President Trump, should have that unilateral power to start nuclear war.

I have just reintroduced my legislation with Congressman TED LIEU in the House of Representatives to make it the policy of the United States that no President can use nuclear weapons first without the express approval of Congress if we have not been attacked with nuclear weapons. You have got to come to Congress. But that is not the law right now. It is just the President.

Under the Constitution, Congress gets to declare war, not the President. But for now, President Trump has that power exclusively. At any time, for any reason, he can call over the military attache with the nuclear football and call the war room at the Pentagon and give the order to launch. Trump does not have to consult with anyone—not Congress, not the Joint Chiefs of Staff, not the Secretary of Defense.

But if President Trump did want to get a second opinion before starting a nuclear war which could end humanity, calling the Secretary of Defense would usually be a pretty good option in order to make that decision. Do we have any reason to believe that Pete Hegseth has any clue about nuclear weapons or nuclear policy or nuclear strategy? No, we do not.

In fact, Mr. Hegseth’s only qualification for this job that I can see is whether he will do whatever the President asks him to do.

Pete Hegseth is a yes-man. If President Trump calls Pete Hegseth at 2 a.m. in the morning and says, Pete, I am about to start a nuclear war, even though we haven’t been attacked with nuclear weapons, what will Pete Hegseth say? He will say, yes, sir.

So from this perspective, Mr. Hegseth is the worst possible choice to lead the Department of Defense.

We need someone who can challenge the President’s thinking, slow him down, curb his worst impulses, and give him sober, reasoned advice. And with Hegseth, that is not going to happen.

There are other monumental decisions on nuclear policy that President Trump will need reasoned advice on that he is not likely to get from Pete Hegseth. During the campaign, Trump had just one clear proposal related to nuclear policy: to build an Iron Dome missile defense system to ensure that “no enemy can strike our homeland.”

Now, this is a throwback to former President Ronald Reagan’s 1983 proposal called the Strategic Defense Initiative—also called Star Wars—to build a system of space- and ground-based

interceptors to make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete.” It made for great slogans. But after 40 years and some \$400 billion, the technology is still not up to the challenge.

If you try to scale up Iron Dome and cover a country the size of the United States against hundreds of Russian or Chinese long-range missiles, it just won’t work.

Trump could provoke a new arms race, even without his Iron Dome on steroids. Trump’s allies have called for the United States to build more nuclear weapons than Moscow and Beijing combined.

This idea is popular among conservatives at the Heritage Foundation and Project 2025. But let’s be clear. Expanding the U.S. nuclear arsenal is a terrible idea.

We need treaties that end the nuclear arms race. We don’t need a nuclear arms race with AI making these weapons even more deadly, even more accurate. We need treaties. We need negotiations. We need to come together on the planet. That is what we should be talking about.

Building more than we need is a waste of money, but it also makes the world more dangerous, not less dangerous, because it provokes a response from the other side.

Second, guess what Moscow and Beijing will do if Washington suddenly builds more bombs. They will do the same.

Third, a U.S. buildup would doom any chances of saving the U.S.-Russian arms reduction process.

The last remaining treaty, New START, expires 1 year from now. And unless we replace that treaty, there will no longer be any legal limits on the United States or Russian warheads for the first time in 50 years.

Do you hear what I said? No limits. We are in a new world now. For 50 years, we have had limits on nuclear weapons. They will all be gone in a year.

Trump’s allies are also calling for the United States to resume the testing of nuclear weapons for the first time since 1992. We ended nuclear testing three decades ago and then signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996 banning all nuclear tests. We have conducted more nuclear tests—over 1,000—than all other nations combined. We have no need to test. But if we do, other nations will too, like Russia and China. Beijing has only conducted 45 nuclear tests. We have conducted a thousand.

Imagine how much China could learn if Trump gives it an excuse to resume testing, which China is not doing.

The only state in the world today that is still conducting nuclear tests is North Korea. We should be pressuring Pyongyang to stop, not reopening this Pandora’s box.

So, under Trump, we could see billions of dollars spent on long-range missile defenses that don’t work, the end of arms control and the start of a

new nuclear arms race with Russia and China, and new nuclear testing. All of this would make the world a more dangerous place and increase the risk of nuclear conflict.

If Trump asks Hegseth if he should do these dangerous things, the answer will be yes and yes and yes. That is where we are going to be.

Now, there is some possible good news, too. Trump, not surprisingly, gets along well with Russian President Putin. They might end the war in Ukraine. If they do, that could open up a path to negotiate a treaty, to follow a New START.

And as President Trump said just this week: We want to see if we can denuclearize. And I think it's very possible. And I can tell you that President Putin, if he wants to do it, we should take him up on it.

We should see. We should move in that direction.

As for Mr. Hegseth, the last thing President Trump needs is a yes-man for Secretary of Defense.

I will just add one final issue. As a national security threat, climate change, which the Pentagon and which the Joint Chiefs of Staff have said over and over and over again is a threat multiplier to our military and our ability to protect the world—it is a threat multiplier. Having a President who is a climate denier, coupled with the Secretary of Defense who is a climate denier, just ignores the reality of the world as it is unfolding in this climate era.

The whole defense budget is \$900 billion. Hurricanes Milton and Helene in October and November, combined with the fires in Los Angeles right now, \$500 billion of damage in three storms. That is half the entire defense budget for our country.

We can't have a Secretary of Defense who doesn't believe that climate change is a threat multiplier to our military and to the security of the planet. We need someone there who can speak truth to power to the President of the United States.

So I can't more strongly recommend a "no" vote on the floor of the Senate on this nomination. He is unqualified. His confirmation could be very dangerous to our Nation. We need military personnel who respects the Secretary of Defense. We will have none of that with Pete Hegseth.

So I very, very strongly recommend to this body that we vote no and tell the President to come back with someone who is worthy of this most important of all positions in his Cabinet.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Maryland.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to speak to some of the actions that President Trump has taken just in his first 3 to 4 days and speak to the nomination of Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense.

President Trump was sworn in at noon on Monday just down the hall a bit. As a candidate, he ran promising to help working men and women throughout the country. He talked about addressing their kitchen table issues. So let's take a quick look at some of the big actions that have been taken just in the last 4 days.

One very serious action taken was pardoning the men and women who were convicted of bludgeoning and assaulting police officers in this Capitol on January 6, 2021. For those of us who were here that day, we will never forget, because after losing that election, Donald Trump unleashed rioters on Capitol Hill, rampaging throughout the "citadel of democracy," clubbing police officers with baseball bats, and crushing them between doors.

Mr. President, 140 law enforcement officers from the Capitol Police and the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Police were injured that day. I remember their heroism, and I remember those who died in the days following those attacks.

To pardon people who were convicted of assaulting and bloodying and bludgeoning police officers demonstrates contempt for the men and women who help protect us every day—not just here in the Capitol but men and women in law enforcement throughout the country.

As the Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Police Chiefs have said, "Allowing those convicted of these crimes to be released early diminishes accountability and devalues the sacrifices made by courageous law enforcement officers and their families." They go on to say that this leniency "sends a dangerous message that the consequences of attacking law enforcement are not severe, potentially emboldening others to commit similar acts of violence."

The simple result of this is to send a terrible message that if you assault police officers in the name of Donald Trump, he will be there to pardon you.

Let's look at some of the other actions he has taken just in these first days back in the White House.

He issued an Executive order that rolls back initiatives to help reduce the costs of prescription drugs for more Americans.

He has been laying the groundwork here on Capitol Hill for a huge new tax cut that will disproportionately benefit the superwealthy and the biggest corporations at the expense of other Americans.

We heard him speak at that podium during his swearing-in of the golden age, and sitting right behind him were

the billionaire titans from the tech industry. He is going to deliver a golden age—an even more golden age for those who are already very wealthy and for the biggest corporations, but it is not going to trickle down and help others. We know that because we have seen this movie before.

We saw Trump tax cuts 1.0. They promised that investments in businesses would go up, the idea being that if you provide tax cuts to big corporations, they will take the additional savings and they will invest it in their businesses. Well, that has been looked at, and that didn't happen. What did go up were stock buybacks engaged in by the corporations to further benefit their shareholders, many of them already very wealthy people.

They promised that those savings would be used by corporations to increase wages. In fact, they said that on average, it would be \$4,000 a worker. It just didn't happen. What went up were CEO bonuses.

What else went up was the deficit and the debt. The claim that these would somehow pay for themselves was just once again a pure falsehood disproved by reality.

So here we are embarking on 2.0, Trump tax cuts 2.0—same story unfolding, although now we already hear our colleagues talking about how everybody else in America and many other millions of Americans are going to have to pay for the tax cuts for the folks at the very top.

Just take a look at some of the proposals made by the chairman of the House Budget Committee, a Republican Member of Congress, talking about trillions of cuts in things like Medicaid—a very important health program that helps kids with disabilities, helps lower income individuals, helps seniors in nursing homes; talking about cutting programs in—food and nutrition programs.

So everyone seems to be all in with President Trump on the idea of another round of tax cuts for the very rich, but they are going to ask everybody else in the country to pay for it.

Let's look at something else the President did in his first 3 or 4 days. He issued an executive order called schedule F. What is schedule F? In a nutshell, schedule F is an attempt to convert our merit-based civil service into a political cronyism-based civil service.

Since the late 1800s and the Pendleton Act, we have had a civil service based on merit. Civil servants—people who work for the Federal Government in regular, ongoing positions—have to pass a test, show that they are qualified, that they are experienced, that they have the know-how. It is what you know, not who you know.

What President Trump and his team are proposing in schedule F is to convert that merit-based system into a politics-based system where you have a political litmus test not for competence but for your politics.

I should point out that of course Presidents are entitled to lots of people in their administration as political appointments. In fact, there are about 4,000 political appointments in our current system. Obviously, you have the Secretaries of various Departments—I am going to talk about one of those in a minute—but you have the Deputy Secretaries, and you have many Assistant Secretaries.

So you have 4,000 political appointments already available to be made by President Trump, but that is not enough, apparently. They are talking about converting approximately another about 16,000 additional positions that are currently merit-based systems, based on your qualifications, to political cronyism-based systems.

That is a recipe for corruption. It is a recipe for reducing the quality of services to the American people from coast to coast. You do not want somebody who is chosen just because of who they know and what their politics are to be the people doing your food inspection or working on policy on all sorts of important things that impact the American people.

A lot of those positions will be at the Department of Defense, so I want to turn now to the nomination of Pete Hegseth to be the Secretary of Defense.

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Now, I mentioned that Presidents have the flexibility to appoint many political folks to positions in the U.S. Government, but for the top ones—for the Secretary of Defense, for example—the Founders of this country—those who wrote the Constitution—put a little bit of check and balance in that. They said the Senate has the right to advise and consent on those very top positions because those are incredibly consequential decisions, and we want people of good judgment and good character in those positions. So that is what the Senate is engaged in right now, is a debate under the advice and consent clause of the U.S. Constitution.

I think we all recognize that we are here at a very perilous moment in the world. We have Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine. Our allies are watching closely to know whether we are going to stand with the people of Ukraine. Other people are watching too. President Xi of China has one eye on what is happening in Ukraine and he has another eye on Taiwan. We have huge challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. We have a very combustible Middle East, with the malign actions Iran continues to take. We have a very fragile cease-fire in Gaza, with the return of hostages. If you look around the world, it is in a very, very sensitive and explosive moment.

We should keep that in mind as we decide whether we are going to provide advice and consent to Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense—somebody who will be overseeing 3.4 million servicemembers and employees; someone who will be second to the President in mak-

ing decisions on the operation of our nuclear forces; someone who will oversee what represents over half of the entire discretionary budget of the United States of America—\$850 billion.

So in this moment, it is especially important that we look at his qualifications because what we don't want is somebody who is untested and incompetent and someone of low character running the Defense Department in the highest position of that Department. Yet, as we have heard from ample testimony, that is exactly what will happen if Pete Hegseth is confirmed to be Secretary of Defense.

As our colleague, Senator REED of Rhode Island, the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and someone who served in the 82nd Airborne, has said, servicemembers with Mr. Hegseth's record would be disqualified not just from the highest position of the Defense Department but any position in the military.

This Secretary of Defense would be overseeing all of those men and women whom we ask to uphold the highest tradition and values of our country, and yet the person who would be in charge, if confirmed, would be somebody who would be disqualified from being one of them. That is a terrible message to send.

Let's take a look at the record on management as well as the personal conduct of the person President Trump has nominated to be head of the Defense Department, Mr. Hegseth.

He led two veterans organizations and, based on the testimony, in both cases engaged in financial mismanagement and wasteful spending. When managing a budget of under \$10 million, he repeatedly overspent until the organization was on the edge of bankruptcy.

In his next leadership role, he continued to overspend, including on social events and excessive drinking. His successor in that position was told:

Among the staff, the disgust for Pete was pretty high. Most veterans do not think he represents them nor their highest standard of excellence.

He was told that funds had been used to fund Mr. Hegseth's partying and drinking, as well as his use of work events to "hook up with women on the road."

Mr. Hegseth has a disturbing history of sexual harassment. In 2017, he was credibly accused of raping a woman in a California hotel room. We learned yesterday that Mr. Hegseth paid the woman \$50,000 to prevent her from talking about the assault. We also know that he failed to disclose that information to the transition team, attempting to keep it secret.

We can understand why he didn't want the American people and the Senate to know that.

So I really wonder how the Senate could possibly confirm Mr. Hegseth for an entry-level security clearance, let alone the enormous responsibility of leading the Department of Defense and the men and women who serve there.

Let's take a look at another aspect of Mr. Hegseth's record, because whoever is Secretary of Defense has to understand that they represent the great American military—every single person in it, regardless of background, regardless of religion, regardless of race, regardless of sexual orientation. That is their job. They all bleed red. They are all out there fighting for the United States of America. They have all sworn to defend our country.

And, yet, if you look at his statements, it is very clear that he believes military service is for some, but not all, Americans who want to serve. His remarks are centered on disparaging women, people in the LGBT community, and Muslim Americans.

Let's look at the women serving in the military. He has said:

I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles.

Now, I watched some of the hearing. I saw him try to wheedle out of statements that he had made very clearly, like this one I just read. And, frankly, nobody should be fooled by this eleventh hour conversion as he seeks to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. He said what he said, and it was actually part of a pattern when it came to women serving in the military.

In his 2024 book called "The War on Warriors," Mr. Hegseth criticized both the don't ask, don't tell, as well as its repeal, writing that these policies are just part of a social justice agenda.

I would say to those men and women who are serving in our military who have been condemned and criticized by Mr. Hegseth, we all thank you for your service. Most of us thank you for your service.

In his 2020 book, "American Crusade," Mr. Hegseth portrays contemporary cultural and political conflicts in the United States. He portrays them as part of the Crusades—the Crusades—and frames "Islamism" and Muslim immigration as existential threats to American society.

Again, we have a military comprised of people of all different faiths. They have all sworn an oath to defend this country, and we should not have a Secretary of Defense that maligns a big group based on their faith and engages in that kind of bigotry.

And yet, in 2015, a former employee reported that Hegseth chanted: "Kill all Muslims." In a "drunk and violent manner" he said that.

So these are just some examples of the words and conduct of the person that we are considering to be Secretary of Defense for all the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces and in the Pentagon. And we should not want any member of our military to be fearful of the person who is leading them. And, yet, if you are falling into one of these groups—or even if you are not—you should be very scared about what he has said, maligning certain Americans and trying to pit people against each other based on faith, based on gender, based on sexual orientation.

I want to turn to one other category of important issues that we would think—I hope we would think—should be upheld by the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Hegseth has lacked moral clarity and expertise about lots of elements of the military and war, including the laws of armed conflict. And his comments suggest that he does not believe that the U.S. Armed Forces should follow the laws of war.

One of the very important principles we instill in our professional U.S. military is the importance of following the laws of war. And yet Mr. Hegseth has lobbied for pardons of military members who were turned in, based on testimony of their peers, for illegal behavior and convicted by military courts. He defended military contractors convicted of war crimes, including killing 14 unarmed Iraqi citizens without cause, just for fun, just because they thought they could get away with it.

He has repeatedly mocked the laws of armed conflict and expressed unequivocal support for servicemembers who have been convicted of war crimes. In his book, so-called “The War on Warriors,” he writes:

Should we follow the Geneva Conventions?

Aren't we just better off in winning our wars according to our own rules?

A former colleague of ours and a great American hero, Senator McCain, would be turning in his grave to hear these kinds of comments. I want to read what Senator McCain said about the importance of the laws of war.

War is retched beyond description, and only a fool or a fraud could sentimentalize its cruel reality. The Geneva Conventions and the Red Cross were created in response to the stark recognition of the true horrors of unbounded war. And I thank God for that. I am thankful for those of us whose dignity, health and lives have been protected by the Conventions.

Senator John McCain in 1999.

Hegseth, 2025: Let's just get rid of those rules of war—put in place because of the hard-earned lessons of, as Senator McCain said, the wretchedness of war.

Mr. Hegseth has also talked about going back to the days of illegal waterboarding and ignoring the Geneva Conventions on the rules when it comes to torture in interrogation, saying that we should—again, as he said—just sort of ignore those rules; do our own thing.

Here is what Senator McCain said about that when it was debated here in the U.S. Senate:

I know from personal experience that the abuse of prisoners will produce more bad than good intelligence. I know that victims of torture will offer intentionally misleading information if they think their capturers will believe it. I know they will say whatever they think their torturers want them to say if they believe it will stop their suffering. Most of all, I know the use of torture compromises that which most distinguishes us from our enemies, our belief that all people, even captured enemies, possess basic human rights, which are protected by international conventions the U.S. not only joined, but for the most part authored.

Senator McCain.

Now, I know that President Trump disdains that great American hero, Senator McCain. In fact here is what Candidate Trump said back in 2015:

He's not a war hero. He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured.

Says somebody who never served in the military.

Colleagues, I urge us to apply the standards that Senator McCain would apply. I urge us to listen to our colleague JACK REED, who served in the 82nd Airborne and, with great diligence, serves as the ranking members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I would ask our colleagues, based on this record of personal misconduct, financial mismanagement, Pete Hegseth's disregard for many men and women who serve in the military—based on his own statements—and his contempt for the rules of war that John McCain so eloquently upheld, when it comes to this Senator—I hope other Senators—when it comes to providing advice and consent as part of our constitutional duty under the Constitution and balance of powers, I will withhold my consent, and I urge my colleagues to vote no on the nomination of Pete Hegseth to serve as the Secretary of Defense.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, when I came out of graduate school, I was hired by Secretary Weinberger as a Presidential Management Intern—now called PMF, or Presidential Management Fellows—five of us who were brought in to do a series of rotations to bring, well, an injection of policy determination to the conversation in Secretary of Defense's Office.

And it was really quite an enlightening experience. My first assignment involved being desk officer for Jordan at the Defense Security Systems Agency, because the desk officer who worked for both Jordan and Lebanon had to pay a lot more attention to Lebanon because we had the horrific bombing of the Marines in the tower.

And then there was an argument inside the defense establishment about how to keep Russia from going forward at a faster pace technologically. And the research and development side said: If you classify everything, you will slow us down and Russia will catch up.

And the policy said: Unless we classify everything, the Russians will steal so much, they will speed up and catch up.

And there was this fundamental difference of opinion about how to control technology in order to maintain our technological lead over Russia.

And I was asked to set up a steering committee and bring both parties to the table to try to work out where they could work together and try to resolve their differences.

And in the course of things, I was drafted to become a programmer to do

computer studies of survivability related to what strategies with our strategic forces would decrease the risk of nuclear war happening? What would strengthen deterrence? And then on to a service at NATO, and then to an R&D budgeting cycle, where I learned many of the budget games the Defense Department employs in order to get a whole lot of money that seems to be never accounted for.

In fact, it has become universally recognized that the Defense Department can never pass a budget, can never pass a budget test—that is, an audit—because they don't track anything very closely, and there are just all kinds of loose ends left.

And year after year, Democrats and Republicans have said: Audit the Secretary of Defense. Audit the Defense Department. We want to know where our funds go.

And here we are, decades and decades later, and we still have that same problem.

You know, it was a valuable several years that led, then, to me working for Congress on strategic nuclear issues. And in the decade of the 1980s, we saw some real advances in our security. We saw some real advances in terms of the stability of the nuclear dynamic with the then-Soviet Union.

And, in fact, the folks who put together the Doomsday Clock, which was very close to midnight when I started working on defense issues, was turned back some 13 or 15 minutes from midnight by the late eighties because of a series of agreements and policies and force changes that had been worked out over the eighties.

The Defense Department is massive. It is massive—an annual budget of about \$850 billion, 3.4 million people working for it, 2.5 million servicemembers, 900,000 civilians. It is massive. It is complicated.

But what experience does Mr. Hegseth bring? He ran two little micro-nonprofits, and he ran them into the ground. He had documented problems with drinking on the job. He had credible and repeated accusations of sexual assault. He showed disrespect for female servicemembers and diverse servicemembers, including the current—well, the former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Brown.

What?

This man who couldn't manage his way out of a paper bag, who mismanaged the enterprise he had undertaken—that is the man we are going to confirm to run the U.S. military that has massive needs for reform?

Is this man some expert in military strategy? No. Is he some esteemed driver of the new technology of war with drones? No. Did he have diverse experiences inside the Defense Department that gave him many perspectives about the incredible sections of the Defense Department that deal with so many different issues? No, no.

So why are we having this conversation? What has happened to the idea of

credible leadership? I can tell you what happened. The President of the United States, President Trump, said: Do what I want, or I will primary you. And now we have a bunch of folks across the aisle that are not doing their job under the Constitution. The Constitution says it is our responsibility to advise and consent, to vet nominees and to make sure they are qualified before they take these positions.

I say to my colleagues: Stop shaking and shivering under the aura of an authoritarian President and do your job. And your job is to say no, because this man is not qualified.

He did not even tell President-elect Trump about all the accusations made against him. If he could not tell President Trump the truth before he was serving and before President Trump is President Trump, how will he be able to stand up for the truth and say what needs to be said after President Trump is in office and he is Secretary of Defense?

The Department of Defense has failed seven audits in a row. The Secretary of Defense must be able to get the department on track to pass an audit. It is mandated by Congress. It has been mandated before, and they still fail year after year. But both sides say it should happen. We should put some teeth into that.

But I tell you, putting a man who can't manage a tiny nonprofit isn't going to get the job done. They ran up enormous debt. And by 2008, the financial records show they were unable to pay their creditors—irresponsible in the max.

I know running a small nonprofit is hard. I was the director of an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, and I ran the housing division of another nonprofit that developed affordable housing, and then I was President of the World Affairs Council and had the managerial responsibilities. And it was tough making sure we hit payroll each month, making sure we raise more money for the aspirations we had for those organizations. It was hard work. I worried about it all the time, but we always met payroll. We always advanced in our mission.

Maybe, if we are going to hire somebody from a sole nonprofit to run a gigantic organization, we should at least know they can run the small organization before they get promoted to running an organization with millions of people and the better part of a trillion dollars in its budget.

A Republican strategist who worked with him at that organization said:

I don't know how he's going to run an organization with an \$857 billion budget and 3 million individuals.

On more than a dozen occasions, Mr. Hegseth's FOX News colleagues report smelling alcohol on him before he went on air, including just a couple of months ago. Former employees of the nonprofit he ran reported him being drunk on the job and having to be carried out of events.

That is the person we want running the Department of Defense?

A former employee noted in a letter of complaint that Mr. Hegseth was drunkenly chanting "Kill all Muslims, Kill all Muslims" at a bar while on a work trip.

You know, we have many faiths serving us in the defense of this country because we are a multifaith Nation. Having a person who advocates for killing people of a particular religious faith is not acceptable to run the Department of Defense.

He said: Well, I will reform. I have broken the rules on drinking before, but I will reform. How many times have you heard that from people who are—well, they have an addiction. They try to reform. Maybe they make it for a little while. But in the end, they relapse. Shall we put that risk upon the security of the United States of America?

We used to have a more responsible attitude here in the Senate. In 1989, when President George H. W. Bush nominated John Tower, an FBI investigation revealed that he was a drunk and a womanizer and Mr. Tower pledged not to drink any alcoholic beverages during his time as Secretary of Defense, just as Mr. Hegseth has. And then the Senate weighed the risk of putting somebody with an addiction in charge of the Department of Defense and rejected his nomination.

It is an insult to the servicemembers of the United States of America to put a man with an addiction in charge of them. It is irresponsible to the security of the Nation and all civilians of this Nation.

The Department of Defense struggles with high levels of sexual assault of female servicemembers, so a person who has been involved in numerous incidents of misbehavior on the issue of treating women isn't the right person to have as the Secretary of Defense.

In 2023, the year I have numbers for, 29,000 Active-Duty troops reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact. Mr. Hegseth has been accused of sexual assault. He paid the accuser \$50,000 in a settlement. It took place in 2017 after a speaking appearance at a Republican women's event in Monterey, CA. No charges were filed. But this, in combination with multiple other reports of his treatment—accusations of mistreatment of women, means he is the wrong person to have at an organization in which women provide enormously valuable contributions.

During his time at the head of a veterans' organization, the employees report that Mr. Hegseth "sexually pursued the organization's female staffers." It is not like this was one misunderstood event somewhere in his way past life.

Women are 18 percent of our Active-Duty servicemembers, but Mr. Hegseth dismisses them.

We need moms. But not in the military, especially not in combat boots.

He went on to say:

I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles. It hasn't made us more effective. Hasn't made us more lethal. Has made fighting more complicated.

And he is wrong on every point. Women in combat roles have helped fill out ranks. We do have a volunteer Army. We do recruit to get the staff we need in the military in order to be able to operate the weapons systems and the communication systems and the supply systems and the repair systems—all of it. They work in every role—valuable, valuable contributors.

We should not put a person at the head of our Department of Defense who somehow thinks half the jobs in the world can only be done by men, because it is wrong and because it undermines the effectiveness of the military providing security.

He also doesn't like minorities. Well, minority groups comprise 30 percent of servicemembers. I don't care what color of skin you have. I do care if you work hard as a member of the military to support the security of this Nation. And people of every race are a valuable part of our military. And a man who thinks the color of your skin controls the content of your character and the ability and talents that you possess doesn't belong as the head of the military.

He has said:

The dumbest phrase on planet Earth is "our diversity is our strength."

You take away the diversity in our service and you will soon see our diverse servicemembers are invaluable, and a person who doesn't understand that should never be confirmed. That is our job. Our job, under the Constitution, is to say: Mr. President, sometime Presidents get it wrong. Maybe it is for political reasons; maybe you woke up and didn't know all the background of the person. But we have to vet them, and we have to help make sure your executive branch is successful.

That is our job. You are not helping President Trump by voting for a man totally unqualified—the most unqualified man who could be found in America to head the Department of Defense.

Mr. Hegseth says:

I told my platoon they could ignore directives limiting when they can shoot.

A person who violates the directives in the military doesn't belong running the military. There is a strong command structure in the military, and it includes how you behave in certain situations that are crucial to the security of this Nation. But he did not understand that.

He has argued that "U.S. forces should ignore the Geneva Conventions and other elements of international law governing the conduct of war."

As my colleague from Maryland was just talking about and reciting the wisdom of John McCain saying how the Geneva Conventions and rules on torture serve us well, because you get misinformation when you torture people and you get Americans tortured when

they are captured if we are torturing people. So a man who believes in torturing people doesn't understand how to get accurate information and is putting our own servicemembers at risk when they are captured.

Why would any Member of this body so disrespect the servicemembers of the United States of America as to put this man in charge?

I was honored to work for Secretary Weinberger. I believed that the world was at great risk of the possibility of nuclear war, and that is the issue I focused on in my time there and then my time working for Congress. There is nothing I saw during my time in the Pentagon that equals this level of failure to protect and defend the United States of America. I did not see people put into command who talked about killing members who were of a different religion than they were. I did not hear people talking about how women should not even be there or how diversity was a problem rather than a strength. I saw her as people working hard together, people who had served in Vietnam together.

Many of the folks who I served with during those 2 years in my role as a civilian being hired to work with Secretary Weinberger had served in Vietnam. The war had ended by the time I had reached draft age, and I so respected the service that they had given and their dedication to the security of this country.

If you are dedicated to the security of this country, if you respect the servicemembers of the United States of America, then do not give them a boss who is the wrong fit in every way possible.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, we are here discussing the nomination of the next potential Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth.

Of course that job, as we all know, is probably the second most difficult job in the country. He presides over the welfare of 3.4 million people in Active service and Active Reserve all around the world. He presides over a budget of \$850 billion. The person who has that position has to be a preeminent strategic thinker: How do we modernize our Navy? How do we recruit in the modern world? How do we maintain force preparedness? How do we cement strategic alliances? It is a job that you can't just show up and start doing; there has to be behind it a lifetime experience that gives you some capacity to be able to do all of these things and respond to the emergencies that inevitably arise when you get that phone call at 3 in the morning.

There has been a lot of discussion by my colleagues about the lack of experience of Mr. Hegseth. I share that concern. There has been a lot of discussion about his views on women in the military, and our distinguished Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH is the most preeminent example of the capacity of

women to serve effectively and bravely.

Mr. Hegseth has repudiated his well-founded, longstanding view that he is against women in the military. Frankly, it sounds to me like a nomination-eve consideration.

Speaking, of course, to the Presiding Officer, I really respect the military service he has provided to our country.

But the big concern I have about Mr. Hegseth, in addition to the character issues, the experience issues, and the drinking issues—and by the way, I am puzzled as to his assertion that if he gets the job, he will stop drinking. Why wait?

But here is the concern I have: Unlike the Presiding Officer, I did not serve in the military. My draft lottery number was high—this was during Vietnam—and I wasn't drafted. Many of my college classmates were. They served in Vietnam. Some of them came home injured, and some did not come home. I think about them every day and how it is that they served. Some were badly injured, and some died.

When I think about the situation most Americans are in, most of us didn't serve, but all of us who didn't serve are so indebted to those who did.

My high school classmates were like the young people I see now who are volunteering to go into the military.

So we as Americans have a profound obligation to honor the service of those who volunteer to respond to the call of the Commander in Chief, who says: You are going to be deployed. They don't know where. They are not involved in the discussion of whether. They are not involved in the discussion of when. They show up.

Our democracy so profoundly depends on the idealism of young people who are willing to subject themselves to the decisions of the Commander in Chief, and I believe that every one of us here who is involved in the decisions about authorizing the use of military force has an absolutely profound obligation to do that with care because the folks who are going to do the work and be in harm's way are going to be there because we sent them there.

It is why I have been so insistent, as have many of us here, that we have to have a good VA, that we have to have medical care for our soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines.

But what we need, too, is a Secretary of Defense who honors that idealism of these young Americans who decide to enlist. That idealism is borne in a sense of common commitment, a sense of wanting to do something for the common good, and it is also to live by the code of military conduct.

There is great honor in our services. Those men and women whom I so admire know they may have to use lethal force to defend our values, to defend our country, to protect their fellow soldiers, but they know there are limits, and they use it when they must but never more than that.

By the way, that is asking a lot of our soldiers, to be restrained when

they are in a combat zone and can be killed themselves.

So what distresses me so much about Mr. Hegseth is how he used his very powerful forum on FOX TV, in my view, to dishonor the soldiers who acted with restraint and valor and integrity by taking up the cause of some of our soldiers—there are not many of them, but they do exist—who kill people, who use violence not in furtherance of our defense but for their own reasons.

I am speaking about Mr. Lorange. Clint Lorange was a soldier. He was sent, in 2012, as a new commander without combat experience to lead a platoon of young soldiers who were deployed to Afghanistan with the mission of defeating the local Taliban and winning over the area's population—an incredibly hard task. But one day, for reasons Mr. Lorange—then Soldier Lorange—knew, he threatened to kill a farmer and his son, a 3- or 4-year-old boy. A day later, he ordered his men to shoot within inches of unarmed villagers—that was including near children.

He said: It is funny watching the villagers dance.

Mr. Lorange's men, who were honorable, brave, willing to be in harm's way, and willing to act like warriors but were not ever willing to kill indiscriminately, balked at his orders. And you know how hard that is to do if you are a soldier when you are given an order even if you know it is the wrong order. Then they were told to make false reports about taking fire from the village to justify this conduct, but they refused to do it.

The next day, Lorange ordered fire on unarmed Afghans who were over 100 yards from the platoon. They were killed. They filed a false report claiming the bodies couldn't be reached.

The people I honor are the people under his command who refused to take those orders. The people I honor are soldiers whose bravery extends not just to putting their own physical well-being in harm's way but who maintain that commitment to the ideals of the military code of conduct that give us the standing and legitimacy that are so important to our well-being.

So my problem is this: I want a Secretary of Defense who is as good as the soldiers he leads. Mr. Hegseth, in my view, fails to meet that standard.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I rise today because it is inevitable that at some point in the near future, President Trump will have to convene his national security team in the Situation Room at the White House in response to a global crisis, whether in Ukraine or in the Taiwan Strait or in some other hotspot.

The Situation Room is a room that I have had the privilege of working in as staff on the White House National Security Council. It is a room where the

most consequential decisions are made, where the safety and security of our country is decided, and where the lives of people are determined. But who will be in the room with the President, advising the President during these difficult and stressful times? As the President sits at the end of the table, flanking him will be some of the most senior advisers. One of them, the closest to him, will be the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. President, I rise today because I know the importance of that role in that room. I have seen what it means for the President to turn to the Secretary of Defense for counsel. In fact, I even worked at the Pentagon, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I have seen the massive operation that the Secretary needs to lead every day and what it takes. I have seen the readiness necessary for the Secretary of Defense to turn to the President and provide the right recommendations for America's national security.

I have seen Mr. Pete Hegseth make his case. I have seen his answers in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee. I have seen the reports. I can say from my experience in the Secretary of Defense's Office as well as in the Situation Room, that Mr. Hegseth's appointment is an unnecessary risk in a dangerous global moment.

Now, I get it. President Trump wants to be a disruptor. He wants to bring in people who are going to shake up the system. He wants people who represent a change from the status quo. I am sure a number of us here in the Senate would like to see some changes at the Pentagon—changes as to how things are done and understanding that the status quo is not something we can lean on. We certainly have disagreements on how best to add certainty and stability to the world that seems to be off the rails in this moment. But there is talking about change and there is actually having the skills and the capacity to implement change.

The Department of Defense is our largest employer in our government and one that requires critical leadership.

Let's look at the world that Mr. Hegseth would inherit as Secretary of Defense, the world that President Trump will ask him about in the Situation Room.

On Ukraine, it is clear that Mr. Hegseth simply doesn't know his history. During his nomination hearing, he called Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea a "minor incursion." He has also downplayed the threat that Putin's Russia poses to our NATO allies.

On China, Mr. Hegseth demonstrated a lack of depth of knowledge when asked by Senator DUCKWORTH to name the importance of even one of the ASEAN countries and the type of agreement we have with them. He could not name one. These countries—including multiple treaty allies—are on the frontlines of our competition with China. Multiple ASEAN members

are locked in territorial disputes with China.

This is a critical partner, so much that the Department of Defense 2 months ago released a strategic document called "U.S. Department of Defense Vision Statement for a Prosperous and Secure Southeast Asia" that was centered on ASEAN and even mentioned that "The United States has worked closely with ASEAN on defense and security in the Indo-Pacific region since former Defense Secretary Robert Gates attended the inaugural ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting . . . in 2010." It goes on to say that the "U.S. Secretary of Defense has attended and supported ASEAN at every single one of those gatherings ever since."

In a moment where these disputes could easily flare up to conflict, the President needs a Secretary by his side who doesn't draw a blank on questions about our allies.

And on the Middle East, Mr. Hegseth remarked that ISIS was "raging across Iraq" when President Trump was first sworn into office in 2017 was simply not reflective of the reality on the ground at the time.

Combined, that lack of knowledge and qualifications alone should disqualify Mr. Hegseth from this role. But there is one more disqualifying factor, which is his character.

Now, there has been a lot said about this already in terms of personal challenges and behaviors, so I will leave it at this: Someone who is being asked to lead millions of uniformed and civilian personnel, his statements on women and transgender servicemembers are simply unacceptable.

Claiming that standards have been lowered for women and that allowing LGBT Americans to serve in the military is somehow part of a Marxist agenda is beyond offensive; it is absurd. And it is far beneath the person that is supposed to be setting the standard and serving as a leader for the men and women who have dedicated themselves to protecting this country.

I have said before that every President, including President Trump, has the prerogative to choose the people who sit at that table with him in the Situation Room. But our job here in the Senate is to make sure that those people have the competence and the character to serve our country. This is not a reality TV show. This is real life, and there are real lives at stake.

Mr. Hegseth should be recognized for his service, but he should not be Secretary of Defense. If that is not enough, we are voting also to approve someone to be the sixth in line of Presidential succession. Is Mr. Hegseth ready for either of these distinctions? The answer for me is no.

For the sake of our country and our national security, I encourage my colleagues who want to support this President to oppose this nomination and bring forth another nominee more qualified for the role, more ready for the role. I encourage my colleagues

who want to deliver change to oppose this nomination and bring forth another nominee with the experience and credibility to deliver it. I encourage my colleagues who want to make our country safe, who want to make our world a more stable place, and who want to leave a legacy of peace and strength, to oppose this nomination and bring us a nominee ready to deliver for the American people.

I urge a "no" vote on Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, I am concerned that soon the U.S. Senate might confirm the most unprepared nominee to lead the Department of Defense that has ever been put forward.

I look at every nominee based on whether they are qualified and committed to do the job. It is how I evaluated nominees from the last President, and it is how I am evaluating nominees from this President. And I approach each person with an open mind. It is our responsibility to make sure the folks we consider are ready to do these jobs for the American people.

But this one, the Secretary of Defense, it is especially important. Outside of the Presidency, it might be the biggest job in the country. It is almost impossible to imagine the scale of it.

You have about 3 million people working for you. You are the civilian leader at the top of a massive operation that includes every single soldier, sailor, guardian, airman, marine, and civilian contractor and employee. These folks are spread out across hundreds of military installations in dozens of countries. So it is basically the toughest management job in the world.

You are also responsible for overseeing a budget that exceeds \$850 billion every single year, so it is one of the most complicated budget-management jobs in the world as well.

You are overseeing some of the most complicated weapons systems and defense programs that exist. Some of these are multibillion-dollar projects that happen over the course of years to develop, test, and field.

It is also one of the most demanding policy and program implementation jobs.

Now, not every Secretary of Defense nominee checks the box for each of those qualifications. It is impossible for us to expect that. The job is too big. But what is clear to me at the end of this process is that Mr. Hegseth does not check any of the boxes.

I appreciate his service in the U.S. Army and his service to this country,

especially in combat, but that is not a requirement for this role.

During his career in the Guard and Reserve, Mr. Hegseth did not rise to a command position where he would learn the management, joint forces operations, logistics, and other skills that are relevant to fill this job. In his civilian roles, he has led two veterans organizations, neither of which were larger than about 50 people. And he spent 7 years as a TV host. Normally, this would be the end of the conversation. Normally, it would be clear to every single person in this Chamber that this is not someone ready to do this job.

Now, I understand that the case for his nomination is in part because he is an outsider—I get that—that he can shake things up. I am not opposed to that. The Pentagon needs to be leaner. It needs to move more quickly and be willing to lose things that aren't working and adopt things that will work. Having someone who isn't beholden to the current way of doing things—that is exciting.

My concern is not that Mr. Hegseth is going to succeed in whipping the Pentagon into shape; my concern is that he would fail. Given his lack of experience, it is much more likely that the bureaucracy is going to crush Mr. Hegseth than he is going to crush the bureaucracy. It is not just that Mr. Hegseth is unprepared for this role; the experience he does have is riddled with serious issues that should concern us all.

During his time leading two veterans organizations, he was accused of financial mismanagement.

In 2009, after just about 2 years leading a group called Vets for Freedom, it has been reported that forensic accountants found that the organization had about \$1,000 in the bank, more than \$400,000 in unpaid bills, and \$75,000 in credit card debt. Mr. Hegseth wants to get the Pentagon to finally pass an audit. Yet the much smaller—much smaller—organization he led could not do the same.

During his time leading Concerned Veterans for America, the organization was forced to reach a financial settlement with a female employee who accused a male colleague of trying to sexually assault her. The woman was reportedly ostracized and faced reprisals in the workplace after that settlement. For a Department that is working to address sexual assault and harassment, what would it say to confirm someone who has already fostered environments where these are an issue?

It has also been reported that he frequently abused alcohol, getting drunk in front of his staff and in public. I want to remind folks of some of these incidents:

Memorial Day 2014; CVA event in Virginia Beach. Hegseth needed to be carried out of the event.

Summer 2014 in Cleveland. Drunk in public with the CVA team.

November 2014; "Get Out the Vote" event in North Carolina. Hegseth got

drunk with three young female staff members. CVA had instituted a no-alcohol policy at its events in October—this was 1 month later—but Mr. Hegseth and another manager lifted the policy.

In December 2014, at the CVA Christmas party at the Grand Hyatt in this city, Washington, DC, Hegseth was "noticeably intoxicated and had to be carried up to his room."

Another time, a CVA staffer stated that Hegseth "passed out" in the back of a party bus.

On May 29, 2015, a now-former CVA employee sent a complaint letter to management that Hegseth was chanting "Kill All Muslims" at a bar in Cuyahoga Falls, OH, in "a drunk and violent manner."

While at FOX News, in October 2017, following his dinner speech at the California Federation of Republican Women's 40th Biennial Convention in Monterey, CA, Hegseth was reportedly engaged in a loud argument by the pool and was "very intoxicated."

FOX News employees have reported that after a St. Patrick's Day segment on St. Patrick's Day, after being on TV, Hegseth drank several beers that had been sitting out for hours. These employees also noted that the segment finished before 10 a.m. and they were shocked at Hegseth's behavior.

One current and two former FOX News employees told NBC News that they felt that they had to "babysit" Hegseth to mitigate the effects of his drinking. This is a quote: "We'd have to call him to make sure he didn't oversleep because we knew he'd be out partying the night before."

Two FOX employees—current or former—said that on more than a dozen occasions during Hegseth's time as a cohost on "Fox & Friends Weekend," which began in 2017, they smelled alcohol on him before he went on air. That was in the morning. Those same two people, plus another, said that during his time there, he appeared on television after they heard him talk about being hungover as he was getting ready or on set.

In the fall of 2024, one FOX employee said they heard him complain about being hungover.

In November 2024, one FOX employee said they smelled alcohol on him as recently as this past November, 3 months ago.

During his confirmation hearing, I gave Mr. Hegseth the opportunity to answer for a number of these incidents. I asked him point blank: Are these true or false?

He had the opportunity to say "These things did not happen" or to explain how he is prepared to account for them and how he won't repeat this concerning behavior as Secretary of Defense. He wouldn't answer, with one notable exception. I asked him about reports that in 2014 he was drunk at a strip club with staff in Louisiana. He replied to me: Absolutely not. He specifically denied that incident. He was

prepared to say that one—but only that one—didn't happen, but the rest of these incidents, well, he would not deny them. Instead, he called them "anonymous smears."

Well, first of all, they are not all anonymous. The committee has had access to sworn affidavits from individuals who witnessed this behavior firsthand.

This confirmation process was rushed. The FBI background check, which the entire committee was never given access to, was clearly inadequate and had to be updated multiple times. And despite repeated efforts, Mr. Hegseth has refused to meet with me and many others on the committee in private to discuss these concerns further.

But beyond all of that, it defies belief that this behavior does not represent a pattern. The incidents listed earlier stretch out across a decade. These are individuals who worked with him across three different organizations, and in each place, these people witnessed him abuse alcohol. It is obvious to anyone willing to see it that this is a pattern.

Let's be clear. These are not smears. If Mr. Hegseth were a private citizen, these issues with alcohol would only be a concern for those around him. But when you are nominated to be Secretary of Defense, it is a concern for all of us, each and every American. This is not a job where you clock in at the beginning of the day and clock out at the end of the day. You have to be able to move seamlessly between advising the President on matters of national security, sitting with foreign leaders to hammer out agreements, and discussing complex weapons systems with your staff. And that might just be in the afternoon. Some of these things might happen on a plane across an ocean on a weeklong trip or during a phone call that comes late at night, with quick decisions that affect the lives of our servicemembers.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Robert McNamara was briefed at midnight about the first photographs from U-2 spy planes showing the likelihood of Soviet ballistic missile sites in Cuba. The same has likely happened when North Korea has tested ballistic missiles that could threaten Guam or our allies.

This is a demanding job for anyone. It is a concerning job for someone with Mr. Hegseth's track record.

So as the Senate moves towards a final confirmation vote on this nominee, Mr. Hegseth, here is what I want to ask my colleagues: Are you sure? Are you sure that you trust him with this job? Are you sure there isn't another individual the President could choose who could pursue the same goals but is better prepared to do this job? Are you sure it is worth the risk to our servicemembers, to our national security, and to your families?

I know I am not.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, anyone who has tried to buy a carton of eggs at the grocery store lately has probably seen a sign on the empty shelves saying there is a national shortage of eggs because of the bird flu.

The reason notices like this exist is because the Department of Health and Human Services tracks disease outbreaks around the clock and notifies the public in real time. And, of course, we take that for granted. We should take that for granted. It is the kind of thing that the government just does and that we normally don't argue about.

There are a lot of things for us to argue about, but whether or not the government should tell us if there is a public health problem has never been something that we have argued about. We take it for granted, but it is an invaluable service that keeps the public safe and healthy, which is why it was so bizarre that in one of his first acts as President, Donald Trump suspended all—all—communications from HHS—health advisories, scientific reports, updates on the website, all of it.

What is that supposed to do other than keep people from getting the information that they need to keep their families healthy? This is about being able to know if a certain kind of meat or vegetable has been contaminated and staying away from it.

For instance, when there was an E. coli outbreak at McDonald's last year, the FDA immediately sent out an alert, which the press picked up on and warned the public about. Those communications are paused. Cucumbers at Costco is another example. E. coli at McDonald's—I don't mean to pick on these particular companies; lots of retail operations have their various public health problems.

I understand elections have consequences, right? And it is within the scope of a new administration that is reasonable for them to kind of take a look at all public policy and implement their own public policy. But, look, this is a little nuts.

I am assuming that there was a person in the White House or in the transition team writing up a bunch of Executive orders and thinking through an ideological lens or even an electoral lens. Fair enough. And they wanted to have a bunch of Executive orders ready to roll. So day one—boom, nothing coming out of HHS.

But the problem is, this isn't partisan; this isn't what people thought they were voting for; and this really could jeopardize the public health. So

the resolution I am introducing and asking for unanimous consent on is very simple. It reaffirms the very basic belief that people deserve to have timely and accurate information relevant to their health and well-being.

We are not arguing about like a COVID response. We just want to know if there is a problem in what you are about to eat. And suspending those communications has nothing to do with party. It has to do with keeping everybody safe. So if there is a problem during this pause, the Department of Health and Human Services will not communicate to the public about it.

As if in legislative session, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of my resolution at the desk; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Reserving the right to object, I think all of us can agree with my colleague. We can agree it is very important the American people have readily available access to accurate and timely public health information. I don't think anyone disputes that, and no one should have to doubt the important work done by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the American people with the information they need to remain healthy and safe.

But this resolution is unnecessary. The new administration just took office and issued a temporary pause until February 1 on all communications coming from its Agencies without approval. They have every right to do this.

To be frank, they have a lot of problems to solve from the prior administration.

I hope we can focus on confirming nominees quickly. The sooner his team gets in place, the sooner he can deliver on his promises to the American people. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, a new story was published today about the extent of Mr. Robert F. Kennedy's involvement in the 2019 measles outbreak in Samoa, and it shot a chill down my spine. That is not a rhetorical flourish. I read it and I felt hot, I felt angry, I felt worried.

We already know that he flew halfway across the world to Samoa to spread lies about the measles vaccine and discourage people from taking it. We already know that as a result, there was a measles outbreak. Five thousand people got measles; 83 people died; 79 of them were children.

But I think there is a new fact here that is worth lingering on. He saw it as

a great research opportunity—he saw it as a great research opportunity. He literally took an informatics expert—somebody who studies how people receive information—with him to Samoa to run a “natural experiment” studying what would happen to kids if they weren't vaccinated.

Let me tell you why this is personal to me. My dad is my hero. May his memory be a blessing. He is my hero for a number of reasons; but among them, he was a young doctor, and he was reading the *New England Journal of Medicine*. He was right out of medical school, and he read about something called the Tuskegee experiments.

What happened in the Tuskegee experiments is the United States Public Health Service withheld lifesaving medication from African-American men to “observe the disease process.” They considered these men expendable. They provided half of the cohort with penicillin, which they knew would cure syphilis, and half of the men with a placebo without telling them to, again, observe the disease process.

And so my dad went on the record and Congress actually intervened many years later with Tom Harkin, and on a bipartisan basis, making it explicit that the U.S. Public Health Service has to observe the Hippocratic Oath: “Do no harm.”

Do no harm.

And it is a dark history for America but a proud moment as I think of my father and his legacy.

But the one thing I never thought would ever occur is that more than 50 years later, we would be at the precipice of confirming a person to run the Department of Health and Human Services who, in this era—50 years after the Tuskegee experiments—flew to Samoa, encouraged people not to take the measles vaccine, watched 5,000 people get sick, watched 83 people die, watched 79 kids die and said: This is a real opportunity for data collection so we can see how this plays out.

I am still a little shocked that this person isn't going to be rejected 100 to 0. I understand partisanship. I understand loyalty. I am not immune to partisan pressures on my own side. But this guy is different. This guy is about to run the Department of Health and Human Services and he doesn't have just, like, one weird idea about one certain aspect of public health. He is a person who has flown across the planet to cause outbreaks of diseases that are generations in our past.

And to add insult to injury, he is repeating the moral mistakes of the Tuskegee experiment that has been actually outlawed by the United States Congress.

I will be talking about this more, but I am just hoping that—we fight about a lot of stuff in this building, but I know there are a lot of people on both sides of the aisle that take their obligations seriously to provide advice and consent to the President of the United States, whether you voted for him or not,

whether your State voted for him or not.

This is an opportunity to say we are a separate and coequal branch of government and if you are a Republican, say: Listen, I support this President, but I don't support this nominee because I don't want measles or mumps or rubella or polio to make a comeback.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF PETER HEGSETH

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the pending matter of the Pete Hegseth nomination to be Secretary of Defense.

Before I get into the bulk of my comments, I want to just state my own record in terms of votes for the Secretary of Defense as a member of the Armed Services Committee. This administration is the fourth Presidential administration I have been part of. I was elected with the second Obama administration, then served in the first Trump administration, then the Biden administration, and now a second Trump administration. As to my track record as an Armed Services Committee member and as a Member of this body, I voted for every Secretary of Defense nomination before the body.

In focusing on the Trump nominees, President Trump nominated General Mattis to be Secretary of Defense. I voted for him in committee. I voted for him on the floor, and he received a 98-to-1 vote with 1 abstention when he was before us in 2017. Secretary Mattis served during a portion of President Trump's term and then stepped down, and President Trump nominated Mark Esper, who had been the Secretary of the Army, to succeed General Mattis.

A Trump administration nominee paid me the honor of asking if I would introduce him before the Armed Services Committee, and I did. He is a Virginian. I had worked with Secretary Esper when he was the Army Secretary on military housing issues. He had been responsive and professional. So I said: Sure. You are President Trump's nominee, but I am going to introduce you before the committee.

Secretary Esper was approved in the committee—I think unanimously—and the vote on the floor for Secretary Esper was 90-8-2.

I bring that up just to say it is not my desire or norm to stand on the floor and speak in opposition to a nominee for Secretary of Defense or to speak in opposition to a nominee by President Trump for Secretary of Defense.

I spoke the other day—probably 2 days ago—here about why I am opposing Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of De-

fense. What I want to focus on today is his claim. I know my colleagues have been on the floor all day long explaining their own reasons for their opposition to Pete Hegseth, but I want to just really drill down on what Pete Hegseth is saying about the allegations that folks are making against him.

This was pretty apparent in the committee hearing a week ago Tuesday, and it has been consistent since. It was most clear in a recitation that he had back and forth with Senator KELLY of Arizona.

Senator KELLY asked him: I am just going to ask you really simple questions. Here is an event that someone says you participated in; true or false?

Again and again and again, what Pete Hegseth said was “anonymous smears.” He didn't say “false” because if you say “false” to something that you have done, it could verge on perjury. He didn't say “true” because if you say “true” to these kinds of allegations, it could be disqualifying.

So it was a very interesting litany where, again and again and again, Senator KELLY said: Here is an event; true or false?

“Anonymous smears.”

“Anonymous smears” was a very, very sophisticated way of not answering the question. Yet, even as I examined Pete Hegseth about marital infidelity and about a sexual assault allegation against him that led him to make a payout to the complainant, about allegations of spousal abuse, again and again, what he said was “anonymous smears.”

So what I want to do during my time today, since I have already laid out sort of my bill of particulars about why I am not supporting his nomination, I want to focus on this: The claims that have been made against Pete Hegseth are not anonymous, and they are not smears. They are not anonymous, and they are not smears.

Let me start with “not anonymous.”

To begin with, many of the claims are claims that have been admitted by Pete Hegseth. So let's start with the man himself. He has admitted serial infidelity in both of his first two marriages. He told me at the committee hearing that he took an oath of fidelity to his wife, but he admitted to serial infidelity. That is not an irrelevant factor when we are analyzing whether someone who takes an oath to become Secretary of Defense is able to carry out that oath.

Pete Hegseth admitted as recently as yesterday that he made a payout to somebody who charged him with a sexual assault. There was an incident in Monterey in September of 2017 that led to a criminal sexual assault complaint and a criminal investigation. It did not lead to criminal charges, but it did lead to a civil charge and a settlement and a payout and a nondisclosure agreement. He has admitted to all of that. He claims it was a consensual event, and the victim claims it was a sexual assault, but as to the fact of the inter-

action and the fact that it was both cheating on an existing wife and also on the mother of a newborn child, he has admitted to all of that. It is not an anonymous claim when Pete Hegseth has admitted to this.

Second, it is not anonymous what Pete Hegseth's mother wrote to him. Pete Hegseth was in the middle of a very contentious divorce from his second wife, Samantha, in 2018, and he received a most extraordinary email from his mother. This is not anonymous, and I want to read the email. It is an extraordinary bit of tough love from a mom to a son.

Son, I have tried to keep quiet about your character and behavior, but after listening to the way you made Samantha feel today, I cannot stay silent. And as a woman and your mother I feel I must speak out.

You are an abuser of women—that is the ugly truth and I have no respect for any man that belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around, and uses women for his own power and ego. You are that man (and have been for years) and as your mother, it pains me and embarrasses me to say that, but it is the sad, sad truth.

I am not a saint, far from it, so don't throw that in my face, but your abuse over the years to women (dishonesty, sleeping around, betrayal, debasing, belittling) needs to be called out.

Sam is a good mother and a good person (under the circumstances that you created) and I know deep down you know that. For you to try to label her as “unstable” for your own advantage is despicable and abusive. Is there any sense of decency left in you? She did not ask for or deserve any of what has come to her by your hand. Neither did Meredith.

Meredith was the first wife.

I know you think this is one big competition and that we have taken her side . . . bunk. . . . We are on the side of good and that is not you. (Go ahead and call me self-righteous, I don't care.) Don't you dare run to her and cry foul that we shared with us. . . . That's what babies do. It's time for someone—

Someone—

(I wish it was a strong man) to stand up to your abusive behavior and call it out, especially against women.

We still love you, but we are broken by your behavior and lack of character. I don't want to write emails like this and never thought I would. If it damages our relationship further, then so be it, but at least I have said my piece.

And yes, we are praying for you (and you don't deserve to know how we are praying, so skip the snarky reply).

I don't want an answer to this . . . I don't want to debate with you. You twist and abuse everything I say anyway. But . . . on behalf of all the women (and I know it's many) you have abused in some way, I say . . . get some help and take an honest look at yourself . . . Mom.

This is not an anonymous smear. I know a little bit about a mother's love. I know a little bit about a mother's tough love. This is not an anonymous smear, but it is an extraordinary, painful, candid rebuke.

Why do I have this letter? This is not a letter that anyone in this body had. This is a letter that appeared in a newspaper about a month ago. The only people who would have had this email are family, the people closest in

the world to Pete Hegseth. No one else would have seen this. No one else would have had it. No one else could have read it on the floor of the Senate unless someone very close to Pete Hegseth—a member of his immediate family—decided years after it was written that a man nominated to be Secretary of Defense whose character had led his own mother to write this letter—that this is a fact that should be put before the public in analyzing the character and qualifications of this individual—not anonymous.

Pete Hegseth's former sister-in-law Danielle Hegseth, who had been married to his brother Nathaniel, submitted an affidavit that is in the Senate records, which is available to all of my colleagues, and all have read this affidavit or made a decision that they didn't want to read it, but it is available to all of us.

The affidavit that Danielle has written about the treatment that was referred to by his mother in this letter is completely consistent with what the mother says. The mother wrote this. It is now public. Danielle has signed an affidavit about it. It is now public, and it is completely consistent with what the mother said. Danielle Hegseth is not anonymous.

There is a whistleblower report that is available to all Senate Members. I read it 10 days ago. It is for Members only, but it is available to all hundred of us, and I hope all of my colleagues have read it. It would be a huge mistake to vote on this nomination not having read that whistleblower report.

What does the whistleblower report involve? It is anything but anonymous. It is a report that was generated years ago when Pete Hegseth was the leader of an organization called Concerned Veterans for America. It wasn't created for this hearing. It wasn't created because of a Secretary of Defense nomination. It was created by disgruntled employees in an organization that Pete Hegseth was leading. It is a seven-page, single-spaced whistleblower report.

Again, I have to say it is anything but anonymous. In fact, it mentions, by my count, 36 names of individuals connected with Concerned Veterans for America and multiple events of improper behavior by Pete Hegseth as the leader: being at work events impaired by alcohol, creating a toxic work culture that led to the sexual harassment of women employees, repeated instances of unprofessional behavior, and fiscal mismanagement of the organization.

I know that Pete Hegseth calls that "anonymous smears." But when you read this 6-page document—and, again, I just want to say to any public watching this: The Senators in this body have all had access to it. So if you see somebody like Pete Hegseth saying it is an "anonymous smear"—no, the Members of this body have all had access to Danielle Hegseth's affidavit, to Pete Hegseth's admissions, to the mother's letters, and to a whistle-

blower report with 36 names in it atesting to a variety of unprofessional behaviors. That document was provided to Mr. Hegseth and his attorney, and they submitted a response.

But by my read of the document, they could not get a single individual whose name is mentioned to challenge or retract any of the statements that are made in the document. This is anything but anonymous.

Again, all Members have seen this. All Members have had access to it. These are not anonymous claims. They are on-the-record claims by people very close to this man, including in a most unusual way, his own mother.

Now, I will acknowledge this: There are some who have come forward who are anonymous. I have to acknowledge that. They are anonymous because they are afraid.

I have had extensive conversations with a close personal friend of the second wife who has told me things that are directly supportive of the public materials contained in the mother's letter and in the Danielle Hegseth affidavit.

I don't know that he knows Danielle, but what he told me is completely consistent with Danielle Hegseth's allegations that Pete Hegseth was abusive to his second wife. But this individual is afraid to come forward and have his name mentioned because he believes that, if his name was mentioned, he would be subject to abuse and potentially violence.

I have spoken to a close friend of Jane Doe, the complainant in the sexual assault allegation and the sexual assault civil complaint and settlement, with direct knowledge of this. She has told me a number of things that confirm the public reporting about the sexual assault allegation, but she is afraid, for her own physical safety, to come forward.

And I have spoken to one of the individuals whose name is mentioned, among the 36 whose names are mentioned, in the whistleblower report, who participated in putting it together years ago, who was able to give some texture and context to this report that all Members have had access to. She expressed a willingness to speak to the FBI about it. She doesn't want to come forward publicly because she is afraid, but she expressed a willingness. Mr. President, get this: She expressed a willingness weeks ago to talk to the FBI about the whistleblower report, which they had.

And as of 2 hours ago, the FBI has not been in contact with a single individual whose name is mentioned in this whistleblower report.

Now, we already know that the FBI, in their initial investigation, did not reach out to either of the wives—wife one and wife two. They didn't reach out.

I haven't seen the FBI report. I am not allowed to see it. It is only accessible by our committee chair and ranking. But I asked Senator REED: Was

there any reference to it? Was there any evidence that either of the first wives were interviewed?

I mean, you had the letter from the mother. Why wouldn't you go talk to the wives about the behavior? The FBI didn't talk to the first or second wife. They had to go back and do an interview, after we brought that up that they hadn't even done it. They did a cursory interview about Mr. Hegseth's drinking but didn't ask him about the abuse allegations.

But as of 2 hours ago, the FBI still has not reached out to a single person whose name is contained as someone with knowledge about the whistleblower report and the activities of Mr. Hegseth when he was the CEO or the lead executive of Concerned Veterans for America.

I am saddened that a friend of wife two, that a friend of Jane Doe, that somebody who is a whistleblower is so physically afraid to come forward and say what they know because of fears of violence against them. That makes me sad. But I will stake my reputation on this: What they have told me is a direct match and an affirmation of the material contained in the public accounts from the mother, from Pete Hegseth's own admissions, from the sexual assault facts that we know, and from the Danielle Hegseth affidavit.

I have taken some time to go over this to show that the material that this body is considering is not anonymous, and now I want to turn to the second. It is not a smear.

The Pete Hegseth allegation seems to be that this is all created at the last minute to try to derail him from being Secretary of Defense, and, in that way, it is a smear. It wouldn't be further from the truth.

The sexual assault claim happened years ago. It was not created to try to stop Pete.

The whistleblower report was written more than a decade ago. It was not written to stop Pete Hegseth from being Secretary of Defense.

Pete Hegseth has admitted to serial infidelity years ago. Those allegations were not brought up to stop Pete Hegseth from being Secretary of Defense.

And, finally, this letter from Pete Hegseth's mother, it was sent years ago, and it wasn't sent to stop Pete Hegseth from being Secretary of Defense. It was sent, as his own mother has recently stated in media interviews, as a message of love. This painful, painful email was sent to her son as a message of love.

None of this material was a smear. None of this material was created once Pete Hegseth was nominated to be Secretary of Defense to try to stop him. This material has been around for many, many years and was created contemporaneously with abuse that he was visiting upon others because people were trying to stop him. They were trying to stop him as a message of love. They were praying for him. They

were encouraging him to look in the mirror and improve. Yet he says this is all a smear.

That is not the case. They are not smears. They are clear and consistent and contemporaneous reports of the behavior, judgment, impulse control, and character of this nominee for the most important Cabinet position that any President will forward to the U.S. Senate.

I am going to conclude and just say this: We can do better. As a nation, we can do better. As a U.S. Senate, we can do better. Supporters of President Trump can do better. Members of the military can do better. Veterans can do better. Blue Star families—I am one. My kid is a Marine reservist. We can do better.

We need to do better. We need to do better by our Active Duty. We need to do better by our Guard and Reserve. We need to do better by DOD civilians. We need to do better by military families. We need to do better by defense contractors. We need to do better by all who care about the important mission of the American military. And we can do better.

Mr. President, you and I both know this: There are so many good public officials who have aligned on the Republican side, who have supported President Trump, who have their own credentials.

In this body—I could name a bunch, but I am worried I would forget one and then get in trouble with one of the ones I don't name. But in this body, there are Senators who have served honorably in the military and are well qualified for the position of Secretary of Defense.

In the House, there are Members who are loyal to this President who have served honorably in the military and are qualified to be Secretary of Defense.

We have Governors, we have mayors, we have leaders of companies who have supported this President and are loyal to his agenda and could get a 90-8-2 vote, like Mark Esper did, or a 98-to-1 vote, like General Mattis did, and would be loyal to this President and carry out this President's agenda.

They are there. There are hundreds of them without the personal baggage of sexual assault claims that have been settled, of allegations of spousal abuse that have been testified to, of allegations of drunkenness on the job and fiscal mismanagement that are the subject of a very extensive report written by non-anonymous coworkers.

So as we near the vote for this most important position, my plea to my colleagues, as one who has supported every Secretary of Defense who has ever come before my committee—Democrat or Republican—is don't rush this and make a mistake.

No one in this room, should this break badly following the confirmation, could say: Well, I didn't know. I didn't know.

Everyone knows. Everyone has access to this material. Everyone knows

the risk we would be undertaking in confirming Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense. There will be no place—no shelter, no refuge—of “Wow, I was unaware of this.”

But, more importantly than that, we all know people right in this Chamber who are qualified by background, who are qualified by credential, but, most importantly, who are qualified by character to undertake this most solemn responsibility.

Let's get this one right. Let's take the time and get this one right.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHIFF. 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. SCHIFF. Mr. President, the men and women serving at home and overseas under the flag of the United States of America are counting on us. To guide the Pentagon through times of war or peace, they need and deserve a Secretary of Defense who is a person of considerable experience and can run a mammoth Agency, who has exhibited good judgment, who is a person of good character, who appreciates the role of women in the military in and out of combat, and who they can look on in confidence to guide us through some of the most difficult and complex national security threats we have ever faced. While I greatly respect his time in the service, regrettably, that person is not Pete Hegseth.

This is no minor or ceremonial position. The Secretary of Defense is responsible for a nearly trillion-dollar budget, one-eighth of all Federal spending, and the 3 million people who serve under that charge.

In my time in Congress, I have worked with Secretaries of Defense from both parties who understood their sacred responsibility and upheld their oaths to support every one of our troops and lead our Nation's military to the best of their ability. Secretaries Gates and Panetta, Mattis and Carter, and many others come to mind.

But Mr. Hegseth lacks the experience to be the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Hegseth has not shown the judgment to be Secretary of Defense. Mr. Hegseth has not shown the character to be Secretary of Defense. For this job is a heavy responsibility, and he is not the right person for the job.

His record speaks for itself: financial mismanagement in the organizations he led—organizations much, much smaller than the Pentagon, with budgets that were a fraction of the size and nevertheless squandered and mismanaged. He has at times demonstrated a callous disregard for human rights and the laws of armed conflict, going so far as to recommend that the President disregard the Gene-

va Conventions and intervene in cases of servicemembers convicted of war crimes. He has a history of belittling our brave women in uniform, of denigrating the service of women in uniform and their abilities. These failures are not trivial. They are real, they are significant, and they cannot be ignored.

So let's not mince words: Pete Hegseth is the wrong choice for Secretary of Defense.

Mr. President, many of my colleagues have spoken on the floor about Mr. Hegseth's personal shortcomings and lack of experience to carry out the job to which he has been nominated. I would like to speak also about what we need from a Secretary of Defense and what a more appropriate nominee should bring to this position of such immense responsibility.

The challenges we face today are enormous. They demand real experience and leadership.

The largest land war in Europe since World War II rages on.

The Middle East is a tinderbox, with a terrorist group still running Gaza, with hostages still in captivity, with a new Syrian regime of uncertain direction, a weakened but still dangerous Iran with all of its proxies, still threatening retaliation.

China looms as a peer global competitor, with a stated object of expanding its influence and territory and outpacing the United States.

China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are increasingly aligned with the shared goal of rolling back U.S. influence and have developed a robust operational partnership. Iran and North Korea provide Russia with drones and missiles to prosecute its relentless war of aggression against Ukraine, all while China provides money and dual-use technologies to underpin Russia's resurgent wartime economy. Trade amongst this bloc seeks to frustrate U.S.-led international sanctions.

We don't know what technology and know-how Russia has already or will provide rogue states like Iran and North Korea for their nuclear, missile, and other WMD programs.

This growing alignment among authoritarians threatens our country and our allies. Yet here we are, being asked to hand over the keys to our national defense to someone so patently unqualified, so palpably unprepared.

I think it is telling that Mr. Hegseth's opening statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee failed to even mention the war in Ukraine. Just imagine, perhaps the most important national security issue that the previous Congress debated—whether to provide aid to our partners in Ukraine to turn back the Russian attack and defend their homeland—doesn't merit a sentence in his opening testimony. This is a conflict that President Trump now owns, and we must rely on him and his administration—including, if he were confirmed, Mr. Hegseth—to support our democratic partner.

When the Senator from Maine asked Mr. Hegseth about the omission of the war in Ukraine from his prepared remarks, here was his response:

Senator, that is a Presidential-level policy decision.

This from the person who is supposed to be the President's senior adviser on defense matters and a key official needed to rally NATO and other nations to Ukraine's defense.

We have a moral and a legal obligation and imperative to aid Ukraine in its existential fight against Russia and to protect our NATO allies should Russia's ambitions be left unconstrained. The last Congress made clear its support with bipartisan, overwhelming votes to reaffirm our support for Ukraine in this fight, and we will do so again as necessary.

It is not just a matter of Ukrainian security. If Russia is allowed to succeed in its objectives in Ukraine, whether on the battlefield or through a forced but favorable negotiated settlement, it will not stop there. Russia is already engaged in influence operations, cyber operations, and attacks against critical infrastructure up and down its border with NATO.

Allowing Russia to tear off parts of Ukraine will embolden Putin, allow him to better arm his war machine, and will send a message that NATO is fragmented and weak.

It will not be just Russia that receives this message; Xi Jinping is watching intently what is happening with Ukraine and whether America will continue to defend its allies and its values.

That is why Taiwan supports U.S. aid to Ukraine, even if it means sending weapons there that might otherwise be shipped to Asia—because Taiwan wants to know that if and when they face their own day of reckoning, that the United States will honor its commitments to come to its defense.

Our allies must be able to count on us, on the President, on the Secretary of Defense. They must. A nominee who ignores our obligations or our national interests in helping Ukraine roll back Russia's war machine is not a person capable of defending our interests across the globe. They just aren't.

The responsibilities go well beyond our foreign commitments. The Secretary of Defense has an enormous task to continue to rebuild the strength and readiness of our forces. For nearly two decades, wars in the Middle East and a long list of contingencies have pushed military readiness to the breaking point. The Army, Air Force, and Navy continue to face major recruitment challenges just to maintain their current size, let alone what may be necessary to—God forbid—fight a major war in the coming years against technologies we can only imagine now. We need a Secretary of Defense who can lead and inspire our troops, from the most senior officers to the youngest enlisted men and women.

Mr. Hegseth has belittled women in the military. He has attacked people

who live their lives differently than he would prefer. He has stood with those who violate the law rather than those who keep the peace. And he has no experience running a large enterprise. His experience running small enterprises was a terrible failure.

We need a Secretary of Defense with the management experience to rebuild and reshape our national security for the challenges of the present and the future. As our assistance to partners in the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East have shown, we need to bring about urgent reforms if we are to produce the platforms, weapons, and ammunition necessary to supply our partners with the tools they need to fight and win.

So long as our enemies test the dearth of our beliefs with fire and steel, we must ensure that our military remains the best equipped, best prepared fighting force in the world. This requires investment in our manufacturing sector and the defense acquisition process. Anything less is not an "arsenal of democracy" or "Freedom's Forge"; it is a failure of our duty to defend ourselves and our allies, which is to say nothing of the need to develop new technologies and new operational concepts, tapping into the best innovative minds across the country.

Let's face it, the United States is on the brink of losing its overwhelming technological edge. Bringing it back will require reshaping the Pentagon to include new participants ready to disrupt some of our hidebound, bureaucratic, and expensive processes—new innovators and technologies, including many from my home State of California.

Partners that embrace new technology are more nimble to meet today's challenges. There is simply nothing in Mr. Hegseth's background or his performance to demonstrate that he has the necessary understanding or ability to make these changes.

GEN Matthew Ridgway was one of the greatest military minds of the 20th century. His service spanned decades and continents—and after the end of his service as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, he was recruited to join the "Wise Men," a group of retired diplomats, politicians, and generals who assembled from time to time to give their advice to President Lyndon B. Johnson.

He knew then—as we know today—what makes effective leadership in both war and peace on the front lines and on the homefront. He said:

There is far more to professional fitness than knowledge and skill in the techniques and tools of war. These the officer must have, but the final test of his ability is not in what he knows but in what he is. There is no substitute for those innate qualities which we generally refer to as character.

My fellow Senators, put aside the nominee's lack of knowledge and lack of experience to prepare him for a role of this magnitude. We must also consider this nominee's absence of char-

acter becoming of a Secretary of Defense. You heard it in his confirmation hearings. You have heard it described by my colleagues today. You have seen it on television, read about it in the materials that we have been provided that demonstrates Mr. Hegseth's unfitness for this office. Character matters—it does. It still does.

And no amount of tough talk on TV or bromides about a warrior spirit can make up for a distinct lack of character.

GEN Omar Bradley, the first ever chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the longest serving active duty servicemember in the history of the United States Armed Forces, wrote to the Infantry School Quarterly in April of 1953. He said:

Leadership in a democratic Army means fairness, not harshness; understanding, not weakness; justice, not license; humaneness, not intolerance; generosity, not selfishness; pride, not egotism.

Think about those qualities. Think about whether the nominee we consider today resembles even just one of them. Certainly not generosity. Certainly not humanity. Certainly not understanding. Certainly not.

I understand that politics can be complicated, but there is nothing complicated about this. Our servicemembers are watching. Their families who fear that their loved ones may be sent to battle are watching. Our adversaries are watching. There is an inscription down the hall that says it plainly, what we should consider in this moment:

Our government, conceived in freedom and purchased with blood can be preserved only by constant vigilance.

Constant vigilance. The vote before us today is about Mr. Hegseth, but it is also about all of us. What do we stand for? Are we being vigilant in the defense of our country?

This candidate is not qualified. This candidate is not experienced. This candidate lacks judgment. This candidate lacks the character we need to lead this Department at a time of great national peril.

He is simply the wrong one for the job. I urge a "no" vote.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am going to support Pete Hegseth to be Secretary of Defense. In the process of doing that, I am going to refer generally to some of the things that I spoke about—problems at the Department of Defense—when Mr. Hegseth was in my office for these personal interviews that all nominees tend to do before their consideration on the floor of the Senate.

One of those subjects was my oversight work of the Department of Defense. I have been conducting rigorous oversight of the Defense Department, along with other Federal Departments, since I became a Member of Congress. My oversight work of the Department of Defense has led me to sound the alarm time and again about the lack of internal controls, price gouging, and the mismanagement of the taxpayer dollars.

If confirmed, Pete Hegseth, President Trump's Secretary of Defense nominee, will be the 16th Secretary of Defense to lead the Department during my tenure in this Chamber.

When I met with Mr. Hegseth, I told him what I tell all Cabinet nominees whom I meet with: When asked if you will respond to letters from Members of Congress, instead of saying "yes," you ought to say "maybe" so you won't be made a liar later when you don't answer those letters, because, as we all know here in the Senate, there is not a nominee who comes before any committee in the U.S. Senate who doesn't firmly promise to answer all of our letters or come and testify or take our phone calls. So everyone says yes when seeking confirmation, and most don't respond when they get into office.

Mr. Hegseth said yes to the answer to that question in committee. He kind of laughed when I said in my office "You ought to say 'maybe,'" but he said "I get the message."

Mr. Hegseth and I also discussed the need for the Department of Defense to pass an independent audit and upgrade outdated financial management systems to make the independent audit being certified a real possibility.

You know, the Department of Defense is the only Agency of the Federal Government that can't get a certified audit, and they have been mandated to have one for more than a decade, maybe even two decades. They have tried to produce it.

The smallest of the military groups—the U.S. Marines—they tried to work with that one first of all to see if they could get a certified audit. They went through that rigamarole, and somehow they did get certified. I asked for the Government Accountability Office to check on the legitimacy of that certification, and the Government Accountability Office said that it was not a legitimate certification. After a couple of speeches on the floor of the U.S. Senate about 8, 10 years ago, we finally got them to admit that it was a hoax that they were saying they were getting a certified audit.

So this has been a big problem for a long period of time, and I hope Mr. Hegseth can get to the bottom of it and get a clean audit because the lack of a clean audit opinion at the Department of Defense presents huge potential for waste, fraud, and abuse in defense spending. When I get to the end of my remarks, I am going to give you a couple of examples.

Mr. Hegseth acknowledged this weakness within the Department of Defense

and assured me that he will get the Department on a proper financial footing.

He also committed to ensuring the protections of whistleblowers who speak out against instances of fraud, waste, and abuse that have been unrestrained within the Department. We spoke about that issue because, for every nominee who comes to my office wanting confirmation, I say to them: You know, whether you have a Department of a few hundred or a few thousand or a few 10,000s—and there are some Departments around here that have a few hundred thousand people—big or little, you can't know what is going on in that Department as far as listening to whistleblowers.

I consider whistleblowers to be very dedicated to their jobs and very patriotic people. They just want the government to do what the government is supposed to do under the law or to spend the money the way it is supposed to be spent. So they see something wrong; they come forward. You know, maybe sometimes they accomplish a lot by coming forward, but sometimes they are so frustrated that they come to us Members of the Senate—in my particular case, CHUCK GRASSLEY. Of the 35 investigations I have going on somewhere in the executive branch of government, 90 percent of them are instituted by information whistleblowers give me.

So I tell these nominees: You don't know what is going on. You ought to listen to whistleblowers.

It isn't just the case of a nominee listening to a whistleblower; it is a case of the nominee having a culture within their Department that will encourage middle management to listen to whistleblowers. That is particularly a problem in the Defense Department.

We find too many whistleblowers ruining themselves professionally. They are treated like a skunk at a picnic in their Departments. I could tell you a lot of stories where they have been misused just because they came forward with information that the government wasn't following the laws.

I know you can tell from what I just said that I have been a longtime advocate for whistleblowers and continue to work to ensure that they are protected when they rightfully speak out about the wrongdoings within our government.

As you can tell from my conversation with you, my colleagues, I expect Mr. Hegseth to stay true to his word that he is going to listen to whistleblowers and get the financial management system of the Department of Defense turned around.

Finally, we should thank anybody who serves in the military but particularly Mr. Hegseth for his service to our country in the military. All of the brave men and women who have served our Nation in uniform deserve our gratitude and respect.

Now, I told you that I would give you a couple of examples. One of them is financial mismanagement or not following the law.

One is Janet Mello. About 6 months ago, she pleaded guilty in a Texas court—can you believe this?—for stealing \$106 million over a period of 5 years as a Defense Department employee.

The problem there is that I am trying to get information from the Defense Department on one of my investigations. How could an employee of the Department of Defense over a period of 5 years get away with \$106 million? I read someplace it was \$112 million, but whether it was \$106 million or \$112 million, what difference does it make? It makes a difference if \$1 is stolen from the taxpayers. Anyway, if she had stolen \$5 million, she would probably still be a free person.

But what is wrong with the financial management system of the Defense Department that they can't keep track of \$106 million being stolen? So I am trying to get an answer to that, and finally, today, I got a response on my investigation. Maybe I got it because I talked to Pete Hegseth about it.

Another one is what we call in Washington the JEDI, a program that the Defense Department wanted to establish called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure. There were people in the Defense Department who had a conflict of interest because they had a relationship with Amazon. Amazon wanted that contract. They didn't recuse themselves.

This whole Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure and these contracts, there was so much competition among a couple wanting that besides Amazon, that it was given a brandnew start on negotiations, and I don't even know where they are on those negotiations at this point.

But those are two examples of things that have been really wrong with the way the Department of Defense has been run, not just under Biden but under a lot of Presidents, both Republican and Democrat, over a long period of time. And that is why I am going to suggest that the inspector general at the Department of Defense ought to be fired. Hopefully, Mr. Hegseth can straighten that out.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. 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. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to carefully consider their vote on the nomination of Mr. Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense.

The Senate is now in the process of voting on many members of President Trump's new Cabinet, who will determine policies that will affect the lives of every American. However, I would argue that the position of the Secretary of Defense is unique. It requires

the highest quality of leadership, the ability to make on-the-spot life-or-death decisions, excellent diplomatic skills, and character beyond reproach.

There is no question that President Trump has the right to select his Cabinet, but his Defense Secretary should be someone who is capable, without question, to meet the demands of the job and the expectations of those he will lead. They should have the knowledge and experience to manage one of the most complex organizations in the world, and they should be willing to admit what they do not know and assemble a team who will help them carry on.

In his hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, last week, and in his writings and comments, Mr. Hegseth has not proven that he is qualified to be Secretary of Defense. He has been questioned about allegations of significant personal misconduct, including alcohol abuse, infidelity, sexual harassment and abuse, and toxic work environments. He refused to really address or take ownership of these allegations. As a result, he leaves himself open to having his personal history subject to exploitation by adversaries, which is the last thing we need for the leader of the most powerful military in the world.

If confirmed, Mr. Hegseth would be giving orders to men and women of every race, religion, and sexual orientation. His orders may result in these men and women risking and perhaps losing their lives. These men and women must trust that the Secretary of Defense giving those orders respects and supports them.

Instead, Mr. Hegseth has disparaged military personnel with racist and sexist comments, he has derided diversity in the ranks, and he has openly opposed women in combat roles. How can we expect our military to overcome recruiting challenges, maintain retention, and remain the most ready and lethal fighting force in the world if they do not have respect for their leader? Who would want to follow the orders of someone who belittles them?

For better or worse, the industry and workforce that supports the Pentagon is enormous, complicated, and is a huge factor in our Nation's economy, as well as national security. Mismanaging it can cost fortunes in our taxpayers' investments, the American economy, and workers' lives.

It has been widely documented that the extent of Mr. Hegseth's management experience was running two small veterans organizations, both of which he drove to the verge of bankruptcy and had to be relieved from his leadership roles. He has refused to acknowledge this, and it does not seem that he has learned from the experience. Do we want to risk an organization with a \$900 billion annual budget to such a nominee?

Another keystone of the U.S. military is that it is entirely professional, unlike many other nations' armies.

The U.S. military is held in such high esteem around the world because we follow the rule of law and the Geneva Conventions. Our military is not like those of Russia, Iran, or North Korea, whose soldiers terrorize and kill civilians, pillage cities, and torture captives. When the U.S. military arrives, our enemies should be afraid, but civilians should be relieved because we hold our servicemembers to the highest standards.

But in his writings, Mr. Hegseth has shown nothing but disdain for the rule of law and the men and women who attempt to keep our military personnel disciplined. He wants the United States to "fight by our own rules." But do we want the U.S. military to fight like the Russian military that is destroying Ukraine—or the Chinese or Houthis, who show no regard for international law? Do we want to vote for a nominee who will tear down 250 years of honorable service by the men and women of our U.S. forces? I hope not.

As I hope my colleagues know, my top priority has always been national security, and I have tried to avoid partisanship. I don't think it has a place in that mission. I will always pick up the phone and call whoever holds the position of Secretary of Defense and seek out opportunities to work with them to strengthen and support our military.

Whoever they may be, I hope they comport themselves with the wisdom, composure, and character that this awesome responsibility demands. Our military men and women—indeed, the American people—deserve nothing less from their Secretary of Defense.

The question I have is this: Is Pete Hegseth truly the best we have to offer?

I do not believe so, and I urge my colleagues to vote against this nominee.

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WICKER. 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. WICKER. Mr. President, I agree with my friend from Rhode Island, the distinguished ranking member on the committee, that this is something Senators need to think very carefully about. And I would remind my friend and my fellow Senators and my fellow Americans that the voters of the United States spoke very strongly and very firmly and overwhelmingly on the first Tuesday of November for change, and over 75 million Americans voted for change not only domestically, which we are seeing being fulfilled even in the first week of this term, but also on the international scene.

The United States needs to return to a position of strength, and through that strength and through that mili-

tary might, we can assure peace for a generation. So I think one of the things that over 75 million Americans spoke for on election day was peace through strength.

The President has made his choice, and he is putting his team together to strengthen our military and to get us ready, and the person he has chosen to lead the Defense Department is Pete Hegseth.

The more I have seen of this young man over the time that we have had a chance to visit and over the time that he has been questioned and actually put through a number of trials, the more impressed I am with his character and with his ability to withstand the slings and arrows that we see in politics and in government today.

Pete Hegseth is ready to put forward the program of President Donald Trump, and he has satisfied me that he will be a change agent in the Department of Defense and that he is the person we need. He is the President's choice, and we owe it to this Commander in Chief to put him in this position unless he is not qualified for the office.

Mr. Hegseth is a retired major from the Army National Guard. He has had multiple combat tours of duty. And then he has come back and he has had some struggles. He has had some PTSD. And there are thousands and thousands of his comrades who have experienced the same thing, experienced problems after they came back. But he has overcome those.

And those thousands of young officers and people who have been in combat for the United States are watching the U.S. Senate tonight, even so, and they are watching to see whether we have listened to the dreams and to the plans and to the hopes of this young man as the next Secretary of Defense.

I agree with my friend: We should look carefully. But once we look carefully, I think we will decide that this President, who has had this mandate, is entitled to this remarkable young man as his Secretary of Defense. I am going to vote for him early and enthusiastically, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON HEGSETH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hegseth nomination?

Mr. WICKER. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 15 Ex.]
YEAS—50

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cassidy	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
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—50

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

The VICE PRESIDENT. Are there any Senators in the Chamber who wish to vote or change a vote?

If not, on this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative.

The nomination is confirmed. (Applause.)

The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Hegseth nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Noem nomination be waived.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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. 4, Kristi Noem, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

John Thune, Steve Daines, John Kennedy, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tim Sheehy, Mike Crapo, Deb Fischer, Tommy Tuberville, Rick Scott of Florida, Pete Ricketts, Katie Britt, Ted Budd, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, Roger Marshall, Eric Schmitt.

The VICE PRESIDENT. 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 Kristi Noem, of South Dakota, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 16 Ex.]
YEAS—61

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

NAYS—39

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 39.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kristi Noem, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF KRISTI NOEM

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, I rise today to address the nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to serve as the next Secretary of Homeland Security.

I think we will all agree that there are very few jobs more important to the safety and security of American lives than that of Secretary of Homeland Security.

Created in 2002 in the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the DHS Secretary and the Offices and Agencies under its purview are responsible for some critical things, including our national security, working to protect us against terrorism. DHS implements our Nation's immigration policy. DHS directs disaster responses to States and Territories across the country. And, of course, they are responsible for cyber security and election security.

It is a role that I believe requires complete and total commitment to the safety of the American people above all else—above politics, above personal ambition, and above loyalty to one man or movement—because for whom-ever is Secretary, American lives are literally on the line.

Unfortunately, in the months and years prior to Governor Noem's nomination, and certainly over the course of her nomination process, it has become clear to me that she is not fit for the job. Time and again, she has demonstrated her loyalty lies more with President Trump than it does with the American people, and it is my belief that, when pressed, we cannot count on a potential Secretary Noem to make decisions that are in the best interest of the people and of the values that we hold as a nation over doing the President's bidding.

So, today, I want to take a few minutes to explain my thinking—both to the nominee and to the Nation—about why I believe she is unfit to lead a Department of this importance.

To begin with, leading DHS is so much more than about providing fodder for FOX News. In recent weeks, the people in my home State of California have seen just how vital this Department and its Agencies can be. As of today, multiple wildfires across Southern California have burnt over 55,000 acres. They have destroyed more than 16,000 structures, and they have taken the lives of at least 28 Californians.

Even as firefighters continue to fight massive blazes like the Palisades and the Eaton fires that have raged for weeks, red flag conditions persist, and new fires continue to ignite. Northwest of Los Angeles, for example, the Hughes fire grew to more than 10,000 acres in just 2 days.

But while the fight still rages on, we know that, in the months and years to come, Los Angeles will rebuild. But we are going to need the rest of the country to support Los Angeles in its recovery, just as Los Angeles has always been there for the rest of the country.

This is now Los Angeles's time of need, and we are going to need all of you. We are going to need Federal disaster aid, and it will require a non-partisan effort from FEMA.

Whether it is wildfires in Los Angeles; hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana, the Carolinas; or ice storms in Texas, Mother Nature does not distinguish between red States and blue States, and neither should our disaster response efforts. Yet, even as we speak, President Trump is floating reckless ideas like eliminating FEMA, suggesting that States take care of their own problems.

President Trump wants to impose conditions on aid to California while thousands of families have lost their homes and businesses. In a situation like this, when lives are on the line, we need a DHS Secretary who will do right for all Americans. We need a DHS Secretary who will speak truth to power. But based on her testimony before this

body, I don't believe Governor Noem is capable or willing to do that.

So, yes, Southern California has a long road back to rebuilding our communities, and, as I said, we are going to need all hands on deck, which brings me to my next point.

Immigrants in Los Angeles will, no doubt, be critical in the rebuilding of our communities. Over 40 percent of construction workers in California are immigrants. But more than that, our national economy relies on immigrants too.

Let me remind folks that during President Trump's first term, his administration—the Trump administration—designated workers in the healthcare, food and agriculture, education, public works, and other sectors as essential workers during the pandemic. And those sectors include millions of immigrants, both documented and undocumented. That is right, colleagues. Undocumented immigrants are and have been, for a long time, a critical part of our healthcare workforce, of our hospital industry, of our tourism sector, of our transportation systems. And they make up around 42 percent of our agricultural workforce. Think about that the next time you are in the produce section of your grocery store.

If tomorrow President Trump could snap his fingers and deport all undocumented immigrants from this country, as he has threatened to do, our annual GDP would drop by 6.8 percent.

So let's be clear. Do the math. Mass deportations would lead to mass inflation. Businesses would shutter. Crops would rot in the fields. Prices would rise for all Americans.

Even in the face of political headwinds, we need a DHS Secretary who will tell the truth—and not just to the President but to the American people—tell the truth about how the vast majority of undocumented immigrants are not violent criminals but they are critical to our economy.

Instead, during her confirmation hearing, Governor Noem repeatedly made false claims about undocumented immigrants. Under oath, she repeated lies that misrepresent noncitizens as security threats. She even denied the well-documented existence of family separations that occurred during the first Trump administration.

We can agree or disagree on policy, but don't lie about the facts. Because if a nominee can so easily lie about a verifiable fact just to curry favor with President Trump, how can we trust him or her to tell the truth to the American people during a crisis?

And between a potential Secretary Noem, a Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, and the Border Czar Tom Homan all competing for President Trump's attention with hard-line immigration enforcements, the Department of Homeland Security will suffer.

Other Agencies and responsibilities within the Department will falter. Roles like critical investigations into

theft or into child exploitation would take a back seat to their political priorities, areas like cyber security and election security—agencies like CISA, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which is a critical resource in an age of misinformation and disinformation and attacks on our elections. And I speak from experience. You may recall that I served as California Secretary of State, the chief elections officer for California, prior to me coming to the Senate.

But rather than rise to the occasion, to meet the real threats that we are confronting, Governor Noem has stated that she wants to downsize CISA and cut back on our election security efforts, and I don't take those threats lightly.

So from national security to immigration to disaster response to election security, we face serious challenges, colleagues. Not one of those challenges will be solved by prioritizing loyalty to one man over loyalty to our country and to our Constitution.

So given her clear, unwavering allegiance to one man over country, for her willingness to push falsehoods over facts, I will oppose her confirmation and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER MARK GAZELLE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in celebrating the career of U.S. Capitol Police Officer Mark Gazelle, who is retiring in January after 34 years of service with the force.

Joining the U.S. Capitol Police in 1991, Officer Gazelle was first assigned to the Capitol Division, First Responders Specialty Unit, before he joined the Mountain Bike Unit. He joined the Senate Chamber Section in 1995 as a plainclothes officer, where he served the remainder of his career on the section. Officer Gazelle has taken command during multiple events as the

Senate floor officer and has been instrumental in training and mentoring newer officers and staff around the Chamber.

Officer Gazelle has served in the U.S. Capitol Police Ceremonial Unit, where he rose through the ranks to become the assistant commander of the unit. The Ceremonial Unit is activated in high-profile congressional events, to include Presidential inaugurations, Congressional Gold Medal ceremonies, statue dedications, and lying in state ceremonies.

Officer Gazelle showed an unwavering commitment to keeping others safe, and these Halls undoubtedly remained safer because of his service. Officer Gazelle represents everything that is great about our country, and we are all better off for his selfless sense of duty and his tireless commitment to our safety. I thank Officer Gazelle for his years of service, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 21. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

H.R. 375. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address Rapid Ohia Death, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 21. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 375. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address Rapid Ohia Death, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-151. A communication from the President of the United States officially notifying the Congress of the United States of the death of former President James Earl Carter, Jr., the thirty-ninth President of the United States; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-152. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Addition of American

Single Malt Whisky to the Standards of Identity for Distilled Spirits” (RIN1513-AC88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2025; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-153. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Privacy Act of 1974: Implementation of Exemptions” (RIN1903-AA18) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-154. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Report to Congress on the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-155. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “National Maternal Mental Health Hotline Fiscal Year 2024”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-156. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Alliance for Innovations on Maternal Health 2025”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-157. A communication from the Deputy Associate General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Civil Monetary Penalty Adjustments for Inflation” (RIN1601-AB16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2025; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 239. A bill to take certain mineral interests into trust for the benefit of the Crow Tribe of Montana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 240. A bill to amend the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010 to make improvements to that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 241. A bill to provide for the settlement of the water rights claims of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. RICKETTS (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. BANKS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. WICKER, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 242. A bill to protect the dignity of fetal remains, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 243. A bill to extend the period for filing claims under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to provide for compensation under such Act for claims relating to Manhattan Project waste, and to improve compensation for workers involved in uranium mining; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 244. A bill to direct the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, to conduct a study of the national security risks posed by consumer routers, modems, and devices that combine a modem and router, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 245. A bill to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish a working group on cyber insurance, to require dissemination of informative resources for issuers and customers of cyber insurance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BUDD (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. DAINES, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 246. A bill to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 247. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to clarify payment rules for manual wheelchairs under part B of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 248. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permanently extend certain in-home cardiopulmonary rehabilitation flexibilities established in response to COVID-19, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 249. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to facilitate patient access to certain pediatric technologies; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CRAVER, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. BANKS, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 250. A bill to restrict the availability of Federal funds to organizations associated with the abortion industry; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BANKS, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAVER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 251. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit treatment of certain distributions and reimbursements for certain abortions as qualified medical expenses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. CRAVER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BUDD, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. LEE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 252. A bill to increase access to agency guidance documents; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. BANKS, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAVER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 253. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that amounts paid for an abortion are not taken into account for purposes of the deduction for medical expenses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 254. A bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to protect the cultural practices and livelihoods of producers of Alaska Native handicrafts and marine mammal ivory products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 255. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to clarify the treatment of authentic Alaska Native articles of handicraft containing nonedible migratory bird parts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. Res. 35. A resolution honoring the 100th anniversary of Nellie Tayloe Ross becoming the first female elected as the Governor of a State in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. COONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ROSEN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. Res. 36. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States, States, cities, Tribal nations, businesses, institutions of higher education, and other institutions in the United States should work toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 37. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the people of the United States should have continuous access to timely, up-to-date, and accurate health information; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. Res. 38. A resolution to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. RISCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRAVER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KELLY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PETERS, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. Con. Res. 6. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 44

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 44, a bill to direct the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library to procure a statue of Benjamin Franklin for placement in the United States Capitol.

S. 107

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 107, a bill to amend the Lumbee Act of 1956.

S. 157

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 157, a bill to authorize certain States to take certain actions on certain Federal land to secure an international border of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 165

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 165, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to list fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances.

S. 213

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) were added as cosponsors of S. 213, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for qualified business income.

S. 224

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 224, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow intangible drilling and development costs to be taken into account when computing adjusted financial statement income.

S. 237

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 237, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide public safety officer benefits for exposure-related cancers, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 3

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 3, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue

Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales".

S. RES. 28

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 28, a resolution honoring the service of women in combat roles in the Armed Forces.

S. RES. 33

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 33, a resolution expressing support for the recognition of January as "Muslim-American Heritage Month" and celebrating the heritage and culture of Muslim Americans in the United States.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 35—HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF NELLIE TAYLOE ROSS BECOMING THE FIRST FEMALE ELECTED AS THE GOVERNOR OF A STATE IN THE UNITED STATES

Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 35

Whereas, in 1925, Nellie Tayloe Ross (referred to in this preamble as "Governor Ross"), a pioneering figure in United States politics who made significant contributions to the advancement of women in leadership and public service, achieved the historic distinction of being the first female elected as the Governor of a State in the United States;

Whereas, on January 5, 1925, Governor Ross was inaugurated as the 14th Governor of Wyoming, a momentous event in the political history of the United States that not only marked a major milestone for the rights and empowerment of women, but also set a precedent for women in governance across the United States;

Whereas, during her tenure, Governor Ross demonstrated exceptional leadership in advocating for banking reform, public health, education, and the overall welfare of the people of the State of Wyoming, embodying a steadfast commitment to public service and the betterment of the State;

Whereas the groundbreaking leadership of Governor Ross represented the principles of progress and innovation, serving as a symbol of determination, resilience, and the tireless spirit of women in the State of Wyoming and the United States; and

Whereas the Senate, recognizing the profound impact of the legacy of Governor Ross, honors and celebrates the enduring influence of the achievements of Governor Ross, which continue to inspire generations of women to achieve leadership roles in all levels of government: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commemorates the legacy of Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross (referred to in this resolution as "Governor Ross") and her groundbreaking role as the first female elected as the Governor of a State in the United States;

(2) celebrates the lasting contributions of Governor Ross to the advancement of women in leadership positions; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to join in the observance of January, 2025, as the 100th anniversary of the pioneering spirit of Governor Ross, whose work continues to inspire and empower women in the political arena and beyond.

SENATE RESOLUTION 36—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES, STATES, CITIES, TRIBAL NATIONS, BUSINESSES, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD WORK TOWARD ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. COONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ROSEN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 36

Whereas 195 of the 198 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have acceded to the decision by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, France, adopted December 12, 2015 (referred to in this preamble as the "Paris Agreement");

Whereas the Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that—

(1) human activity has been the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century;

(2) human-caused climate change has led to widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere;

(3) vulnerable communities that have historically contributed the least to human-caused climate change are disproportionately affected by its impacts;

(4) adverse impact from human-caused climate change will continue to intensify;

(5) continued emissions will further impact all components of the climate system, and changes in weather and climate extremes will become larger;

(6) in the near term, global warming is more likely than not to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius even under low greenhouse gas emission scenarios;

(7) economic damages from climate change are present in climate-exposed sectors like agriculture, forestry, fishery, energy, and tourism;

(8) global temperatures must be kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrialized levels to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate;

(9) limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will require rapid, deep, and immediate greenhouse gas emission reductions; and

(10) deep, rapid, and sustained mitigation and adaptation measures between 2020 and 2030 would help to reduce loss and damage for humans and ecosystems;

Whereas, in 2024, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported 27 disasters that each resulted in at least

\$1,000,000,000 in damages and, in total, an estimated amount of \$182,700,000,000 in damages;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration determined that in 2020, the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in the United States was due to the economic recession associated with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic;

Whereas, in 2021 and 2022, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel consumption in the United States rose 8 percent relative to 2020 and 1 percent relative to 2021, returning to pre-pandemic levels;

Whereas, in 2022, the Energy Information Administration reported that renewable energy generated more power than coal for the first time in the United States;

Whereas, in 2023, approximately 40 percent of the global electricity supply was provided by zero-carbon sources, according to the International Energy Agency;

Whereas, in 2024, automakers sold more than 1,300,000 electric vehicles in the United States, making up 8 percent of all new vehicles sales;

Whereas 32 States have released a climate plan;

Whereas 29 States and the District of Columbia adopted a renewable portfolio standard;

Whereas 36 States and the District of Columbia have adopted clean vehicle policies;

Whereas 24 States and the District of Columbia have adopted greenhouse gas emissions targets;

Whereas 33 States have adopted energy efficiency resource standards;

Whereas 11 States have implemented the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to construct a market-based system that sets a cap on emissions from the electric sector that declines by 3 percent per year from 2021 through 2030, with a current goal of reducing power sector emissions among the participating States by 30 percent below 2020 levels by 2030;

Whereas the State of California has a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 48 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent by 2045;

Whereas, in the United States, 90 cities, 11 counties, 2 States, and the District of Columbia have adopted 100 percent clean and renewable energy goals, and 217 companies have committed to 100 percent renewable energy;

Whereas, since Public Law 117-168 (commonly known as the 'Inflation Reduction Act'), the largest United States investment in climate and clean energy in history was passed in August 2022, clean energy companies have announced or advanced nearly 750 projects, more than \$422,000,000,000 in investments, and created more than 400,000 new clean energy jobs;

Whereas more than 85 percent of the investments from the Inflation Reduction Act were made in counties with below average college graduation rates and more than 75 percent of investments were made in areas with below average median household incomes;

Whereas the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act are estimated to create up to 1,700,000 new jobs by 2030 and 2,900,000 jobs by 2035;

Whereas, in 2024, the United States submitted a new nationally determined contribution, in accordance with the Paris Agreement, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by 61 to 66 percent below 2005 levels by 2035, which is made possible in part by programs and investments supported by the Inflation Reduction Act

and the Infrastructure Law Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58);

Whereas, in 2023, more money was invested in solar energy than in oil for the first time globally;

Whereas, in 2023, more than 8,300,000 people in the United States worked in the energy sector in all 50 States, including in industries relating to wind energy, solar energy, energy efficiency, clean vehicles, and energy storage;

Whereas, in 2023, approximately 495,871 people in the United States were working in the solar and wind industries, including roofers, electricians, and steel workers;

Whereas the 2024 U.S. Energy and Employment Jobs Report published by the Department of Energy found that new clean energy jobs are outpacing the rest of the energy sector and United States economy by more than 2 times;

Whereas the vehicle emissions standards updated by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2024 for vehicle model years 2027 through 2032 are predicted—

(1) to provide \$13,000,000,000 in annual health benefits from air pollution reduction;

(2) to save drivers nearly \$6,000 over the lifetime of a new vehicle from fuel and maintenance costs; and

(3) to prevent 25,000 premature deaths;

Whereas the America Is All In coalition—

(1) has evolved from the 2017 launched We Are Still In Coalition to become the largest subnational climate coalition in the United States composed of States, Tribal nations, cities, businesses, universities, healthcare organizations, faith groups, and cultural institutions;

(2) has committed to uphold the Paris Agreement and formally reaffirmed that commitment at the recent ninth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement;

(3) represents approximately ¾ of the gross domestic product of the United States and ¾ of the population of the United States through city and State partners; and

(4) has committed to supporting subnational climate leaders as they build climate resilience and sustainable supply chains;

Whereas on the day before President Donald Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement on June 1, 2017, Hua Chunying, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, which is the world's current largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, said "China will stay committed to upholding and promoting the global governance on climate change, and take an active part in the multilateral process on climate change and promote green, low-carbon and sustainable growth of the world.";

Whereas, according to the International Energy Agency, China has made more than \$800,000,000,000 in foreign investment in clean energy and energy storage infrastructure around the world since 2016; and

Whereas the United States needs both a fully engaged Federal Government and States, cities, businesses, and all subnational actors working together to reduce emissions, avoid the worst effects of climate change, and compete in the global clean energy market: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United States—

(1) should remain a party to the Paris Agreement;

(2) should support policies at the Federal, State, and local level that promote the reduction of global warming pollution and aim to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement; and

(3) should support the clear intents and efforts of businesses, investors, and whole-of-American-society to take action on climate change.

SENATE RESOLUTION 37—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO TIMELY, UP-TO-DATE, AND ACCURATE HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 37

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services provides crucial external communications to protect the health and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas urgent communications provided by the Department of Health and Human Services help health care providers and the public learn about and respond to public health incidents and threats, including outbreaks of infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and the opioid overdose epidemic;

Whereas the United States has published the epidemiological digest, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, every week since 1961;

Whereas foodborne disease outbreak notices published by the Department of Health and Human Services are essential in coordinating and investigating illness, helping to respond to the estimated 48,000,000 people who get sick from foodborne disease each year in the United States; and

Whereas in 2024, public health information reported through the Health Alert Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included information regarding increased risks in the United States of avian influenza, dengue virus, and measles: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the people of the United States should have continuous access to timely, up-to-date, and accurate health information provided through the Department of Health and Human Services.

SENATE RESOLUTION 38—TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. THUNE submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 38

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the majority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mrs. Capito (Chair), Mr. Cramer, Ms. Lummis, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Graham, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Ricketts, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Husted.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Cassidy (Chair), Mr. Paul, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Mullin, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Scott (SC), Mr. Hawley, Mr. Tuberville, Mr. Banks, Mr. Husted, Mrs. Moody.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Paul (Chair), Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Scott (FL),

Mr. Hawley, Mr. Moreno, Ms. Ernst, Mrs. Moody.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Grassley (Chair), Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Hawley, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Blackburn, Mr. Schmitt, Mrs. Britt, Mrs. Moody.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Cotton (Chair), Mr. Risch, Ms. Collins, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Moran, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Young, Mr. Budd.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Mr. Scott (FL) (Chair), Mr. McCormick, Mr. Justice, Mr. Tuberville, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Moody, Mr. Husted.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Mr. Schmitt (Chair), Mr. Cotton, Mr. Budd, Mr. McCormick, Mrs. Blackburn, Mrs. Moody.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Ms. Ernst (Chair), Mr. Risch, Mr. Paul, Mr. Scott (SC), Mr. Young, Mr. Hawley, Mr. Budd, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Justice, Mr. Husted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 6—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT TAX-EXEMPT FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES HAVE HISTORICALLY PROVIDED AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CRITICAL BENEFITS TO THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. RISCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KELLY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PETERS, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 6

Whereas the fraternal benefit societies of the United States are longstanding mutual aid organizations created more than a century ago to serve the needs of communities and provide for the payment of life, health, accident, and other benefits to their members;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies represent a successful, modern-day model under which individuals come together with a common purpose to collectively provide charitable and other beneficial activities for society;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies operate under a chapter system, creating a nationwide infrastructure, combined with local energy and knowledge, which positions fraternal benefit societies to most efficiently address unmet needs in communities, many of which the government cannot address;

Whereas the fraternal benefit society model represents one of the largest member-volunteer networks in the United States, with approximately 7,000,000 people belonging to local chapters across the country;

Whereas research has shown that the value of the work of fraternal benefit societies to society averages more than \$3,800,000,000 per year, accounting for charitable giving, educational programs, and volunteer activities, as well as important social capital that strengthens the fabric, safety, and quality of life in thousands of local communities in the United States;

Whereas, in 1909, Congress recognized the value of fraternal benefit societies and ex-

empted those organizations from taxation, as later codified in section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve the evolving needs of their members and the public;

Whereas the efforts of fraternal benefit societies to help people of the United States save money and be financially secure relieves pressure on government safety net programs; and

Whereas Congress recognizes that fraternal benefit societies have served their original purpose for more than a century, helping countless individuals, families, and communities through fraternal member activities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the fraternal benefit society model is a successful private sector economic and social support system that helps meet needs that would otherwise go unmet;

(2) the provision of payment for life, health, accident, or other benefits to the members of fraternal benefit societies in accordance with section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is necessary to support the charitable and fraternal activities of the volunteer chapters within the communities of fraternal benefit societies;

(3) fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve their members and the public; and

(4) the exemption from taxation under section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of fraternal benefit societies continues to generate significant returns to the United States, and the work of fraternal benefit societies should continue to be promoted.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following members of my team be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress: Lindsey Williams, Tracey Henry, Poki'i Balaz, Sujith Ramachandran, Jack Pitsor, Robert Walsh, Samantha Fein, Shannon Rogers, Eoghan Stafford, Yezi Yang, Helin Unal, Eric LoPresti, and Ian Hunter.

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

CONSTITUTING THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 38, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (S. Res. 38) to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be

considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 38) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Noem nomination expire at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 25. I further ask that if cloture is invoked on the Bessent nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Bessent nomination at 5:30 p.m., Monday, January 27; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Duffy nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Duffy nomination at noon on Tuesday, January 28; finally, that the cloture vote with respect to the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 3, H.R. 23, ripen at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 28.

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

ORDERS FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. Saturday, January 25; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that morning business be closed and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume Executive Calendar No. 4, Kristi Noem, postcloture.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:59 p.m., adjourned until Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 24, 2025:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

PETER HEGSETH, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING COUNTY COMMISSION CHAIR STEVE MORRIS FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 24, 2025

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Steve Morris for a lifetime of dedication and commitment to the people of Cabarrus County. Having served for 12 years on the Board of Commissioners, and as Chairman, he has given his heart to this community for over a decade. I have seen his extraordinary leadership firsthand and can say that Cabarrus County is better off today due in large part to his efforts.

First elected in 2012, Chairman Morris has been a champion for public safety, mental health services, education, and economic stability. Since his election, Cabarrus County has grown from a population of 185,000 to around 245,000 people; added at least 10 new public schools; received over \$3.5 billion in capital investments, including approximately \$2 billion from Eli Lilly; and seen good paying jobs grow by more than 7,000. He also oversaw the creation of new municipal facilities, including a courthouse, EMS headquarters, and the appropriately named Stephen M. Morris Behavioral Health Center, which broke ground in November 2024.

Chairman Morris retires as one of the longest serving members of the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners in history. Over the course of his career, he has extended the highest level of personal sacrifice and has dedicated himself fully to the service of others.

Renee and I offer our most heartfelt appreciation to Chairman Morris for his years of exemplary service. I know I speak for the entire community in wishing him continued success and happiness as he moves on to his next great adventure.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in honoring my friend, Chairman Morris, for his extraordinary career of service to his community.

RECOGNIZING ALAN SLOBODIN

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 24, 2025

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Alan Slobodin for 30 years of service to

the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. I am proud to join the entire Committee in honoring his significant achievement and distinguished career on Capitol Hill.

Alan, a Bethesda, Maryland resident, graduated from Temple University in 1979 and received his JD from George Washington University in 1984. After receiving his JD, Alan served in private practice then as counsel on the House Committee on the Judiciary. He later became the President and General Counsel of the Legal Studies Division of the Washington Legal Foundation where he directed activities of legal publication and education programs for a major, national, pro-business public interest law center and advocated pro-free enterprise legal ideas before federal and state judges, Members of Congress, state legislators, the Executive Branch, and the media.

In 1995, Alan began his distinguished career with the House Committee on Energy and Commerce where he has proudly served six Republican Full Committee Chairs, eight Republican Oversight Subcommittee Chairmen, three Republican Ranking Members, and five Republican Subcommittee Ranking Members. As Chief Investigative Counsel since 2011, Alan has strengthened the public health of our Nation by conducting extensive oversight of public health agencies, spearheading scores of hearings, and leading many committee investigations into various topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic, drug and device safety, the opioid crisis, and bioterrorism preparedness among others. In addition, Alan has mentored generations of Energy and Commerce Committee staff and earned the respect of Members and staff on both sides of the aisle.

On behalf of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and all the past Chairs and Ranking Members of our Committee that Alan has been dedicated to assisting; I thank him for his career of service and dedication to our Nation and our Committee.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MOTHER ALICE HILLIARD

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 24, 2025

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the extraordinary life and legacy of Mother Alice Hilliard, a remarkable woman

who lived a life defined by faith, resilience, and selfless service. Born on March 24, 1921, her life was a testament to strength, love, and devotion to her family, community, and church.

Alice attended Wooden City School in Lewisville and accepted Christ at an early age, joining Union Hill Baptist Church under the leadership of J.H. Wyatt. In 1942, she relocated to Richmond, California, where she took on a historic role during World War II. Alice joined the workforce at the Kaiser Shipyard, stepping into roles traditionally held by men serving in the military. Her hard work and dedication earned her the distinguished title of "Rosie the Riveter," and she was later featured in the book "Staging Migrations Toward An American West" by Marta Effinger-Crichlow, highlighting her contributions during this pivotal time in American history.

After working at the shipyard, Alice continued her professional journey at the Dole Cannery and Aebi Nursery, where she eventually retired. However, her life's work extended far beyond her career. Alice had a passion for gardening, especially tending to her beloved rose bushes, traveling with her family, sewing, and cooking. She also faithfully served her community as a member of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church in Richmond for over 70 years. She was deeply involved in numerous church auxiliaries, including the Women's Mission Union and Baptist Training Union, and served as Chair of the Kitchen Committee. Her dedication to her church family was unwavering.

Mother Alice Hilliard's 103 years were marked by a life of faith, perseverance, and selfless love. She was an inspiration to all who knew her, and her legacy will live on in the hearts of her family, friends, and community. Today, I honor her remarkable life and extend my deepest condolences to all who mourn her passing. May her memory be a blessing to us all. I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to Ms. Hilliard's loved ones. I know they and the people of California's 8th Congressional district join me in celebrating her life and legacy.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Peter Hegseth, of Tennessee, to be Secretary of Defense.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S343–S374

Measures Introduced: Seventeen bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 239–255, S. Res. 35–38, and S. Con. Res. 6. **Page S371**

Measures Passed:

Majority Party's Membership on Certain Committees: Senate agreed to S. Res. 38, to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen. **Page S374**

Noem Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Kristi Noem, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of Homeland Security. **Pages S369–70**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 61 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. Ex. 16), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S369**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding Rule XXII, the post-cloture time on the nomination expire at 11:30 a.m., on Saturday, January 25, 2025; that if cloture is invoked on the nomination of Scott Bessent, of South Carolina, to be Secretary of the Treasury, all post-cloture time be considered expired and Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination of Scott Bessent at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, January 27, 2025; that if cloture is invoked on the nomination of Sean Duffy, of Wisconsin, to be Secretary of Transportation, all post-cloture time be considered expired and Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination of Sean Duffy at 12:00 noon, on Tuesday, January 28, 2025; and that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture with respect to the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 23, to impose sanctions with respect

to the International Criminal Court engaged in any effort to investigate, arrest, detain, or prosecute any protected person of the United States and its allies, ripen at 2:15 p.m., on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. **Page S374**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Saturday, January 25, 2025. **Page S374**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 51 yeas 50 nays, Vice President voting yea (Vote No. Ex. 15), Peter Hegseth, of Tennessee, to be Secretary of Defense. **Pages S368–69**

Messages from the House: **Page S370**

Measures Referred: **Page S370**

Executive Communications: **Pages S370–71**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S372**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S372–74**

Additional Statements:

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S374**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—16) **Page S369**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:59 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 25, 2025. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S374.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 119th Congress:

Subcommittee on Airland: Senators Cramer (Chair), Fischer, Cotton, Sullivan, Mullin, Budd, Schmitt, Kelly, Blumenthal, King, Peters, Duckworth, and Slotkin.

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity: Senators Rounds (Chair), Cotton, Ernst, Budd, Schmitt, Rosen, Gillibrand, Peters, and Slotkin.

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities: Senators Ernst (Chair), Cotton, Rounds, Cramer, Mullin,

Budd, Schmitt, Sheehy, Slotkin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Kaine, Peters, Rosen, and Kelly.

Subcommittee on Personnel: Senators Tuberville (Chair), Ernst, Scott, Budd, Banks, Warren, Blumenthal, Hirono, and Duckworth.

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support: Senators Sullivan (Chair), Fischer, Cramer, Scott (FL), Schmitt, Sheehy, Hirono, Shaheen, Kaine, Warren, and Duckworth.

Subcommittee on Seapower: Senators Scott (FL) (Chair), Sullivan, Tuberville, Mullin, Banks, Sheehy, Kaine, Shaheen, Blumenthal, Hirono, and King.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces: Senators Fischer (Chair), Cotton, Rounds, Cramer, Tuberville, Banks, King, Gillibrand, Warren, Rosen, and Kelly.

Senators Wicker and Reed are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 21 public bills, H.R. 719–739; and 6 resolutions, H.J. Res. 30; and H. Res. 65–69, were introduced.

Pages H393–95

Additional Cosponsors: Page H396

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Collins to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. Page H391

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Dr. Benny Tate, Rock Springs Church, Milner, Georgia. Page H391

House Democracy Partnership—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members to the House Democracy Partnership: Representative Buchanan, Chair; Representatives Smith (NE), LaHood, Dunn (FL), Fitzpatrick, Hern (OK), Tenney, Luna, Scott Franklin (FL), Steil and Kelly (PA). Page H391

United States Semiquincentennial Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission: Representatives Aderholt and Salazar. Page H391

United States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the United

States Group of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly: Representatives Turner (OH), Dunn (FL), Wagner, Fitzpatrick, Guthrie, Van Duyne and Connolly.

Page H391

Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Representatives McCaul, Letlow and Beatty. Pages H391–92

Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: Representatives Smith (NE), Gimenez and Matsui. Page H392

Migratory Bird Conservation Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission: Representative Wittman. Page H392

Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State: Representative Miller (OH). Page H392

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member to serve as Co-

Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission: Representative Smith (NJ). **Page H392**

Japan-United States Friendship Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the Japan-United States Friendship Commission: Representative Smith (NE). **Page H392**

Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China: Representative Smith (NJ), Co-Chair. **Page H392**

British-American Interparliamentary Group—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group: Representative Latta. **Page H392**

Board of Visitors of the United States Air Force Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors of the United States Air Force Academy: Representatives Pfluger and Crank. **Page H392**

Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy: Representatives McClain and Rutherford. **Page H392**

Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy: Representatives Valadao and Suozzi. **Page H392**

Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy: Representatives Womack and Bice. **Page H392**

Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy: Representatives Ellzey and Scott Franklin (FL). **Page H392**

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no Yea and Nay votes, and there were no Recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of January 27 through January 31, 2025

Senate Chamber

On Monday, if cloture has been invoked on the nomination of Scott Bessent, of South Carolina, to be Secretary of the Treasury, Senate will vote on confirmation thereon at 5:30 p.m. Following disposition of the nomination, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Sean Duffy, of Wisconsin, to be Secretary of Transportation.

On Tuesday, if cloture has been invoked on the nomination of Sean Duffy, Senate will vote on confirmation thereon at 12:00 noon. At 2:15 p.m., Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 23, Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Armed Services: January 28, to hold hearings to examine defense innovation and acquisition reform, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

January 30, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: January 28, to hold hearings to examine the Panama Canal and its impact on U.S. trade and national security, focusing on fees and foreign influence, 10 a.m., SR-253.

January 29, Full Committee, business meeting to consider committee rules for the 119th Congress; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Finance: January 29, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SD-215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: January 30, business meeting to consider the nominations of Elise Stefanik, of New York, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, 10:25 a.m., SD-419.

January 30, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the influence of the People's Republic of China at home and abroad, focusing on recommendations for policy makers, 10:30 a.m., SD-419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: January 30, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SD-562.

Committee on the Judiciary: January 29, business meeting to consider the nomination of Pamela Bondi, of Florida, to be Attorney General, Department of Justice, 9 a.m., SH-216.

January 30, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, 9:30 a.m., SH-216.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: January 29, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, 2:30 p.m., SR-428A.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: January 28, to hold hearings to examine the VA's Community Care Program, 10:30 a.m., SR-418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: January 28, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

January 30, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence; to be immediately followed by a closed hearing in SH-219, 10 a.m., SD-106.

Special Committee on Aging: January 29, to hold hearings to examine making Washington work for seniors, focusing on fighting to end inflation and achieve fiscal sanity, 3:30 p.m., SD-106.

House Committees

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Saturday, January 25

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Tuesday, January 28

Senate Chamber

Program for Saturday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Kristi Noem, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of Homeland Security, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 11:30 a.m.

Following disposition of the nomination of Kristi Noem, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Scott Bessent, of South Carolina, to be Secretary of the Treasury.

House Chamber

Program for Saturday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Garamendi, John, Calif., E69
Guthrie, Brett, Ky., E69
Hudson, Richard, N.C., E69



Congressional Record

printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at www.govinfo.gov, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202-512-1800, or 866-512-1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, contactcenter@gpo.gov. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000, or phone orders to 866-512-1800 (toll-free), 202-512-1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202-512-2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.