

5:30 p.m., the Senate will vote today on the confirmation of the Cobb, Williams, and Giles nominations, in that order.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I also want to extend my congratulations to four individuals, four friends, both former colleagues and folks I have known for a long time, who have just been confirmed by the Senate of the United States. Their confirmations will be conveyed to the President, and they will begin their service.

I wanted to briefly thank the Members of this Senate for acting quickly and appropriately to confirm the nominations of Senator Flake to represent us in Turkey, of Senator Udall to represent us in New Zealand, of Vicky Kennedy to represent us as Ambassador to Austria, and of Mrs. Cindy McCain to represent us at the U.N. agencies in Rome. All four of these incredibly talented individuals are deserving of confirmation, and I am encouraged by this progress.

I remain gravely concerned, however, at just how many nominees await action here. There are dozens of countries where there is no confirmed American Ambassador, and I hope that this moment of progress will be a predictor of other progress to come soon in terms of other confirmations.

(The remarks of Mr. COONS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3075 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COONS. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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—S. 2841

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I will be delivering remarks in a moment regarding the unanimous consent request that I am about to make. In deference and as a courtesy to my colleague from Washington, I will make the request first rather than speaking first.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, as if in legislative session, that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 2841 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I do have

good news for my colleague and everyone looking for information about the safety of vaccines: The CDC already collects and publicly releases data like what this bill proposes. So anyone who is curious about whether they should get a COVID-19 vaccination can go to the CDC website right now at cdc.gov.

And some more good news: The data overwhelmingly shows these vaccines meet FDA's rigorous standards of safety and effectiveness.

So now that that has been cleared up, I hope instead of wasting any more time on bills like this—bills which threaten to undermine public confidence in vaccines and trust in our public health experts by ignoring the thorough work they already do to provide clear, scientific data—we can instead focus on what we can all do to finally end this pandemic, which has now killed over 730,000 people and counting, and rebuild our country stronger and fairer.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, in recent years, particularly those on the other side of the aisle have called for, declared, and demanded that we rebuild what they call trust in government. While I believe that Americans must have a healthy distrust of the idea of government and any expansion of the necessarily limited powers of the Federal Government, that does not exempt government from the obligation of being trustworthy. That is why I find the position that so many of my colleagues across the aisle are taking to be so confusing: trust, but verify; trust your neighbor, count the cards.

People need information with which to analyze the faithfulness of government and to accept the facts as they deem appropriate. Now they claim that Americans must be forced, coerced, prodded, cajoled, threatened into making the government-approved medical decision. But heaven forbid if someone resists, objects due to moral or religious beliefs, or opts out of being vaccinated due to specific unique health concerns, she is derided and ignored, and—if the current Presidential administration has its way—forced out of her job.

All of this is supposed to build a safer and more trusting society?

This argument is totalitarian, and it is wrong. The United States is an open society, and the only way by which government can build trust with the American people is to earn it. The government will earn that trust only through transparency.

I have come to the Senate floor now nine times to oppose President Biden's immoral, unwise, and damaging vaccine mandate. I am committed to keep this going for as long as it takes to beat the mandate. I have introduced, now, a dozen bills to counteract, restrict, or limit the mandate. I do all this because I have heard from over 300

Utahans from one end of the State to the other, who are at risk of losing their livelihoods due to this aggressive government overreach.

Overreach of the government is staggering in here. It is an overreach the likes of which we haven't seen in this country in a long time; the likes of which we arguably haven't seen since April 8, 1952, when President Harry Truman seized every steel mill in America in order to support the Korean war effort. Fortunately, within a couple of months, the Supreme Court of the United States acted and invalidated that maneuver as unlawful, unconstitutional, which, of course, it was.

In this instance, that hasn't happened because, with respect to the OSHA mandate, the employer mandate—one saying all employers with more than 99 employees have to comply, have to fire people who aren't vaccinated—there is nothing there because the authority doesn't exist. But, in the meantime, corporate America is picking up the slack and doing the President's dirty work for him.

But it is a government overreach, and it is an overreach that is harming good people, people who are not enemies of the United States. No, they are not enemies to anyone. They are our neighbors, our fellow citizens, and our friends. Their stories are as tragic as they are moving, yet this administration seems bent on assuming that they have no voice, on giving them no voice.

Don't get me wrong, I am not against the mandate—I am against the mandate. I am not against the vaccine, not in any way. I am fully vaccinated. My entire family has been vaccinated. I have encouraged people to get vaccinated for the specific reason that I see the vaccines as miracles and miracles that are protecting many, many millions of Americans from the harms of COVID-19.

But if government is trying to encourage Americans to get vaccinated, hiding information about their concerns with the vaccine is the worst possible way to build trust. It has the exact opposite of what they claim they are trying to do. Existing concerns, make no mistake, are not just going to evaporate if they are ignored.

And the government's lack of transparency should be just as concerning to Americans who aren't worried about the vaccine as it is to those who are. Government should never be in the business of hiding information about the adverse effects and risks involved, no matter how infrequent or uncommon they might be.

And the government has—let's face it—been less than forthright with information about vaccine complications. Adverse reactions to the vaccine have been documented since the COVID-19 shot became available. The administration's message has been: Get the vaccine; it is safe, period.

If individuals pose questions about possible risks, about its interactions

with other medical treatments, or about rare reactions seen directly after its administration, they are often pushed aside, denied proper care, or deemed crazy conspiracy theorists for trying to scare the public away from the vaccine.

Sadly, this breeds distrust and it threatens the ability of those who experience rare vaccine injuries, the ability to access the proper treatment, care, and respect they deserve.

We should all be able to agree this type of governmental deception has no place in the United States. That is why today I came to the floor to offer the Transparency in COVID-19 Vaccination Act.

This bill would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to publicly disclose all information regarding adverse effects of the COVID-19 vaccines. This sunshine would help clear the air and allow individuals and the medical community the opportunity to make informed decisions.

This clarity would also be an important step toward building trust with the American public. Americans have the best, most accurate information when they make medical decisions—at least they try to. They deserve to have the best and most accurate information when they make medical decisions. This bill would ensure that happens. That is why I came to the floor to offer it today, offer that we pass it and offer the protections.

My friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Washington, regrettably objected to it. In doing so, she argued that it is not necessary because, according to the Senator from Washington, all the information that they need is now available. In many instances, it is not. This bill would require that be made available—all of it.

The CDC does collect information on it, but the American people don't have full access to that information, and they should.

That begs the question: Why? Why would anyone want to do that?

I don't know why. To me, it doesn't make sense, especially if one wants to increase the number of people getting the vaccine as I do.

I would like to see more people getting vaccinated because I think the vaccine is something of a medical miracle and it is protecting many, many millions of Americans from the harmful effects of COVID-19. That is a good thing.

We want them to be protected. To be protected, we want them to get vaccinated. It doesn't mean government should force it on them, and it certainly doesn't mean that government should be perceived in any way as being less than forthcoming with information that it gains access to.

That is all this bill would require. It is not hard. There is nothing wrong with doing that. In fact, my colleague from Washington insists that it is already done.

If that is the case, what is wrong with putting that into law?

There isn't anything. We should do it.

I will be back on this and other topics related to the COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

All this is unfortunate. No one is happy about the fact that COVID-19 has touched our country in the way that it has. It has been painful. It is devastating. The 730,000 Americans who have died with COVID are tragedies, each and every one of them.

There is nothing about government overreach that will bring them back. There is certainly not anything about government overreach that is going to have a proper influence than the American people. There is certainly not anything about government hiding the ball when it comes to data that the American people deserve and want to have access to that is going to make people better.

We want more people to get vaccinated. Because of that, we want them to have the facts. We should do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after failing to pass any radical climate proposals this year, it appears our colleagues across the aisle are in a panic mode. The reason is, later this week, President Biden will be traveling to Glasgow, along with a dozen or more U.S. officials and Members of Congress, for a U.N. climate summit, and it looks like they are going to show up empty-handed.

The President has talked a big game when it comes to climate change. On the campaign trail, he promised that the electric sector would be carbon pollution-free by 2035. He committed to building 1.5 million energy-efficient homes and public housing units, and he said the United States would transition from oil and gas.

Of course, he will be long gone from office, so he will never be held accountable for these projections, even if they miss by a mile, which I predict they will. But the fact is he has failed to make good on his promises to fundamentally transform the energy landscape in America, and I would suggest that that is for a very good reason.

Policies that drive up costs for the American people, hurt our energy security, and enrich our adversaries don't typically get a lot of traction here in the U.S. Congress.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we saw a great example of how unpopular these policies were when the pie-in-the-sky Green New Deal came to the Senate floor for a vote. Not a single Senator voted for that bill. Even the Members who introduced it were too afraid to vote yes because of the blowback.

But now that our Democratic colleagues control all levers of the Federal Government, afraid of their radical base, their calculus seems to have changed, so they are trying to jam these radical policies into the multi-trillion-dollar tax-and-spending spree bill, otherwise known as reconciliation.

Despite working on this bill for months and only needing Democrat support to get it to the President's desk, our Democratic colleagues are still struggling to reach an agreement among themselves. But now that President Biden has a deadline and he wants to look good in front of other world leaders in Glasgow, it is, apparently, crunch time.

But they have a problem: no bill has even been written or even seen the light of day. There is a steady stream of reporting about which outrageous policies are in and which are out, but none of us have seen a bill—we haven't seen it in writing—if it exists at all.

Based on reporting, though, massive tax hikes on the energy sector appear to be in the mix. Energy companies would pay higher taxes on income earned in the global marketplace and be subjected to the double taxation of their foreign incomes. And we know that when producers have higher overhead because of the higher tax burden, they don't absorb that; they pass it along to consumers in terms of higher prices.

Our Democratic colleagues want to also add a Superfund excise tax, which would force energy companies to pay more on every barrel of crude oil that is sold. Tax hikes on oil and gas companies won't increase the output of renewables, and renewables only accounted for 20 percent of the electricity generation last year while natural gas accounted for double that.

That is why, in my State, we believe in the all-of-the-above approach—all forms of energy—knowing that the Sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. We found out last year, because of extremely cold weather, we couldn't even put natural gas in the pipeline because we didn't have the electricity to run the compressors, and so it was—no pun intended—a perfect storm.

What we learned from that experience—and I think what we should all learn—is that renewables have their place. They are important, and their role is growing, but you have to have a reliable base load of energy, which renewables cannot supply. The only outcome of these tax hikes will be to drive up costs for working families and send more business to foreign energy producers.

I remember recently that President Biden, in looking at the high price of gasoline—which has gone up dramatically—looked to OPEC—the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries—led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, and asked them to produce more oil.

Well, how about American energy producers and the jobs that go along with that and the pipelines that move that oil and gas safely around the country?

He is OK with Nord Stream 2, which is a Russian gas pipeline over in Europe; but when it comes to the Keystone XL Pipeline here in America, “shut her down” is his attitude.