

run down any number of everyday conservatives, people who have been prosecuted, investigated, harassed by this Department of Justice. It should be enforcing the law. It should leave the politics to this Chamber and to the electoral process.

I will continue to object so long as the Department of Justice conducts its business in a highly politicized way. If Merrick Garland or anyone else is listening, please get back to the business of enforcing the law, get out of politics, and then and only then will I release my hold policy.

Because of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week in my home area of Chicago, a 6-year-old Palestinian boy answered the door and was stabbed over and over again until he died and then the assailant went into another room and tried to kill his mother. The question is, Is this a hate crime because of his Palestinian origin? Does it deserve an investigation? Does it sound, in America, like this is the sort of thing we want an answer to? Whom would we turn to for that investigation? The U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of Illinois.

But the Senator from Ohio—because of his hurt feelings over the indictment of former President Trump by many others—has decided to say, in my region of the country, we will have no U.S. attorney; we will leave the position vacant, not because the person isn't qualified to take it over but because he is hurt and believes he wants to protest over the idea of holding a former President accountable.

Obviously, in his mind, former Presidents are above the law—not in my mind and not in any democracy. I don't know if former President Trump is guilty of any charges. We have a system of laws and law enforcement to reach that conclusion. But in the meantime, whether it is a hate crime in a suburb of Chicago or drug crimes that are claiming lives every single night in every single neighborhood in our Nation, how can we stand here in good conscience and say we want to grind the Department of Justice to a halt?

That is exactly what he said over and over again: grind the Department of Justice to a halt. To prove what? To prove what about this Nation? We deserve the opportunity to be protected by the Agencies of government we have appointed, and the men and women who are willing to sacrifice their time, their skills to serve that purpose and keep us safe deserve better treatment than what is happening on the Senate floor.

I wish I could say this is a unique experience. It has become a pattern: a House of Representatives which goes for 21, 22 days trying to find a leader on the Republican side of the aisle; military appointments, hundreds of them,

men and women, qualified, serving in the military, risking their lives, whose nominations are being held up on the Senate floor by one Republican Senator; the idea that we are holding back the possibility of appointing Ambassadors in parts of the world where war is imminent and underway and could drag the United States into conflict if we are not careful.

To take that position that we want to stop government, whether it is in the Department of Defense and their promotion policy, whether it is in the Department of State and the representatives around the world, or whether it is in the Department of Justice, is shameful.

This is not public service. This is a political errand. I wish it would come to an end soon, and I wish the Senator, who is new to this body, would think twice about whether this is how he wants to write his record in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

#### RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS AND THE RECORD-SETTING VOLLEYBALL DAY IN NEBRASKA EVENT ON AUGUST 30, 2023

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, on August 30, Nebraska made history. Thousands of spectators streamed into Lincoln's Memorial Stadium for two women's volleyball matches: the first between the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Wayne State College and the second between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Omaha.

On Volleyball Day in Nebraska, we broke a world record. Our Nebraska team set the new record for attendance at a women's sporting event: 92,003 fans. Volleyball Day in Nebraska took months of preparation to pull off, but the University of Nebraska did it successfully. Our Nebraska colleges planned and worked hard in anticipation of this new record. It is a picture of Nebraska. We are a State that is defined by dedication, drive, and—most of all—by community.

Nebraskans showcased that dedication and drive as they came together to get as many people as possible in the stands. And when they got there, they supported and encouraged players and fans alike. Whether the spectators were Husker, Maverick, Lopers, or Wildcat fans, they showed sportsmanship and good will.

In response to Nebraska's exciting new record, we are passing a resolution today that would celebrate women's collegiate athletics in our home State. This resolution will recognize the historic Volleyball Day in Nebraska on a Federal level.

In addition to attendance at a women's sporting event, Volleyball Day in Nebraska broke several other records. The event exceeded the previous at-

tendance record for NCAA women's volleyball. The new women's volleyball record of 92,003 fans in attendance is almost five times more than the old record of 18,755. The August 30 match also exceeded the attendance record for UNL's Memorial Stadium.

Our resolution specifically honors Nebraska's former coach Pat Sullivan, who started the University of Nebraska volleyball program in 1975. It also honors former coach Terry Pettit, who built the volleyball program from 1977 to 1999, and current coach John Cook, who has sustained excellence in this program since the year 2000.

And the team has sustained excellence ever since Volleyball Day in Nebraska. Our UNL women's volleyball team won the battle of the undefeated against Wisconsin this past weekend, and our team is now ranked No. 1. This Senate resolution celebrates a special day for women, for volleyball players, and for all Nebraskans. I am proud to bring well-deserved recognition to this unique accomplishment. As we often say, there is no place like Nebraska.

And I would yield the floor to my colleague from Nebraska, Senator RICKETTS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I am here today to join my senior Senator to celebrate this historic achievement for our State of Nebraska and women's athletics.

Nebraskans, we love our sports. And we are particularly proud of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers. Today, I especially want to point out our pride in the UNL women's volleyball program. As my senior Senator just recognized, they are the No. 1 team in the Nation. We have had five national championships in volleyball in the State of Nebraska. It is the third most in the NCAA. That is also as many national championships as we have had for our college football team. The volleyball program has nine former Olympians. The Husker women have also played on the U.S. National Team. In fact, three of them are on that team right now. They are also pioneers in name, image, and likeness.

As my senior Senator pointed out, we just beat the previous No. 1, undefeated University of Wisconsin Badgers on Saturday night in a five-set thriller that lived up to its billing as the match of the century. In 2022, our volleyball team led the Nation with an average attendance of 8,190 fans per game. We have had 314 consecutive sellouts in the regular season. And for the last nine consecutive seasons, we have led the Nation in attendance.

But earlier this year, Nebraskans helped the women's volleyball program reach a new height, a world record. It was Volleyball Day in Nebraska: 92,003 of the best fans in sports jammed into Memorial Stadium to watch four women's volleyball programs highlight their talent. The Wayne State College Wildcats took on the University of Nebraska at Kearney Lopers, and the

Omaha Mavericks took on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers. The eyes of the entire world were focused on Memorial Stadium.

Right in my home State of Nebraska, we had the most highly attended women's sporting event in the world ever. As Omaha World-Herald columnist Tom Shatel wrote:

Volleyball Day in Nebraska may be the biggest Title IX statement of all time.

Volleyball Day demonstrated just how much progress we have made in providing equal opportunity to our daughters, granddaughters, and sisters in sports. Title IX was about leveling the playing field for women's athletics. And for over 50 years, it has done just that. And, of course, this is more than just about sports for many of these women. Athletics have been a pathway for scholarships, educational opportunities, and career pathways.

The University of Nebraska also prides itself in instilling life skills into its student athletes. The Huskers Women's Volleyball Program has been filled with remarkable student athletes in the truest sense of the word. They lead the Nation with 40 volleyball Academic All-Americans as part of a nation-leading 351 Academic All-Americans in all sports. They also have three NCAA volleyball Elite 90 award winners.

The players are the stars. But, of course, you can't have a good team without a good coach. The Nebraska women's volleyball program has a great one in Coach John Cook. Coach Cook has been a part of the Nebraska volleyball family for 23 years. During that time, the team has made the NCAA playoffs every single year. Under his eye, the women's volleyball team has won four national championships. And in September of 2022, Coach Cook celebrated his 800th career coaching win.

The Huskers' tagline is: "In our grit, our glory." Volleyball Day in Nebraska and a new world record in attendance at a women's sporting event is the epitome of this motto.

Congratulations to everyone at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln whose grit made Volleyball Day possible and to all the other programs who participated.

I also want to thank vice chancellor and athletic director Trev Alberts and his team for their efforts. Thanks also to Coach Cook and his staff, and most especially, thank you to the women of the University of Nebraska volleyball program. You have given us something very special to be proud of. Truly, there is no place like Nebraska. Nebraska is what America is supposed to be.

And, finally, thank you to the senior Senator from Nebraska for introducing this resolution. I am proud to join you in recognizing this great achievement. I yield back.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleague Senator RICKETTS for his great comments

in recognizing the women's volleyball team, the State of Nebraska, and the great people that we have.

Mr. President, and with that, I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 428, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 428) recognizing women's collegiate athletics and record-setting Volleyball Day in Nebraska event on August 30, 2023.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. FISCHER. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 428) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

##### FARM BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about rural communities like my hometown of Clare, MI. It was a great place to grow up. My dad and my grandpa ran the local Oldsmobile dealership on Main Street, and my mom was director of nursing at the local hospital, and my relatives were dairy farmers.

And I saw how hard they worked every single day, rarely taking a day off. In fact, on Thanksgiving or Christmas, they were not there most of the time. They had to run back and milk the cows. So I so appreciated how hard they worked. I had many jobs growing up, but my first real job was at the local Dairy Phil, where I learned the art of filling a cone with soft-serve ice cream.

It wasn't a big town. It still isn't. But there was a real sense of community there. People shopped at local businesses, attended local events, cheered for the local high school sports teams, and rallied around local families when they needed help.

Places like Clare still exist, of course. In fact, in August, I was there to celebrate the Dairy Phil's 70th anniversary. But small towns and rural communities have seen a lot of changes over the years, and not all of them have been good. When I graduated from

high school in 1968, about 1 in 4 people lived in rural communities. Today, only 1 in 7 call rural America home. There are fewer people and a lot fewer farms.

Among other things, trade wars started by the Trump administration helped fuel this consolidation, causing dramatic drops in crop prices and billions in ad hoc inequitable Federal trade assistance payments. As people have left and as our economy has changed, many smalltown Main Streets have a lot more empty storefronts. Other towns have lost their schools, and more than 190 rural hospitals have closed since 2005.

Our small towns and rural communities are under a lot of pressure, and that is something that we all should care about. These communities are important. They are a crucial part of the fabric of our Nation. And I am so proud of the investments we have made over the last few years to strengthen that fabric.

We invested in healthcare and rural hospitals during the pandemic. In the American Rescue Plan, we invested in telehealth to bring healthcare providers to people where they were when they needed healthcare. In fact, telehealth visits by people in rural areas skyrocketed from 9,000 visits in 2019 to more than 830,000 visits in 2020. We invested in keeping critical rural hospitals open, like where my mom worked as a nurse.

We also know that healthcare above the neck is as important as healthcare below the neck. Farmers and ranchers have always been a stoic group, more likely to tough it out than to talk about it. That can make anxiety and depression and other mental health issues worse. In fact, farming is one of the occupations with the highest risk of suicide today.

We took big steps towards getting folks the help they needed by investing in our bipartisan certified community behavioral health clinics. I so appreciate the Presiding Officer's support in that.

There are now more than 500 of these clinics operating across the country, many of them in rural communities. It is the largest investment in behavioral healthcare in our Nation's history.

Our rural communities have also been pummeled by the climate that is changing right before their eyes. Last year, our country saw 18 separate billion-dollar disasters—18—costing 474 Americans their lives and over \$175 billion in damages. This year, we have already seen 24 separate billion-dollar disasters so far. But it doesn't take a billion-dollar disaster to destroy a family farm. Think about the cherry farmer who loses an entire crop when warm weather causes the trees to bloom early only to be wiped out in a cold snap a few weeks later. Or a wheat farmer whose hard work is leveled when a violent summer storm pummels her fields with hail. Or a family who