

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, well, first off, let me make sure my colleague from Vermont knows my background. I actually grew up in public housing, born to a single mom. I do care about people, making sure you can get an education. That is why I did exactly what I did in Florida. I made sure people had the opportunity to get ahead.

The 4 years before I became Governor of Florida, the State lost 832,000 jobs. By cutting taxes and reducing the regulations and streamlining things, we added 1.7 million jobs so people all over my State could get a job. That is how people get ahead. You don't get ahead by just somebody transferring obligations from one person to somebody else. That improves a few people's lives, but that is completely unfair. That is not how this country was set up, that some people are going to pay for somebody else's obligation that they decided to pick up, and that is all I am talking about.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, you know, I really do think about this transfer question, and I find myself asking: Who paid for Jeff Bezos's yacht? Is it the taxpayers who said: Now, we—America's middle class, America's working class—are actually going to have to pick up the slack. And they will be the ones who have to pay to keep the military. They are the ones who will have to pay for roads and bridges. They are the ones who will pay for investment in science. But the billionaires can get richer and richer and richer and pay little or nothing in taxes. That is a giant transfer, and yet none of our Republican colleagues seem interested in talking about that transfer and just putting a stop to the outflow from hard-working, middle-class families over to the billionaires and the giant corporations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I think who paid for Jeff Bezos's yacht is all the people who bought packages from Amazon. And by the way, if you do get one that says "Made in China," I hope everybody will send it back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S.J. RES. 61

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, in a few minutes, I am going to ask unanimous consent for the passage of the bill. In the interim, I would like to yield some time to my good friend Senator WICKER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak on the same matter that Senator BURR has raised and will raise on the unanimous consent request.

Think of the economy right now, Mr. President. Inflation is at 8.3 percent or higher, our GDP is shrinking, and supply chains have not recovered from the pandemic. The last thing we need is a shutdown of this Nation's rail service, both passenger and freight. Yet that is what we are facing in less than a day and a half from this moment: a massive rail strike that will virtually shut down our economy.

Now, this didn't have to happen, but I will tell you, it has been going on since 2019. So we are in our third year of this matter. There has been negotiation among the rails, some 37 companies—including 7 major freight carriers—and 12 unions. They reached an impasse. So, pursuant to statute, the President of the United States, President Joe Biden, appointed a PEB, a Presidential Emergency Board, to help resolve this issue. They brought the parties together and have worked with the suggestions from both sides—both labor and management—and come up with their recommendation, which the President of the United States has endorsed in full.

We are now at the point where we are asking both labor and management to agree to this recommendation of the PEB. One hundred percent of management has agreed to this recommendation of the Biden-appointed Presidential Emergency Board. Of the 12 unions, 8 of the unions have agreed. So we have an overwhelming majority of the unions agreeing to this and 100 percent of management agreeing to it, but under the law that Congress, in its wisdom, passed years and years ago, we have to have 100 percent of the 12 unions, and there are 4 holdouts at this point.

Pursuant to the statute, when we get to a situation like this, Congress can step in, and that is what my friend is going to ask us to do in just a few minutes. Congress can pass the recommendation of the PEB in full. The Senate can pass it, send it over to the House, send it to the President, who has endorsed the recommendation in full, and we can avoid this strike. And that is what we ought to be doing.

So I want to commend my friend from North Carolina for his leadership in this case. If the trains stop running, our economy grinds to a halt. And that is the very reason this law is in place, and it is the very reason why it is incumbent on us as Senators and Representatives to pass a resolution implementing the PEB.

I yield to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi.

There are going to be some who say this is unprecedented by the Congress. In fact, under the Railway Labor Act, Congress is allowed to intervene. In fact, Congress has intervened 18 times in the past, imposing PEB recommendations in whole or in part 4 times.

If we don't do it, if we do not force this issue, at 12:01 tomorrow night, the railroads will shut down, and the economic impact on the American people is \$2 billion a day—\$2 billion.

The Senator from Mississippi and I have introduced a bill that will adopt the Biden administration recommendations—recommendations that include a 24-percent increase in pay, paid retroactively to 2020; annual bonuses of \$1,000; and additional paid leave. This is what has been negotiated by the PEB board, but, as Senator WICKER said, there are holdouts from a standpoint of some of the major unions even though eight have agreed to it.

Now, as I said, Congress has taken this action 18 times to intervene in 12 different rail disputes. It spans back to 1982, and the latest was in 1991. So I dare say there are only a few that are in this body who were here when that happened.

Now, Senator SANDERS is on the floor, and I know he is going to object. I know he is going to object because I read his tweet this week. It said this:

Congress shouldn't stand in the way of railroad workers going on strike. The rail companies have avoided bargaining, abused their workers, and allied with the same forces who killed the Biden agenda in 2021. Now they want Congress to support their greed. Don't.

It sounds similar to the argument he was just making to Senator SCOTT about student loans. It sounds very similar to every argument he uses. It is that there is this thing in America where nobody is speaking up for something.

Listen, this is the President's bipartisan emergency Board that he set up that came back with a recommendation to the Biden administration and said: Here is the solution to this. It should be adopted.

This is really weird that Senator WICKER and I were on the floor introducing legislation that supports the President's position and supports the position of the Presidential Emergency Board.

Now, here is the key thing. This is the takeaway. We don't have to be here. Senator SCHUMER at any point can place this legislation on the floor. Clearly, Senator SANDERS would object then. But let me make a promise. If Senator SCHUMER needs votes, I can deliver 48 Republican votes to implement the PEB recommendation and the Biden-endorsed position.

Let me say that again because I want to make sure Senator SCHUMER's staff understands. This is about how you get to 60. I don't want to give a 101 of the U.S. Senate, but 60 votes, as the President knows, is required. I am offering him 48. He only needs to get 12 on his side to have 60 votes, take this up, pass it, to have this over with. And there is no interruption.

Not only is it \$2 billion a day in economic impact; this is 160,000 trainloads of agricultural product at a time of harvest to cross this country.

There are some who say: Well, this isn't going to affect me. They haul coal. They haul gas. They haul petroleum. They haul gases like helium that are required for manufacturing businesses. They haul auto parts, which means you are going to see auto assembly plants that shut down not because of China but because we let the railroad workers go on strike and did not support the President's position.

This is not political. This is Republicans supporting the President's position and only asking 12 Democrats to support this action.

I ask my colleagues: Drop this concern that you are representing one side or the other. Ask yourself what is best for America.

We just got a report that inflation is 8.3—8.3; food up 7; housing up 6; gasoline was down, and I think everybody expected inflation numbers to go way down. So 8.3 percent—wages aren't keeping up with that.

Every American family is losing money every month. And now you are going to tell them you are going to be paying more because food is going to be scarce. Commodities are going to be scarce. Some things aren't going to be delivered.

If we thought that the port chaos that we saw last year was bad, we are going to see a complete shutdown of rail, and we are just a matter of months away from Christmas, when most retailers are counting on that product to come in.

There are ports like Seattle and L.A., what are they going to do with the containers? You talk about ships staying out at ocean. Amtrak canceled their east-west rail coverage today going forward. Carriers have already stopped hauling hazardous waste because they didn't want to get halfway down a line and not be able to secure the hazardous waste.

We are at a real tipping point on this. And this can all be solved by either no objection to the unanimous consent request or by Senator SCHUMER bringing this to the floor, knowing that he has 48 Republicans, and he only needs to produce 12 to get to 60. This is a really easy thing. It is an easy lift.

Well, my hope is that we will take one of the two paths. But do understand that in less than 48 hours, at 12:01 Friday morning, the likelihood is that without action by Congress, there will be a strike, and rail traffic will stop. Period, end of sentence.

At this time, Mr. President, 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.J. Res. 61 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the joint resolution 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?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. And I will object. Let me thank Senator BURR for actually reading my tweets. Much appreciated.

Just a correction of the record. I think Senator WICKER mentioned before that a number of unions had approved this agreement. As I think everybody knows, there cannot be an approval of a union agreement unless the workers themselves vote on it. They have not voted on it. So, in fact, there has been no approval by any union of the agreement. But before I go to the rail situation, I did want to say a few words and put this issue into a broader context, and then I will get to the rail situation.

As I think most Americans know, today we have more income and wealth inequality than at any time in the history of our country. People on top are doing phenomenally well while working people are struggling to keep their heads above water.

During the pandemic, while essential workers, like those employed at the railroads—while these people put their lives on the line and died by the thousands, the billionaire class—the people on top—saw a \$2 trillion increase in their wealth. Workers died by the tens of thousands. People on top became much richer.

Further, as healthcare costs soar, we have over 70 million Americans who are either uninsured or underinsured, and, in addition, the United States remains the only major country on Earth not to guarantee paid family and medical leave. That is the broad issue that we have got to look at as we look at the situation in the rail industry.

As I understand it, it is not accurate to say that the President of the United States has agreed to what the PEB has come up with. They have come up with a proposal. But right now, as we speak, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh is currently meeting with the rail union's end management in trying to forge an agreement. And I happen to wish them well. And I hope that those meetings lead to an agreement that is fair and that is just.

But let us make no mistake about what is happening in the rail industry right now—and I did not hear one word of that from my Republican colleagues—and that is that the rail industry has seen huge profits in recent years and last year alone made a record-breaking \$20 billion in profit. Last year, the rail industry made \$20 billion in profit.

And let me also mention that the CEOs of many of these rail companies are enjoying huge compensation packages. For example, last year, the CEO of CSX made over 20 million in total compensation while the CEOs of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern made over \$14 million each in total compensation.

In other words, what is happening in the rail industry is what is happening all over this country. Corporate profits

are soaring, and CEOs are making incredibly large compensation packages.

I would also add that the parent company of BNSF—one of the largest freight rail companies in America—is Berkshire Hathaway, owned by Warren Buffett. Mr. Buffett is the fourth wealthiest man in America, worth nearly \$100 billion. During the pandemic, as railworkers risked their lives to keep the economy going, Mr. Buffett became \$33 billion richer.

In the midst of all of those profit increases for the industry, in the midst of huge compensation packages for the CEOs of the industry, in the midst of increased wealth for those who own these companies, what is going on for the workers? I think that is a fair question to ask, if we are in the midst of negotiations. What is going on for the workers? How are they doing?

It turns out that the key issue in the current negotiations is not about salaries. Apparently, there is an agreement on that. The key issue that is being contested is about the working conditions in the industry which are absolutely unacceptable and are almost beyond belief.

Right now, if you work in the freight rail industry—one of the most grueling and dangerous jobs in America—you are entitled to a grand total of zero sick days.

In case you missed it, let me repeat it: You are entitled to zero sick days.

What that means is that if you as a worker get sick, if your child gets sick, if your spouse gets sick and you need to take time off of work, not only will you not get paid, you actually could get fired. And that is precisely what is happening today in the rail industry. How crazy is that?

Let me remind you of what you undoubtedly know, that hundreds of Americans are still dying every day from COVID and tens of thousands are being hospitalized as a result of this deadly virus. What the freight rail industry is saying to its workers is this: It doesn't matter if you have COVID. It doesn't matter if you are lying in a hospital bed because of a medical emergency. It doesn't matter if your wife just gave birth to your child. It doesn't matter. If you do not come into work, no matter what the reason, we in the industry, we the bosses, have the right to fire you.

Really? Do these conditions really exist in the United States of America, the wealthiest country on Earth in the year 2022?

I do wonder if the CEO of the railroad or other top executives at that railroad—I wonder if they would get fired if they got sick or if they had a medical emergency in their families. I doubt very much that they would get fired.

Further, I should add, that quite sensibly the Federal Government guarantees 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to its workers. That is what we do as a Federal Government. So if you are an employee at the Department of Transportation in the United

States, sitting behind a desk, you are, appropriately—I believe in this very much—guaranteed 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. That is if you work at the Department of Transportation. But if you are an engineer running a train with tons of freight behind you—a very dangerous job—you get zero sick leave.

Now, that may make sense to somebody, but it doesn't make sense to me. As a result of this reactionary policy of denying workers sick time, rail conductors, engineers, and other rail employees are coming into work sick and exhausted, which is a danger not only to themselves but to their coworkers and everyone else who is around them.

As part of the contract negotiations, the railworkers are asking for 15 paid sick days. This is not a radical idea. We are the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee paid sick days.

In Germany, workers are entitled to 84 weeks of paid sick leave at 70 percent of their salary. In Norway, workers are entitled to 1 year of paid sick leave at 100 percent of their salary. In the UK, workers are entitled up to 28 weeks of paid sick leave.

The railworkers in the United States are not asking for 1 year of paid sick leave. They are not asking for 6 months of paid sick leave. They are asking for 15 days—15 days. The rail industry has said, as I understand it, that they just cannot afford to do that, just don't have the money. They say it would cost too much money to provide their workers with any paid sick days. They just can't afford to do it. Well, let's see. They made over \$20 billion in profits last year, and they provide their CEOs with huge compensation packages.

And here is something else that everyone should know who is getting involved in this issue: Last year, the rail industry spent over \$18 billion, not to improve rail safety, not to address the supply chain crisis in America, but to buy back its own stock and hand out huge dividends to its wealthy stockholders. In fact, since 2010, the rail industry has spent over \$183 billion on stock buybacks and dividends.

So here is where we are. It turns out that guaranteeing 15 paid sick days to rail workers would cost the industry a grand total of \$688 million a year. That is less than 3.5 percent of their annual profits. It seems to me if four major rail carriers can afford to spend over \$18 billion a year on stock buybacks and dividends, please, please don't tell me they cannot afford to guarantee 15 paid sick days to their workers and allow these workers to have a reasonable quality of life, which they don't enjoy today.

If the Burr-Wicker resolution passed, railworkers would be entitled to zero paid sick days and zero unpaid sick days. That is clearly unacceptable.

The outrage over the lack of paid sick leave is not the only issue being negotiated. The railworkers of this country are sick and tired of unreliable

scheduling, which is having a horrendous impact on their personal and family lives. In America today, railworkers are on call for up to 14 consecutive days, 12 hours a day. In fact, it is not uncommon for many railworkers to be on call virtually 24 hours a day with the requirement to report to work within 90 minutes for shifts that can last nearly 80 hours.

My office has heard from railworkers who received calls from management at 2 in the morning requiring them to show up for work at 4 a.m. Again, this is not only unacceptable; it is dangerous, and it has led to a substantial increase in the rate of injuries in the freight rail industry.

If the Burr-Wicker resolution were to pass, these unfair and unsafe working conditions would be allowed to continue, threatening the safety not only of the workers, but of passengers, as well.

Finally, the Burr-Wicker resolution could allow the freight rail industry to substantially increase the cost workers would have to pay for healthcare.

Let us be clear. We are talking about an industry that not only made \$20 billion in profits last year and spent over \$18 billion on stock buybacks and dividends, we are talking about an industry that has slashed its workforce by nearly 30 percent over the last 6 years, leaving its remaining workforce woefully understaffed and overworked. We are talking about an industry that has seen its profit margins nearly triple over the past 20 years.

Today, what Congress should be doing is not passing the Burr-Wicker resolution and forcing railroad workers back to work under horrendous working conditions. What we should be doing is telling the CEOs in the rail industry: Treat your workers with dignity and respect, not contempt. Do not fire workers for the "crime" of going to a doctor when they are sick. Make sure that your workers have 15 paid sick days and adequate time off to rest and spend with their families. At a time when you, the industry, are making recordbreaking profits, do not increase the cost of healthcare for your employees.

The CEOs in the freight rail industry need to understand that they cannot have it all. The rail industry must agree to a contract that is fair and that is just, and if they are not prepared to do that, it is time for Congress to stand on the side of workers for a change and not just the head of large multinational corporations.

Railworkers have a right to strike for reliable schedules. They have a right to strike for paid sick days. They have a right to strike for safe working conditions. Railworkers have a right to strike for these benefits. The Burr-Wicker resolution would take these fundamental rights away from workers. We cannot allow that to happen. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, the objection has been heard and the Senator from Vermont has that right.

I wonder if the Senator would yield for a question concerning some assertions that he has made. It is my understanding—and the Senator is correct in this regard—only two of the unions have actually voted in favor of this plan. Six others have—their leadership has agreed, and we have tentative agreements with six of those. So six plus the two is the eight I mentioned.

Also, the Senator, I think, is mistaken in saying that there is no sick leave policy. That would be unbelievable for the rail industry in this day and age. It works a little differently for the rail. Railroad employees operate trains and have a leave policy under which they first indicate unavailability for work, and when that unavailability is the result of illness, then they receive sick pay through a sickness benefit under a statutory scheme.

The Presidential Emergency Board heard arguments on both sides, recommended an additional paid leave day. And, again, I would stress that this comes on top of a 24-percent wage increase.

But the thing that really strikes me about what my friend from Vermont said is he seems to cast doubt on whether President Biden is actually for this PEB recommendation, and that needs to be cleared up. If the Senator from Vermont is suggesting that President Biden is not behind this, then the White House needs to let us know immediately because when the PEB report was issued, the clear message from the White House is that President Biden was in favor of this and endorses this.

So if there are people in the White House listening to this, if the President of the United States is following this debate, then he needs to clarify this. If he is backing out on his support for the PEB, we need to know that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. My understanding, I say to my colleague from Mississippi, is that as we speak, the Secretary of Labor is in a room—or has been today, with management and labor in trying to forge an agreement. So what is going on right now is they are trying to reach an agreement which is amenable to both sides, so that is a work in process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, it is clearly apparent by listening to this debate, if Senator SANDERS had been on the PEB board, the PEB board wouldn't be making a recommendation and the President wouldn't be behind it. But that is where we are, short of a breakthrough in the negotiations that are occurring and going on.

I grew up listening to Paul Harvey. Paul Harvey had a show, the rest of the

news, the stuff you didn't hear. Let me do Paul Harvey on Senator SANDERS.

The railroad workers today get 3 weeks paid leave on average, plus 11 paid vacation days. PEB made a recommendation that they get 1 additional paid leave day. We will add that in. That is almost a month of paid leave. Regardless of what you call it, there is a month there.

You now mentioned this wasn't as lucrative as Germany and UK. I was home all of August. Nobody was asking: Geez, can you pass legislation that makes us look more like the UK or Germany or the rest of Europe? And I would be willing to bet that 27 paid leave days probably is more than some of the European countries.

Mr. SANDERS. Would you like to bet on that?

Mr. BURR. I will turn to you when I finish, how about that? I gave you a gracious amount of time.

The PEB board determined this was a good solution. And Senator SANDERS says he is here looking out for the middle class because nobody does that. Tell me this: How are you looking out for the middle class when you are risking losing \$2 billion a day in economic activity? Some of those people that you are talking about standing up for, if this rail strike continues, they are going to lose their job because of you. They are going to lose their job because the President took a position and you didn't support him.

I have been amazed with this administration. I find it pretty difficult sitting up here taking the President's position because the CDC today, 78 percent of the CDC workforce does not show up at the office more than 2 days a month. We are in the middle of COVID. We have a monkeypox national medical emergency, and 78 percent of CDC employees—Centers for Disease Control—do not go to the office in Atlanta. As a matter of fact, by, I think, the New York Times report, even the Secretary doesn't go into the office. At a time where you ought to have leadership, the leadership is gone.

Let's give the President a little bit of credit. He is showing some leadership. He realizes this is not good for every American. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor or in the middle. Having \$2 billion a day of negative economic impact is not good. It will ruin people's lives, just like COVID, just like monkeypox has done to some Americans.

I am not sure how in good conscience you can roll the dice and say: Boy, 24-percent increase in pay retroactive to 2020—not 2022, 2020—\$1,000 bonus, and 27 paid leave days per year, somehow we are cheating them. It is beyond me.

But an objection has been heard, and now it means this is in Senator SCHUMER's hands. He is the majority leader. He can bring this legislation up on the floor. All he needs is 60 votes because I am convinced, after hearing Senator SANDERS, he is not going to have an epiphany tonight and wake up tomorrow and say: I was wrong, I am for this.

But here is the promise I will make to Senator SCHUMER. If he will bring it to the floor, I will produce 48 Republican votes for it. That means Democrats only need to produce 12 people to support it to keep the American people from having a \$2 billion-a-day economic impact negatively impacting them. It will keep the flow of goods from the east coast to the west coast, and Amtrak will open up again. Christmas that comes in from overseas will hit L.A., Seattle, everywhere, and it will make it to its retail location where my wife can buy it. You could probably squeeze 12 Democratic votes just out of coastal communities that have ports that are going to be the real loser in this.

Remember, not long ago we had a port problem. We had ships that were sitting off L.A. that couldn't unload, and we felt the impact of it. Well, if you thought that was bad, wait until there are no trains because then they will be unloading no ships. They are all going to sit off the shore. When they back up like that, that backs up further and further when these goods are going to come in because once they unload here, they are going to go back and get more.

It also means that what we export in this country, there are no containers and no ships coming in to export those goods. If you are in agricultural territory at harvest time, this is going to be devastating to you. There are 160 million freight cars of agriculture transported every year, and it happens in this period.

So I say to my colleagues, let's all hope that Senator SCHUMER will bring this up, that he will take Republicans up on their position of supporting the President and a solution to this problem, and that all he needs to do is produce 12 folks, and at any point, we can pass this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I was not aware Senator BURR was a railroad worker, so let me, just to set the record straight, tell you what the railroad workers themselves understand the situation is. We might want to listen to those who live the experience. So let me very briefly quote you a statement from Jeremy Ferguson, president of SMART Transportation Division, and Dennis Pierce, president, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Teamsters Rail Conference.

This is what they say about their working conditions:

Penalizing engineers and conductors for getting sick or going to a doctor's visit with termination must be stopped as part of this contract settlement. Let us repeat that, our members are being terminated for getting sick or for attending routine medical visits as we crawl our way out of a worldwide pandemic. No working-class American should be treated with this level of harassment in the workplace for simply becoming ill or going to a routine medical visit.

That is from the unions themselves.

So let us be clear. I don't think anybody wants a strike or wants a lockout. We hope that a settlement will be reached in the next day. But, in my view, if we are going to reach a settlement, I would hope that the railroads, which are making huge profits, start treating their workers with the respect that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I appreciate the debate on this. Here is where we are on this issue. We are going to have a nationwide strike within a day and a half from now, midnight, 12:01 a.m., Friday.

There are two things that could stop this. The distinguished majority leader can bring this PEB recommendation to the floor, and we will produce the Republican votes to get President Biden's administration's recommendation enacted. Send it to the House. The other thing that can happen is for President Biden to do as I have called on him to do just a few moments ago—to make it clear that this is, in fact, his recommendation, his endorsement of the plan that has been put forward by the Board he appointed; make that clear and exercise the Presidential leadership that is needed at this point to persuade his friends and the four holdout unions that this is what needs to be done.

But that is where we are. If we don't have one of those two actions, then we will have done nothing, and we will see a strike and the economic devastation that the distinguished Senator from North Carolina has described. It is really up to the Democratic leader and the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am very pleased to be on the floor today with my colleague Senator HIRONO to express our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta to be Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues at the Department of State.

The position that Dr. Gupta has been nominated for leads the Office of Global Women's Issues, which is charged with advancing the rights and empowerment of women and girls around the world through U.S. foreign policy, so looking at our foreign policy through a gender lens that recognizes that women are half of the world's population.

Not only does the Office of Global Women's Issues prioritize policies and programs to advance the status of women around the world, it ensures that U.S. policies incorporate a gender lens at all levels of policy and decision making.

The last 2½ years of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated why this office is more important than ever before. Around the world over those last