

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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. 673, Reta Jo Lewis, of Georgia, to be President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2025.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Christopher Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Jack Reed, Ben Ray Lujan, Christopher A. Coons, Chris Van Hollen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Amy Klobuchar, Tammy Baldwin, Tim Kaine, Patrick J. Leahy, Jeanne Shaheen, Edward J. Markey, Debbie Stabenow, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 654.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Leonard Philip Stark, of Delaware, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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. 654, Leonard Philip Stark, of Delaware, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Elizabeth Warren, Mazie Hirono, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Amy Klobuchar, Jon Tester.

Mr. SCHUMER. And, finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, January 20, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 401

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this weekend is the anniversary of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision. It is a decision that, without a doubt, changed lives for the better. It prevented a lot of harm and helped keep many patients healthy. It opened doors for women to pursue their career and education goals and affirmed the right to control our own bodies and our own futures.

Roe was a giant leap forward, and a majority of Americans want to protect it. But since Roe was decided, extreme Republicans have peddled blatant misinformation, filled our judicial system with anti-abortion judges, and passed State laws designed solely to make it harder to get abortions—laws that are now hurting people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, young people, people with low incomes, and people with disabilities the most. And they are not stopping at abortion. They are pushing to make it harder to get birth control and defund family planning clinics—including Planned Parenthood—which provide critical healthcare for so many communities.

In Texas, Republicans have passed, and the Supreme Court green-lit, a law that essentially bans abortions and is enforced by pitting neighbor against neighbor. And even though medication abortion pills are safe to take at home, extreme Republicans are now pushing to pass laws that not only dictate what happens in a doctor's office but also make it harder for patients to take a pill in their very own living room.

You know, Republicans do like to talk about Big Government, but overriding people's individual decisions and science to dictate what people can do in their own homes sounds like a lot of overreach.

The Senator from Oklahoma is here with a bill today that has one goal: to make it harder to get abortion care by allowing someone else's personal beliefs, rather than a patient's best interest, to determine a patient's care. And that is just one example of the extreme agenda Republicans are pushing, today and every day.

I have heard from so many people about the problems and the harm this has caused in their lives. I have heard from many patients who had to jump through unnecessary or even harmful hoops to get the abortion care they needed: patients who had to endure invasive ultrasounds that were medically unnecessary before they could get an abortion; patients who were harassed going in and out of a clinic; patients who had to drive hours or even days to get to the nearest abortion provider or who zeroed out their bank account to afford a plane ticket or childcare; patients, including many in Texas, who didn't have the means to get the abortion care they needed and were forced to stay pregnant when they did not want to be.

And then the Supreme Court took on a direct challenge to Roe that threatens the constitutional right to abortion. I have heard nonstop from people who are very anxious about their future, people who are scared and frustrated, people who, like the majority of Americans, want to protect Roe, who want to live in a country where everyone can make their own decisions about pregnancy and parenting—free from political interference.

That is exactly why I am fighting so hard to protect the right to abortion at the Federal level by passing the Women's Health Protection Act. That bill will safeguard Roe and help make its promises a reality for everyone, no matter their ZIP Code, by ensuring their constitutional right to abortion is not undermined by State abortion bans and restrictions.

But Republican attacks from every angle, like the one we will witness now, means there is no one easy fix.

We have got to do everything we can to undo the damage the extreme Republicans have caused in our laws and in our lives. And that is why I am fighting so hard for the over-the-counter birth control and to make health insurance companies follow the law rather than forcing patients to pay out of pocket for contraception.

It is why I am fighting to make a historic investment in title X family planning centers, which help make healthcare like birth control, STI screenings, and more available to everyone, regardless of their income.

And it is why I am asking for everyone to join me in this fight. It is going to take all of us working together to protect reproductive rights, and there is no action too small.

Share your story. Speak up about what reproductive rights mean to you. Support a local organization helping to get patients the reproductive healthcare they need. Work to combat Republicans' misinformation. Fight to pass local and State laws protecting abortion rights.

And here is something to remember while you do it: It is true that extreme Republicans have worked nonstop to roll back progress on reproductive rights and that abortion access is at risk like never before.

But this is also true: Since Roe, millions and millions of American women and men grew up knowing access to abortion is a constitutional right. Millions and millions more saw how much Roe opened doors for women and empowered people to make their own personal decisions about their body and their future.

The vast majority of Americans believe people should be trusted to make their own decisions about whether or not to get an abortion and that whether and when to get pregnant is a personal decision, not a decision that should be made by any politician or taken away from them because of how much money they have or where they live.

We can make this a reality, but we have got to fight for it. That is what I am doing; that is what I am going to keep doing; and I am very glad to have so many people alongside.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I guess I am one of those extreme Republicans that believe that a child who sucks their thumb, wiggles their toes and fingers, feels pain, has a beating heart, has a functioning nervous system, has DNA that is different than the mom or the dad is a baby.

I didn't think that was an extreme position to see a child as self-evident. That is a child. Now, I understand Americans are divided on whether children in the womb are convenient or inconvenient, and if they are inconvenient, they can be thrown away as medical waste, but if they are convenient, they are kept.

I just think every child is precious, and I think every child should be honored and protected. So I guess that makes me extreme.

The bill that I bring today is a bill that just looks at the millions and millions and millions of Americans who believe like I do. Many of them work in hospitals, and they joined the healthcare profession and got a medical degree because they wanted to save life. They wanted to be a part of protecting individuals at their most critical times, but they also had this real belief—that is a science-based belief, by the way—that a child in the womb is just like a child outside the womb, the only difference is time.

Forty weeks ago, you were 40 weeks younger. That child in the womb at conception and the child outside the womb is just 40 weeks older, just like you are 40 weeks older than what you were 40 weeks ago. It is still a child.

For the millions of Americans who believe like that, we have had conscience-protection laws on the books, for a long time. In fact, there are 25 conscience-protection laws on the books in America right now. Many of these have not been controversial. In fact, if we go through the church amendments, when they were done, they protect the conscience rights of individuals and entities that object to performing or assisting in the performance of abortions or sterilizations against their religious beliefs or moral convictions.

When that passed, almost 50 years ago now, it passed 92 to 1 in this body. It just wasn't that controversial. We understood that people disagreed on the issue of abortion. And why would you ever compel someone to be able to perform an abortion when their conscience objects to that?

In 2004, Congress created the Weldon amendment. It is on all of our annual appropriations bills. The Weldon amendment bars Federal Government, State and local government, and recipients of Federal funds from dis-

criminating against healthcare entities that refuse to provide, pay for, or provide coverage or refer for abortions. It has not been that controversial.

In fact, it was on the Consolidated Appropriations Act last year, which passed 92 to 6. This has not been that controversial to be able to honor the rights of individuals.

Now, there are some things that have changed. Some of these 25 laws have not been enforced. In fact, these 25 conscience protections that are on our books right now are dependent on the executive branch to actually enforce those laws. If I go back during the Trump administration, they confronted California because California mandated that insurance providers had to provide abortion coverage. Well, that is not consistent with our law.

And so the administration pushed them and said: No, you can't compel a religious institution that has a moral objection to abortion in your State; you can't make them buy abortion coverage and actually pay into that system—though California is.

So the Trump administration said to them: No, you have got to allow those folks to have the option; that is the Federal law. And that was in the process of being enforced until this administration took the leadership and Xavier Becerra, who was the attorney general of California, then moved to HHS and immediately dropped the suit against California, his old State—curious.

So the religious entities don't have any recourse in California because the executive branch won't enforce it.

Let me give you another example. There was an employer, University of Vermont Medical Center. They were pressed with a lawsuit against them for knowingly, willfully, and repeatedly violating the Church amendments. They had nurses that were there that said: I have a conscience issue. I don't want to participate in abortion, and the University of Vermont Medical Center would compel them to perform abortions or they would lose their job.

It is in direct violation of Federal law and the conscience protections. So there was a lawsuit against them to be able to have them actually carry out Federal law.

When the Biden administration came in, Xavier Becerra immediately dropped that lawsuit. There was no settlement. There was no statement about it. Though it is Federal law that you can't violate someone's conscience protections, they said: We are not going to enforce that Federal law—though it was in the process of being enforced.

So the question is, For religious entities in California or for a nurse in Vermont, where do they go? If the entity that is charged under Federal law—25 Federal laws, to be exact, to actually allow people to have conscience protections—if that entity says, "We won't do it," what happens?

Well, this bill is very straightforward. It just gives the ability for

that individual to be able to press a suit for their own rights.

If the Federal Government will not enforce the law, this allows that individual to step up and say: Then, I will then file charges that you are in violation of Federal law for this—to protect their rights as a citizen.

Quite frankly, it is not any different than what any other citizen would do anywhere else—that if they had some civil violation against them that was clearly in violation of their rights, they would be able to go to court and be able to say: My rights have been violated; here is the statute. And they would have their day in court.

That is not allowed currently in Federal law. It has to be the executive branch to carry it out. And, as we have learned, it is under the whims of the executive branch whether they are going to carry that out or not.

But, listen, this is really not that controversial in America. The most recent survey that was done by the Knights of Columbus that actually just came out this week asked a question about conscience protections. It was a very straightforward question. And the answer came back: 75 percent of the individuals surveyed said that doctors and nurses should not be forced to perform abortions if they have a religious objection.

Now, we are very divided on the issue of abortion, but our Nation is really not that divided on the issue of conscience protections. This is, Can an employer compel someone to do something that violates their religious beliefs or moral beliefs? And if they don't, they lose their job. That is the only question that is in this, and that is why I bring it to this body today. That is my simple request.

Now, this body knows, and Senator MURRAY, who is on the floor with me today, knows full well of my beliefs about the value of every single child. I do look forward to a day that we are post-Roe as a nation and the Supreme Court of the United States is not compelling every State to have abortions carried out that are elective abortions in their State.

A post-Roe nation is not a nation that has no abortion. It is a nation where, State to State, each State makes those decisions.

I have brought bills dealing with everything from chemical abortions to 20-week, pain-capable bills dealing with Down syndrome children, dealing with Planned Parenthood, dealing with all sorts of different issues.

This issue today is very specific, though—just about conscientious objectors. Should they be compelled to violate their beliefs by their employer?

So as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 401 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered 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?

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, to the Chair, we will as a nation process through this in the days ahead. This body has very strict laws that cover my State and many other States for a lot of other things.

In my State, if you go to build a building in the southeast part of my State, you have to do frequent inspections to make sure the burying beetle is not going to be harmed in that area because it is considered threatened.

If you are in the western part of my State, you can't build certain buildings in certain places or carry out certain farming activities because the lesser prairie-chicken is there.

If you are in California, they pour their water—their great water—out of the mountains into the ocean because if they don't, it may harm the smelt.

If you are building a bridge in Oklahoma, at certain times of the year, and a migratory bird puts up a nest in that construction area, you have to stop construction, because migratory bird eggs are valuable, burying beetles are valuable, prairie-chickens are valuable, smelts are available, but we throw children in the trash.

We have got to figure this out as a nation, and, currently, we seem to be afraid to talk about it or even to protect the rights of individuals who disagree about this in the workplace. We have got to figure this out as a nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). The Senator from Wyoming.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose the Democrats' radical agenda.

For weeks now, America has been breaking records with cases of coronavirus. The scavenger hunt for tests has resulted in long lines and empty shelves. We have just had the worst jobs report of the year—last year—with inflation at a 40-year high. Crime is out of control in big cities run by Democrats. The southern border is being overrun by hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants every single month. Our foreign policy is in shambles; our friends are endangered; and Vladimir Putin, China, North Korea, and Iran are emboldened.

The American people are deeply worried about all of these issues. Yet Democrats in Washington are offering no solutions on these pressing problems. Democrats created many of these crises in the first place, often through incompetence, mismanagement, and weakness. Now, under President Biden, they are making them worse.

Democrats just spent 5 months trying to pass the most expensive spending bill in American history. It was a

bill nobody asked for except for the radical base of professional activists. The bill would have led to the largest tax increase in 50 years, trillions of dollars in new spending and new debt, and even higher inflation.

Democrats tried to pass this on the narrowest of margins. Democrats failed. As soon as the bill was pronounced dead, Democrats scrambled to change the subject. Democrats know they can't solve the inflation crisis, the supply chain crisis, the coronavirus crisis, or any of the other disasters created by the Biden administration. By ignoring these problems, they are practically admitting that, as Democrats, they have no solutions.

So what are they doing instead?

Well, they have tried to manufacture another crisis. They have invented a phony moral panic about election laws. Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS have repeatedly lied about our elections. They got Major League Baseball to move the All-Star Game to a Democrat State. They got Hollywood stars and journalists and wealthy corporations to parrot their talking points. Now they have former Presidents Obama and Clinton getting involved. It has been a shameful effort to frighten the American people and further divide our Nation.

When Joe Biden was a Presidential candidate, he said he would "heal the country." He said he would "restore the soul of the nation." Just 1 year into his Presidency, we have found out that that was all for show. Joe Biden has been one of the most divisive and partisan Presidents in American history, and, today, he is on track to be the least popular President in modern times.

I understand why Democrats are desperate to change the subject. Yet Democrats are failing on the election issue as well. If Democrats think they can win on the idea of a Federal election takeover, they are wrong. Joe Biden is so unpopular in Georgia he couldn't even get Stacey Abrams to show up to his rally in Atlanta. She is running for Governor. She is a political celebrity. Election law is her main issue. Yet she wouldn't be seen in public with Joe Biden, and, frankly, I don't blame her.

Two days later, Joe Biden came to Capitol Hill to convince Democrats to change the rules of the Senate. He failed again. Brave Democratic Senators did the honorable and courageous thing. They kept their word. They said they would not destroy this institution for short-term partisan gain. They deserve the respect of every Member of this body. Joe Biden tried to push them around, and he failed.

The latest Quinnipiac poll has Joe Biden with a 33-percent approval rating just 1 year into his term in office. He has lower economic approval ratings than Jimmy Carter. Yet Senator SCHUMER asked Democrat Senators to follow Joe Biden over the cliff.

Yesterday, in his almost 2-hour press conference, President Biden talked

about taking his message on the road and campaigning with Democrat candidates. I want to see which Democrat candidates actually want to stand with him as more and more Members of the House announce their retirements because they know, and they can see the writing on the wall.

Senator SCHUMER wanted a vote in this body on the Washington election takeover and on changing the rules of the Senate. The American people have utterly rejected both of these ideas. The vast majority of the American people support voter identification. If you want a ballot, show your ID. They support making voters show a photo ID in order to get a ballot. This includes a majority of Democrats, who think it is an important thing to do for ballot integrity and accountability and security.

If Democrats want to fix our election laws, they ought to do something about what is happening in the majority leader's hometown. Just last month, the New York City Council voted to let 900,000 noncitizens vote in New York City's elections—noncitizens. This is a larger group than the margin of victory in this last New York mayoral election. In other words, this new group of voters—not citizens of the United States—could swing and determine the outcome of the next election for the mayor of New York. This is the majority leader's hometown.

Where is the ballot integrity, accountability, and security there for American citizens?

Before CHUCK SCHUMER lectures the American people about our elections, he ought to fix the problems in his own hometown.

Democrats are OK with vaccine passports, and they are OK with noncitizens voting, but they are not OK with voter ID, at least on the legislation that they brought to the floor. Democrats continue to fail to listen to and to fail the American people. Democrats are failing on inflation, on coronavirus, on immigration, on crime, and on national security. By voting on elections and on Senate rules, Democrats are admitting they have absolutely nothing to offer the American people on the key issues and concerns that are impacting the lives of people all across this country.

There is plenty of work to do right now. We have to stop unnecessary government spending to get inflation under control. We need to support law enforcement. We need affordable energy. That is what people want. We need to make sure that our schools stay open. We need to make sure that they teach our children skills, not ideology. We need to secure our border. So, yes, there is plenty of work for this Senate to do. Republicans have been more than willing to work with Democrats on all of these important issues.

The American people are looking for solutions. Yet the majority leader is giving them pointless exercises and show votes. It is time for the majority