

[Rollcall Vote No. 256 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—43

Barrasso	Fischer	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rounds
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Sullivan
Cassidy	Kennedy	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cotton	Lee	Tuberville
Cramer	Lummis	Vance
Crapo	Marshall	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	Young
Daines	Moran	
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—5

Butler	Paul	Scott (SC)
Durbin	Schmitt	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julia Kathleen Munley, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:22 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON MUNLEY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Munley nomination?

Mr. LANKFORD. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rounds
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Butler	Durbin	Paul
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant 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. 53, Karla Ann Gilbride, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term of four years.

Charles E. Schumer, Ben Ray Luján, Peter Welch, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher Murphy, John W. Hickenlooper, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Baldwin, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Mazie Hirono.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Karla Ann Gilbride, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Equal Em-

ployment Opportunity Commission for a term of four years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—47

Barrasso	Graham	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rounds
Britt	Hoeven	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—3

Butler	Durbin	Paul
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 47.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Karla Ann Gilbride, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term of four years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3041

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, 10 days ago, as Israeli families celebrated the Sabbath and the Jewish holiday, Iran's terrorist Hamas launched a barbaric surprise attack against Israel, killing at least 1,400 Israelis and 30 Americans. Hamas fired thousands of rockets at Israeli cities and infiltrated communities to massacre mothers, fathers, children, and grandparents. It was the deadliest day for the Jewish people since American GIs liberated the final

concentration camp of the Third Reich. Hamas terrorists raped women, paraded corpses through the streets, and posted their crimes on social media. They burned families alive, and they murdered babies.

In this time of horror and grief, my prayers are with the people of Israel, and I know I am not alone. Upon hearing the dark news last Saturday, God-fearing Americans across the country knelt in prayer for the people of Israel. I believe all of Israel is uplifted by the prayers of our people for theirs that day.

But like Israelis, Americans don't remain on bended knee for long. And let me remind you again that Hamas also massacred 30 Americans and may hold as many as 13 hostage, making it one of the worst terror attacks against America in recent times. We have to avenge those deaths and do everything possible to bring those missing Americans home. We stand squarely with Israel and its objective to destroy Hamas, not only as a terror group but as a governing entity and a social movement.

But Hamas did not act alone, and it shouldn't pay the price alone. Hamas wouldn't exist at its scale and savagery that it does without Iran. Iran funds Hamas's political organization in Gaza. Iran assisted Hamas in the manufacturing of rockets and drones it used on the October 7 attacks. And Iran trained many of the Hamas terrorists who organized and executed these attacks.

Most damning, according to the Wall Street Journal, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps helped plot the attack against Israel, and Iran's Foreign Minister even attended meetings with Hamas and the IRGC to discuss the attacks. Yet President Biden could soon hand the terrorist regime in Tehran another \$6 billion in cash.

Joe Biden has already given the ayatollahs \$90 billion through his lax enforcement of oil sanctions and his unfreezing of Iranian assets. Tehran has predictably used this Biden bonus to strengthen its military and arm its proxies. Just last year, Iran doubled the budget of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the shock troops of its terror regime, and it more than tripled its support for Hamas's military brigades.

Worse, since President Biden took office, Iran and its proxies have attacked American troops more than 83 times, it has armed Russia in its war in Ukraine, and it has helped orchestrate the worst terrorist attack since September 11. The last thing we should do is give Iran another \$6 billion in a dangerous ransom payment for American hostages.

Under public and congressional pressure, the Biden administration purported to delay the release of the \$6 billion in concert with Qatar, where the money is now located. But color me skeptical of a "quiet understanding" between a soft-on-Iran Joe Biden and a soft-on-Hamas Government of Qatar, especially since the administration re-

fuses to freeze the funds and reserves the right to release the \$6 billion at any time without notifying Congress or the public, and, even more especially, since the Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister stood on a stage last week with the Secretary of State and said in Arabic that there were no changes to the agreement under which Iran could access the \$6 billion.

That is why Senator MCCONNELL and I have introduced a simple bill to prevent President Biden from making this \$6 billion payment to Iran. It rescinds the sanctions waiver issued by Joe Biden and Tony Blinken, locking down those funds and preventing the Iranian regime from withdrawing them.

Like Barack Obama before him, President Biden simply can't be trusted when it comes to Iran. Appeasement and accommodation are instinctual for them. Whether it takes days, weeks, or months, Joe Biden will revert to form. In fact, he already seems to be doing so.

This legislation would stop such a predictable reversal.

I am pleased to report that many of my Democratic colleagues have joined Senator MCCONNELL and me to call for the freezing of this \$6 billion—understandably so, since it means Iran will have an extra \$6 billion to support Hamas, to expand the Revolutionary Guard Corps, and to accelerate its nuclear program.

So will they allow this bill to pass today or are they all talk on the campaign trail and no action here in the Senate? Let's find out.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 3041 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?

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I want to make a few comments.

First of all, the Senator from Arkansas speaks for 100 Members of the Senate when he expresses his outrage at the horrendous killings and terrorist acts by Hamas against innocent people in Israel—the worst attack and suffering in Israel since the Holocaust. So the Senator from Arkansas speaks for every single one of us. Second, in his characterization of Iran as a malign actor, their association with Hamas, Hezbollah, the attacks they had on our soldiers when they were in Iraq, I believe the Senator from Arkansas speaks for all 100 of us. He certainly speaks for me. I want to salute the Senator for the time he has spent during his service in the Senate alerting America to the threat that Iran poses. But I object for the following reasons:

First of all, this President, President Biden, made a tough decision that Presidents before him had to make—including President Trump—about using the power of the office to bring back hostages who were viciously detained, cruelly detained, in this case by Iran. He made that decision, and, with the help of Qatar, we were able to bring five American hostages home.

That is a tough decision, but I would disagree with my colleague when he says that decision in any way indicates weakness or lack of resolve on behalf of President Biden towards what is happening and has happened in Israel. There is no better friend to Israel than President Joe Biden. He has been an ally and supporter of Israel throughout his time of service in the U.S. Senate, as Vice President, and as President of the United States.

I do disagree, but this is not the time to get into a debate about the Senator from Arkansas's characterization of some of the intelligence about what was the role of Iran in what just happened. That is a debate for a separate time.

I also want to disagree with the characterization that this is more money that is going to go to Iran. When this was being negotiated, there was great care given to the fact that this money had to be fenced off so that it could only be used essentially for humanitarian purposes. I am talking about medicine, medical devices, food, and agricultural products.

Let's keep in mind that, yes, we have an adversary in Iran with the ayatollahs, with Iran's Revolutionary Guard, but there are Iranians who are suffering and who do need medicine. And our beef is not with the people; it is with that government.

How are these funds limited? No bank can approve any one of the transactions. This money is not in the hands of Iran. For any money to be released, we have the backup of Qatar, where the funds are deposited. The money cannot be approved for any expenditure to any vendor unless it gets approval from the U.S. Government first. There is constant—constant—monitoring to make certain that the purpose—that it be for humanitarian use only—is met. The United States completely controls the valve of these funds, with the backup of Qatar.

Finally, this would be somewhat insulting to the confidence we placed in Qatar. What diplomatic efforts they may be involved in now for other hostages, I don't know, but we want to express confidence in Qatar, which has assisted us in bringing five Americans home.

Finally, there is the basic proposition—the United States made an agreement here. We got the benefit of that agreement with five Americans back home with their families. Mr. President, we keep our word. We keep our word.

For these reasons, I object to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I just want to respond briefly to my friend from Vermont, and he is my friend from Vermont. I don't mean that in the way that Senators usually say that when they say "friend from another State" but they are not actually friends and they oftentimes can't stand each other. He is my friend from Vermont, and he has been so since we served together in the House some time ago.

First, I will note, as I said, that nine Democratic Senators have joined my call to freeze this money. Those would be Senator ROSEN, Senator MANCHIN, Senator BALDWIN, Senator CASEY, Senator SINEMA, Senator CORTEZ MASTO, Senator BROWN, Senator KELLY, and Senator TESTER.

I will observe from that list that seven of those nine are up for reelection in difficult campaigns next year, unlike my friend from Vermont, who just won his election in one of the most Democratic States in the country. So I wonder why these seven Democratic Senators who are at risk on the campaign trail next year weren't willing to join my bill. We offered them all an opportunity to join the bill, but it was radio silence. Could it be that they want to say one thing on the campaign trail and do another thing here in the Senate?

A few points that the Senator from Vermont made—that this was a tough decision to free hostages and that we have to keep our word. It is always tough decisions when we face hostage situations overseas; however, paying \$6 billion for five American hostages—\$1.2 billion per hostage—simply encourages more hostage taking. We saw this the last time we paid ransom to Iran under the Obama administration. They immediately took more of the hostages whom we just freed by paying ransom. Just to note, just a few weeks after we paid that ransom, Hamas perpetrated this attack and took over 200 hostages. Maybe they took a lesson from what President Biden did with the hostages held by Iran.

Really, we can't be so naive as to think that, well, we made this deal, we got the hostages back, so we have to give Iran the benefit of the bargain, as if you can deal in good faith with a terrorist regime like Iran.

Second, the Senator from Vermont said there has been no better friend than President Biden to Israel over his long, long career in public office. I have to say, I find it hard to believe that Israel can have no better friend than a man who has spent decades, including 11 years as Vice President and President, empowering Iran—the worst enemy of Israel; a regime that still chants "Death to America" and "Death to Israel"—by giving them hundreds of billions of dollars of sanction relief; by putting them on the path to get a nuclear weapon; by, for instance, not in-

sisting that we continue the multilateral sanctions on Iran's missile program that expire under the nuclear deal tomorrow—that is right, tomorrow, October 18, the 8-year anniversary of the part of the nuclear deal with Iran that says that multilateral sanctions on their missile and drones will expire—at a time when Iran is providing missiles and drones to Russia to kill Ukrainians.

Joe Biden also, when he came to office, didn't just empower Iran; he empowered the exact terror proxies we are talking about. U.S. law prohibits the payment of aid to Palestinians that engage in so-called martyr payments—the grotesque practice of paying the families of suicide bombers and murderers of Jews or paying them if they survive. Congress stopped that practice with something called the Taylor Force Act. The administration has refused to enforce that law. To my knowledge, they continue to say they will make aid payments to Palestinian entities, which, in the end, inevitably free up more resources to attack Israel.

Which gets to another point the Senator from Vermont made—that this \$6 billion is sitting in Qatar in kind of an escrow account and is only going to be used for humanitarian purposes, things like food, medicine, and so forth. I understand that is the argument. I get that. But, of course, money is fungible. Iran now has \$6 billion free to do other things.

If a family in Arkansas is struggling to pay the bill for the groceries and they don't know if they can buy Christmas presents for their kids and they win a \$500 gift card to a grocery store at a Friday Night Football Booster Club event, guess what—it may not pay for the Christmas gifts, but they now have \$500 freed up to buy Christmas gifts. The exact same principle applies here.

I know the Iranian Government doesn't care for its people. That is why they oppress them and murder them. I grant you that. But they also need some kind of social stability to maintain their grip on power.

So, yes, it is a direct benefit to the terror regime in Tehran. If they get \$6 billion for things like food and medicine, that frees up their finances for other activities, like supporting Hamas and supporting Hezbollah and supporting the proxies in Syria and Iraq that have attacked Americans more than 83 times.

The Senator from Vermont also mentioned the suffering Iranians. They are indeed suffering. They have for more than 40 years under the yoke of the ayatollahs.

They have occasionally risen up in opposition—in 2009, during the green revolution, when Barack Obama stood idly by and did nothing to support these brave Iranians, with Joe Biden sitting by his side. Where was he? Was he caught flat-footed? Was he naive? Was he an inexperienced President his fifth month in office? No. He didn't

support the Iranian people when they were rising up against the ayatollahs in the summer of 2009 because he prioritized, above all else, atoning for America's sins against Iran in his mind and procuring a nuclear deal that would elevate Iran to a regional power that would balance off against our friends in Israel and the Arab nations so we could exit the region. That is the exact policy that Joe Biden has pursued in his nearly 3 years in office as well. There have been uprisings in Iran for over a year. Where has the administration been to support them?

I would just say finally on the point about the intelligence on whether Iran had foreknowledge of these attacks, was involved at all in planning them, I think there are disputes about that. I find it very skeptical that an organization that gets more than 90 percent of its funding from Tehran would launch an attack like this against Israel without Iran at least tacitly blessing it. But I also say as a point of analogy that you cannot breed pit bulls, feed them, house them, train them to attack and kill, and then let them off the leash and claim no responsibility when they maul your neighbors. That is exactly what Iran has done with terror groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and militias in Syria and Iraq.

So I regret that my friend from Vermont drew the short straw to come down here and object on behalf of his vulnerable Democratic colleagues. I will continue to work with my colleagues—hopefully, some of those Democrats who claim they want to stop the \$6 billion from being released because the last thing we should be doing, after these atrocious attacks on Israel and on America, I remind you, is enriching the Ayatollah any further.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The Senator from Tennessee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2210

Mr. HAGERTY. In the aftermath of the barbaric massacre committed by Iran-backed terrorist organization Hamas, there has been significant attention given in the U.S. Senate to the \$6 billion the Biden administration unfroze as part of a ransom deal with Iran. This is understandable. Because money is fungible, the combination of waivers and nonenforcement of sanctions has enabled Iran to spend billions of dollars bankrolling terrorists, including Hamas.

The \$6 billion was just the latest installment of an enormous windfall the Iranian regime has enjoyed ever since Joe Biden took office. But not enough attention has been paid to the way Congress has willingly abdicated its responsibility and allowed the executive branch to get away with a reckless policy of appeasement toward Iran.

According to many recent news reports this year, the Biden administration was negotiating an unwritten agreement with Iran in which the United States would relieve billions of dollars of sanctions on Iran in return for a number of Iranian promises.