

Whereas the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus continues to promote diversity and inclusion within the Senate;

Whereas the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus recognizes each of the 11 current or former Senators of African-American descent;

Whereas the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus celebrates and commemorates the dedicated efforts of its members to promote a more diverse and representative government; and

Whereas the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus continues to fight for the justice and equality that started during the civil rights movement of the 1960s: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus for its many contributions and commitment to enrich the Senate community.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I have five requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPETITION POLICY, ANTITRUST, AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

The Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE JAMES M. INHOFE

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I understand the Chair has an announcement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate a commu-

nication regarding the resignation of Senator INHOFE.

Without objection, the letters will be printed in the RECORD and spread upon the Journal, as follows:

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, November 29, 2022.

Hon. KAMALA D. HARRIS,
President of the U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Please find the attached document dated February 28, 2022 officially notifying Oklahoma Secretary of State Brian Bingman of my intent to resign my Senate seat on January 3, 2023. I further note that my resignation will be effective at 11:59AM on that date.

Sincerely,

JAMES M. INHOFE,
U.S. Senate.

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, February 28, 2022.

Secretary of State BRIAN BINGMAN,
Oklahoma City, OK.

DEAR SECRETARY BINGMAN: It has been the greatest honor to serve the people of Oklahoma since I first entered public service in 1967, but after much prayer and consideration, Kay and I feel the time has come to stand aside and support the next generation of Oklahoma leaders.

Accordingly, pursuant to 26 O.S. §12-119, I am writing to inform you of my intention to retire from the United States Senate on January 3, 2023. Under state law 26 O.S. §12-101, this constitutes my irrevocable pledge to retire at the end of the 117th Congress, which allows the special election to be held concurrent with the existing election schedule.

I am excited to announce that I am endorsing Bartlesville-native and fellow Tulsan, Luke Holland in the special election to replace me, because Luke is a fierce conservative and the best person to continue my legacy of a strong national defense and investment in local infrastructure.

May God bless the great state of Oklahoma and the United States of America.

Sincerely,

JAMES M. INHOFE,
U.S. Senator.

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—S. 5068

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that S. 5068 be discharged from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2022

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it recess until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, November 30, and that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Velez-Rive nomination; further, if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to recon-

sider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, for the information of the Senate, there will be two rollcall votes beginning at 11:30 a.m. and two rollcall votes at 2:15 p.m.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand in recess under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator PORTMAN.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UKRAINE

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I come to the floor today for the 26th consecutive week that the Senate has been in session to highlight the very latest from Russia's illegal, unprovoked, and deadly assault on Ukraine. This continues to be a critical time for Ukraine and Ukraine's freedom fighters, and it is a classic fight for freedom. At this critical juncture, as the winter months approach, Russia's morale is flagging and Ukrainians are making steady gains on the battlefield. It is absolutely vital that the United States and our allies continue to stand by the people of Ukraine. We can't pull back now.

Ukraine, as you know, is a democracy. They are a great ally of ours. They just want to live in peace with their neighbors, including Russia.

Over the objections of 140 countries in the United Nations, Russia launched a brutal invasion of Ukraine on February 24. That was 9 months ago, and they haven't let up. While we celebrated Thanksgiving holiday this past week here in America, Ukrainians endured a deadly week of Russian attacks and bombardments on civilian population centers far, far from the frontlines. They didn't get a Thanksgiving break from the war.

Russia's military is actually continuing to bomb inside of Ukraine even today, civilian targets. What is interesting is that, at the same time, Ukraine is winning on the battlefield. Over half of Ukraine's Russian-occupied territory has now been liberated. Remember, at one point, Ukraine included the occupied territory up here near Kyiv, the capital, and all this area. Most of that area has now been liberated, and these are the areas where the Russians continue to occupy: Crimea, which they took back in 2014, parts of the Donetsk, and these additional areas. Even today, Ukrainians are making progress in these areas.

So on the battlefield, the Ukrainians, with our help and the help of 50 countries around the world, are making

progress. Yet, Russia continues to launch these missiles into Ukraine. Even in a place like Bakhmut, one place where the Russians were making some progress using mercenary forces—the Wagner Group, it is called—the monthslong assault by these Russian forces has turned into a grinding battle of attrition, and Russia has made little to no gains. So in the Bakhmut region, which is right here, even there, where the Wagner Group is fighting, they are not making significant progress at all.

By the way, back in April 2018, I visited Bakhmut. I was able to go there as part of a congressional factfinding trip, and the Ukrainian military allowed me to see the line of contact—actually go to that border area—the line of contact being between the occupied part in 2014 and the rest of Ukraine.

That is where I learned that the Ukrainians were going to fight, by the way, because I talked to a lot of the soldiers there about what was going on, and when there was discussion several years later about whether Ukrainians would fight if the Russians invaded, as it appeared clear they were going to do, I had no doubt that the Ukrainians were going to fight because I met these soldiers and talked to them, and they were hardened, and they knew what Russia had done to them and their families and their country and their freedom. And they have fought.

Here is a photo of me back in 2018 in this area of Bakhmut. As you can see, you have Ukrainian soldiers walking around freely.

Here is a photograph of Bakhmut today, to show you the difference. Back when I was there, there was sniper activity. You could hear some artillery being fired off in the distance, but today, months and months of Russia's brutal assault has led to Bakhmut looking like this.

Here is the Ukrainian soldier today.

It is a hellscape straight from the Western front of World War I, isn't it? Relentless artillery bombardments have forced soldiers into these trenches, just like they dug in France during World War I and World War II. This is the condition that Ukrainian soldiers are fighting in to defend their families, their freedom, and their country, and they are doing it as the temperature is falling and winter approaches. But they are undeterred, and they continue to fight hard.

The response to Ukraine making progress on the battlefield by Russia is to launch these missiles into the interior. I really think it is out of frustration. It is a cowardly approach. They can't win on the battlefield, so instead they are sitting back in Russia and bombing these civilian targets.

Here is one you can see. It is an energy grid in Ukraine. This is in western Ukraine. And it is just relentless bombing. They are killing people when they do this, by the way. They are not just taking out energy infrastructure; they are killing civilians, including energy

workers. Again, it is a cowardly approach. They are killing civilians and noncombatants, needlessly slaughtering men, women, and children. They are attacking residential areas, and they have been all along—apartment buildings, hospitals, community buildings—and, of course, causing cities to go dark as they go into winter, dark and cold.

When we were in Ukraine just a few weeks ago—Senator COONS and myself—Senator COONS and I went to get some additional information on the ground in Ukraine, and we got to see this firsthand.

This is in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. This is where the control center was for this energy utility, and this had happened just a few days before we got there. So the Russians are targeting very specifically energy to knock out electricity, knock out heating, knock out water.

That night, by the way, we had dinner with Ukrainian Parliamentarians. It was a dinner meeting to talk about what we could do as Congress and they can do as Parliamentarians to help the Ukrainian people right now. We had to have the meal by flashlight and candles because there was no electricity.

The systemic bombing of civilian infrastructure, throwing these Ukrainian cities in the dark and in the cold, without running water, has been met by heroic repair by Ukrainians. I imagine this is already repaired. But again, the Russians keep bombing. They need our help to be able to help prepare and provide more equipment as this equipment is being destroyed by the Russians.

Today, I was pleased to see that Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced an additional \$53 million from the United States to support efforts to rebuild this Ukrainian energy grid that keeps getting destroyed by the Russians. This package will include distribution transformers, circuit breakers, surge arresters, disconnectors, vehicles, and other key equipment. It brings U.S. support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure since February up to about \$145 million.

But again, it is not just us, and it shouldn't just be us. Our allies need to step forward to help Ukraine in this difficult moment as well, and they are. Finland, as an example I just saw, will send energy equipment to Ukraine this week. The EU, the European Union, will give Ukraine 200 transformers and 40 heavy generators to support the energy sector. The EU has probably given more than anyone else. This critical aid is needed because, again, these attacks just continue and continue.

The recent attacks in Kyiv, by the way, that we saw earlier when I was there 3 weeks ago, 300,000 Ukrainian citizens in Kyiv had lost power when we were there. I am told that there are currently about 130,000 Kyiv residents losing power, without electricity.

The Ukrainian military, again, has been making progress. They have had a huge success here in Kherson. This city

of Kherson in Ukrainian was the first provincial and only provincial capital the Russians occupied and the first major city that they took. The Ukrainian military carefully and over time orchestrated a great victory there, and about 3 weeks ago, it was liberated.

As this photo shows, Ukrainian citizens have welcomed these soldiers as heroes. You have probably seen some of this on TV news. They have just embraced these soldiers, and they put the Ukrainian flags back up in all the buildings. They have told these soldiers and others, including the investigators from the International Criminal Court, of the war crimes, the unthinkable war crimes that were committed by the Russian occupiers while they were there.

So the Russians were forced out of Kherson because of very effective work by the Ukrainians, using the weapons that we and the Europeans have provided them, including longer range missiles, taking out their supplies, taking out their ability to resupply themselves.

So what has happened now is that Russia, once they had left Kherson, has now started their bombing campaign, just nonstop bombing in the very city they occupied only a few weeks ago. So they are saying: If we can't have it, we are just going to bomb it into oblivion. Ukrainians are having now, after having lived through the occupation, to try to live through this bombing.

I saw the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine recently urge civilians to leave Kherson and go to other parts of Ukraine this winter due to these Russian attacks. That is what has to be done. The soldiers will stay and they will fight, but the Russians are just constantly attacking Kherson.

In this area—this oblast, it is called—that provincial area, 10 people have recently been killed and 54 injured. The Russians shelled this provincial area 49 times on Thanksgiving day, 49 missiles and bombs on Thanksgiving day, hitting residential buildings, a shipyard, the school grounds, gas pipelines, everything.

The Russian shelling hit a school that was being used as a distribution point for humanitarian aid in the Zaporizhzhia area, up here. So in Zaporizhzhia, they had a school that was handing out humanitarian assistance, and it was attacked by a Russian missile. It killed a social worker and injured two other people.

You probably saw that also in eastern Ukraine recently, the Russians attacked a maternity hospital, and again they killed innocent civilians. They actually killed a newborn baby, a baby boy. They critically injured a doctor. The overnight explosion left a smalltown hospital there in total disrepair, just a crumble of bricks and scattered metal. There were medical supplies, by the way, strewn all over the streets. The newborn who was killed was only 2 days old—2 days old—but he had a name, Serhii, and his death will not be forgotten in Ukraine.

These are flagrant human rights abuses and war crimes. As a Zelenskyy Presidential adviser said, “There is no military logic [here]: they just want to take revenge on the locals. This is a huge war crime.”

I agree. Vladimir Putin is trying to bring Ukraine to its knees, but do you know what it is doing? It is only strengthening their resolve, the amazing resolve of the Ukrainian people.

Russia is beginning to feel the negative impacts of this war more and more. The sanctions are beginning to bite more, and we should strengthen them even more, in my view. But it is having an impact. The Russian banking sector has been hit by this. The Russian central bank reported that a record \$14.7 billion in hard currency was withdrawn from the Russian banking system last month, in October. People are taking their money and running. This was during the 300,000 troop mobilization of mostly untrained recruits.

A November report by the central bank warned that Russia's GDP would face a sharper contraction of 7.1 percent in the fourth quarter of this year, after falling 4.1 percent and 4 percent compared with last year in the previous two quarters.

So the economy is going the wrong way in Russia. Last week, the economy officially entered into a recession. So this war is having an impact on Russia, finally.

The central bank chairwoman told the Russian lawmakers that next year the situation will get darker still. She said:

We really need to look at the situation very soberly and with our eyes open. Things may get worse, we understand that.

I sure hope so. I sure hope so—that countries around the world see what is happening here and tighten these sanctions.

For many Russian companies, the reality of war sank in with the latest desperate mobilization. This is according to the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. I think that is true.

While there are a lot of Russians who still believe the propaganda and the disinformation from the Kremlin about Ukraine and, therefore, continue to fight innocent Ukrainians—their neighbors—other Russians now understand that this battle is not against an enemy; this battle is a failed ploy by Vladimir Putin to achieve his misguided ambitions to recreate the Russian Empire, the Russian Federation. That is what it is about. It is not about Ukraine.

I want to take a moment to talk about the aid package that is being developed right now here on the floor to send to Ukraine to continue our help at this crucial moment and to make an important point, which is that oversight of our assistance to Ukraine is very important. It is important to me. It is important to my constituents. It is important to my colleagues. We need

to be sure there are significant accountability measures in place. We have got to know where the aid is going. We need to know exactly where it is going and who is using it and how.

No one is advocating that we give Ukraine a blank check; and, by the way, they have not gotten a blank check. There are spending safeguards in place already. President Zelenskyy agrees with that. He wants those kind of checks in the system because he knows that that transparency is critical to the continued aid—not just from us but from the 50 other countries around the world that are providing assistance or more.

There is an accounting firm from the United States involved that follows all the aid to the government, as an example. Also, the World Bank sends a report about all the aid that goes to—the state aid, the government aid part, and they constantly audit that and report on that. So there are mechanisms in place already. Could they be strengthened? Probably so.

With regard to military equipment, we have put in place unprecedented policies to be able to have what is called end-use monitoring of the military weapons that are going to Ukraine. I visited with the 101st Airborne in Poland a few weeks ago and talked a lot about how that end-use monitoring is going. We finally have a military attache in country and some people who can help follow where these various weapons are going. And, honestly, so far, so good.

I have to tell you, I am surprised by this, but there has been absolutely no documented instance yet of diversion of U.S.-supplied weapons—to Russia, to Belarus, to third parties. Now, that may happen in the future, but this end-use monitoring is carefully ensuring that you get the serial number and you find out where the thing is going and you check on it. And I think that is very important, and my colleagues need to know that. This is something that the Ukrainian Government wants to do. And they should want to do it, and our military certainly wants to do it.

The Ukrainian Government has been transparent in terms of the funding because it is in their interest. It is in all of our interest. They hear questions about oversight coming from Members of Congress, and they understand the need to provide the accountability. So we need to continue the assistance at this crucial time, as we have said to-night, but we need to be sure it continues to be accountable.

You know, Vladimir Putin, when he decided to initiate this invasion, which so many people around the world thought he would never do because it made no sense; there was no logic behind it. But when he did this, he thought it would be a walk in the park. He thought the Russian Army would roll in and the Ukrainians would roll over.

It turned out to be a walk through Hell for his army and his government.

Why? Because the Ukrainian people showed grit and determination and the military fought more effectively than anybody expected. It is because Ukraine's morale and leadership has not faltered, even against overwhelming odds, a much larger military, and many more missiles. They have not faltered.

I have seen this mindset in Ukraine on my visits there. I think I have been there 8 or 10 times since 2014. It goes from President Zelenskyy all the way down to the soldiers we saw in the trenches, to the civilians who are doing their part.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that during the Russian occupation of Kherson, the area we talked about earlier, the 68-year-old head doctor at the hospital there in Kherson refused to bow down to the Russian invaders, setting a tone for citywide resistance. He told the invaders: “You can shoot me if you want,” but I am not going to do what you want. I have a responsibility to this hospital, and I am going to carry it out for the citizens of Kherson.

Other Ukrainian workers at the hospital were just as heroic and clever. The Journal reports that their resistance lasted 8 months. They faked a COVID outbreak to keep Russians from stealing their equipment, coming into the hospital and taking equipment. They spied for Ukrainian forces.

The fighting spirit of the Ukrainians should come as no surprise. They are a proud, patriotic, and tough people. For perhaps one of the best illustrations of this courage, I am reminded of the grandmother who gave sunflower seeds to invading Russian soldiers way back in February when they first started coming in. She gave them the sunflowers and said: Give these to somebody to plant at your burial place because you are going to die for invading our country and you might want to have something beautiful being grown at your gravesite.

That was a brave Ukrainian grandmother. I remember the photograph of a woman about 5 feet tall telling this to a Russian soldier a foot or so taller.

And who can blame the patriotic defiance that they have shown. Today, half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure is gone. Kyiv is operating on scheduled blackouts that last 4 hours. This is the capital. Civilians are being killed every day. Ukraine's economy continues to suffer catastrophic consequences. War crimes continue to be revealed day after day.

The actions by the Kremlin to knowingly destroy and attack civilian areas and kill innocent Ukrainians, of course, are meant to dampen Ukrainians' resolve, but, instead, these actions encourage fortitude among the ranks of Ukraine's freedom fighters against the barbaric enemy that has invaded their homeland. That is how they feel.

When I have come down to the floor each week to discuss the status of this

war on Ukraine's land, I have pointed out that this is where the battle is occurring for freedom over tyranny, of democracy over authoritarianism. This is where it is being waged here, in our generation, now. This is why we need to stand up and be counted.

If we don't join allies throughout the world in condemning it and helping Ukraine defend itself, what happens? Well, the world becomes a much more dangerous and volatile place. Trust me, people are watching—our enemies and our adversaries. Iran is watching. China is watching. Others are watching.

This is not the time for the United States and the allies around the world—more than 50 of them who have provided military assistance—to pull back. At a meeting in Romania today, the NATO Secretary General reaffirmed that NATO's door to membership remains open to Ukraine. It has been open since 2008.

I found this to be very welcome news, something I have called for, for years.

I don't think Russia would be in Ukraine if it had happened.

Ukraine is making gains on the battlefield, as I said. Russian forces and equipment are being destroyed and depleted. Russian war crimes continue to be committed as they punish Ukrainian civilians, and the Russian people are beginning to feel the negative effects of this failed war.

I think, frankly, that Vladimir Putin believes his supply of missiles will outlast the patience of the free world. I think that is what he believes. That is why he continues this senseless war. I think he believes he will continue to be able to have enough missiles to outlast the patience of the Western World, of us, the freedom-loving people.

I don't think that is accurate, but we need to prove him wrong. We need to keep the pressure up to end with a resolution to this senseless, brutal war. I believe, with the help of the United States and our allies, democracy can and will prevail over tyranny and authoritarianism. And that, of course,

would send the right message echoed across the world, a message that tyranny and authoritarianism must not triumph.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:24 p.m., recessed until Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

KATE E. BRUBACHER, OF KANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE STEPHEN R. MCALLISTER, RESIGNED.

ISMAIL J. RAMSEY, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE DAVID L. ANDERSON, RESIGNED.