

after winning the World Cup and making it clear to everyone that women athletes deserve equal pay.

It took a lot of hard work to make sure that this bill got into law, and I also want to thank my colleagues from the committee who helped pass this legislation, and Senators KLOBUCHAR and LUMMIS who also joined Senator CAPITO and me in advocating for this legislation.

While I wish tonight there were solutions to the inequities that exist in professional leagues like the WNBA and the National Women's Soccer League, this is a huge important step toward the economic empowerment of women athletes.

I also want to mention the hard work of my staff and Lucy Koch from the Commerce Committee and many others on Senator KLOBUCHAR's staff and on the Commerce Committee who helped get this legislation over the goal line.

This is a strong message to female athletes, not just in the State of Washington but across the United States. You deserve and you now will have equal pay, and this is a win for Team USA.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, this is an exciting evening for Senator CANTWELL and me. She just recently spoke very movingly about something that just passed overwhelmingly in the U.S. House, and that is the bipartisan Equal Pay for Equal Team USA Act. We call it "Equal Pay for Equal Play." I want to thank her for her leadership. She has been spectacular in the dedication that she has shown for this legislation.

I really think this is such a great, not just message, but a vision for the future of where we see and how we respect our women athletes as we respect our male athletes.

In addition, I would like to thank Senator CANTWELL, also Senators LUMMIS and Senators KLOBUCHAR for their partnership during this process.

I want to thank our House colleagues, MIKIE SHERRILL and NANCY MACE. They advocated for this bill on the House side and spoke eloquently this evening.

Just very briefly, I think what we saw with this dominating success of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team really shed the light on this issue of equal pay. I think a lot of us just assumed that, if you were playing for Team USA, male or female, of course, you would get equal pay. But that hasn't been the way it has been over the years.

Whether it is pay, salary, accommodations, training, all these things,

there have been great inequities here. Our Women's National Soccer Team is one of the most successful teams competing in international soccer today. They have won four World Cups, four Olympic gold medals, and they are currently ranked No. 1 in the world. They are continuing to be trailblazers.

U.S. Soccer signed a new collective bargaining agreement this year to close the gender wage gap and achieve true equal pay. Senator CANTWELL and I were on the field with Team USA here in Washington as they defeated the Nigerian team, and we had a ceremonial signing on the field, and it was a wonderful evening. For me, it was very uplifting because I had my 12-year-old granddaughter and her best friend, who are both soccer players. As the stadium would erupt to "Equal Pay for Equal Play," I would look over, and there they were, just yelling their lungs out: "Equal Pay for Equal Play."

So I am really happy today that I can take a Christmas present home to both of them. This is a historic moment that we must use to build off of. The bill will require the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee to provide all athletes who represent the United States in global amateur athletic competitions, regardless of gender, equal compensation and benefits.

As a woman sports fan myself, but also—I say former athlete, but I still like to do lots of sports—as a mother and a grandmother of female athletes, I recognize that for far too long, women's sports have been second best to men's sports. Equal pay and benefits should be the standard for all national teams.

So in closing, this is a simple bill that fixes a major problem.

I will say it again: Equal pay for equal play. It is the combination of a true bipartisan effort, and I am looking forward to seeing the President sign this bill into law on behalf of my West Virginia girls and girls everywhere.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORBITAL SUSTAINABILITY ACT OF 2022

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 4814 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4814) to establish a demonstration program for the active remediation of orbital debris and to require the development of uniform orbital debris standard practices in order to support a safe and sustainable orbital environment, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. BALDWIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Hickenlooper substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 6619), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (S. 4814), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, we are making good progress. As a procedural safeguard, I am filing cloture, but I am hopeful—very hopeful—we will lock in an agreement shortly.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment No. 4 to the bill with an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment No. 4 to H.R. 2617, to amend section 1115 of title 31, United States Code, to amend the description of how performance goals are achieved, and for other purposes, with amendment No. 6552.

Charles E. Schumer, Patrick J. Leahy, Benjamin L. Cardin, Alex Padilla, Jack Reed, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Baldwin, Gary C. Peters, Christopher Murphy, Richard Blumenthal, Tammy Duckworth, Angus S. King, Jr., Brian Schatz, Cory A. Booker, Sherrod Brown, Richard J. Durbin.

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, let me thank you, Madam President, and the entire staff for being here at 2 in the morning, but getting this omnibus bill done is an important thing to do. It is my expectation that we will be able to lock in an agreement on the omnibus tomorrow morning. We are very close, but we are not there yet. I ask Members to be alerted to be here at 8 in the morning when we will have the first vote on a nomination to bring everybody here, to get final agreement, and then to move forward.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 774, 995, 451, 1258, 768, 1281, and 1282; that the Senate vote on the nominations, en bloc, without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Sara C. Bronin, of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for a term expiring January 19, 2025; Evelyn Wang, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Department of Energy; Howard A. Van Vranken, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Botswana; Joey R. Hood, of New Hampshire, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tunisia; Jainey Kumar Bavishi, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; Sue Ellen Moore, of Washington, to be a Member of the Marine Mammal Commission for a term expiring May 13, 2023; and Andrew J. Read, of North Carolina, to be a Member of the Marine Mammal Commission for a term expiring May 13, 2025, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

RECOGNIZING THE VERMONT NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, during my time as a Senator, one of the responsibilities I have cherished most is my role in supporting and strengthening our Vermont National Guard. I have worked closely with the Guard throughout my time in the Senate and since 1999 as cochair of the Senate National Guard Caucus. During my tenure, the Vermont National Guard has never let the people of Vermont down, and I have always tried my best not to let them down.

Tracing all the way back to the New England militias that served in the French and Indian War, groups formed from early settlers in a remote and forested region spanning what is now called Vermont took on the name the Green Mountain Boys. Banded together by the legendary Ethan Allen from a need for local defense, they eventually became an integral component in our Nation's broader national defense strategy. And Vermonters kept answering the call, from 1812, through the Civil War, to our 20th century wars and the overseas deployments since September 11.

Today, our Guard is a diverse and modernized organization, with the same capabilities as its active component peers. At the beginning of my tenure in the Senate, the National Guard was called "weekend warriors" and regularly relegated equipment that was old and discarded from the Active Duty. I worked hard to support efforts that integrated the National Guard and reserves into our Active military forces—often referred to as the Total Force Policy. In partnership with several Presidents and Secretaries of Defense, we have all seen a transformation of how our Nation deploys and calls on our National Guard. That culminated in the passage of the National Guard Empowerment Act that was coauthored by my Guard cochair LINDSEY GRAHAM which elevated the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Over my years in the Senate, I made it a point to fight for equipment worthy of the contributions to the Nation made by the Vermont Guard, such as ensuring the Army Guard fielded the M1 Abrams tank, and that when it converted to a mountain brigade, that it had gear like modern snowshoes and equipment like the icy terrain navigating SUSV. They have proven time and again the value of the National Guard, earning praise at every level of the Department of Defense.

For the Air Guard, too, modern equipment in the hands of such talented people has made the difference. It was Vermont Air National Guard pilots who first secured the skies over New York City following the devastating attacks of 9/11, and they flew F-16Cs that at the time were some of

the most advanced in the Air Force. When the Air Force decided to do something it had never done before and place the second squadron of the most advanced fighter aircraft in the National Guard before all but one Active-Duty squadron, I made sure they stuck to their word, and Vermont was selected for the F-35A Lightning II. This year, they proved the wisdom of that decision, playing a key role in reassuring our NATO allies who feel threatened by Russia's murderous campaign in Ukraine and its belligerence throughout Eastern Europe.

In 2011, while reviewing the carnage Hurricane Irene inflicted on Vermont, I saw firsthand the devotion to service woven throughout the ranks of the Vermont Guard. While flying over the State alongside then Adjutant General Michael Dubie, I witnessed rural communities that were completely cut off because of historic flooding. I saw those same villages and hamlets reconnected with transportation and communication networks as a result of the tireless work of Vermont Guard engineers. Hurricane-impacted Vermonters were fed by supplies dropped from Vermont Guard helicopters, assisted and reassured by Guard patrols moving all around the State, and rendered medical aid by Vermont Guard medical personnel.

While Hurricane Irene stands out in our State's history as our costliest national disaster, it was not our first and it was certainly not the only disaster the Guard helped pull Vermont through. For more than 2 years, the Vermont Guard was activated domestically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Soldiers and airmen established medical surge facilities, helped with logistical operations at the Strategic National Stockpile, set up testing sites, and distributed food to out-of-work families. They accomplished their mission related to the pandemic even while also supplying critical units to the National Capital Region to support security operations following the Capitol attack of January 6, 2021.

Not to be forgotten, Vermont's cyber and information operation units work daily to protect our grid or train others in responding to malicious cyber attacks. These experts skillfully and lawfully bridge the divide between civilian government and our military. They provide wisdom and Federal resources to municipal and State government organizations faced with the ever-evolving task of securing information networks and civil infrastructure. And in keeping with Vermont Guard tradition, many of these soldiers and airmen have helped to set the national standard for how the Department can most appropriately assist local governments in achieving their goals related to cybersecurity and event response, as they did when our local hospital system was hacked.

The soldiers and airmen of the Vermont National Guard distinguish themselves not only in military contexts, but also in their civilian lives,