

well, also commit to expanding their investigation into Norfolk Southern to include all class I freight rail companies so we can get to the heart of the problems that lie within the rail industry?

The Senate needs answers. Communities like East Palestine need answers. So many others deserve answers as well. I hope we will hear some tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REPEALING THE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ—Motion to Proceed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 316, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 25, S. 316, to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

SUNSHINE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, on a lighter note than the majority leader's, I would like to talk about something a little different.

A couple of weekends ago, Americans across the country lost an hour of sleep to "spring forward" and reset their clocks for what we call daylight savings time. I am willing to bet losing that hour might have caused some friends back home in Alabama to have been late for church that day.

But the outdated practice of changing our clocks twice a year has many more consequences than the inconvenience of running behind, and Congress should make this year the last time we ever change our clocks by passing the Sunshine Protection Act.

Over the past 2 years, I have received many, many calls from people across Alabama to make daylight savings time permanent. Many Alabamians, including parents, seniors, farmers, citizens, and mental health professionals, have all reached out to my office in support of days of more sunshine in the evening—but not just Alabamians. Millions—I mean, millions—of Americans are ready to end the outdated practice of springing forward and falling back.

The idea of daylight savings time was originally known as wartime, W-A-R.

It was first introduced as a temporary measure to conserve energy and better utilize resources during World War I. Now, nearly 100 years later, Americans' energy consumption has rapidly, rapidly changed. While adjustments to our clocks might have made sense when it first began, it does not make sense for modern times today.

That is why I joined Senator MARCO RUBIO and a bipartisan group of my colleagues to reintroduce the Sunshine Protection Act to make daylight savings time permanent. The bill would provide an extra hour of sunlight in the afternoon, which would be most notable during the dark and cold winter months.

Many studies have proven that extra sunlight in the evening can lead to improvements in mental health, physical fitness, economic growth, and overall well-being. It is a simple way we could positively impact the day-to-day life of all Americans and finally get something done that a lot of people really care about.

Shifting clocks can disrupt sleep patterns, but a permanent daylight savings time will help Americans maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Studies have suggested that the disruption of sleep patterns associated with the shift in time has increased the risks of cardiovascular disease and physical injuries. Northwestern Medicine found that the "fall back" and "spring forward" comes with a 9-percent spike in fatal car accidents and a 24-percent higher risk of heart attacks.

Additionally, the long-term effects linked to daylight saving time include weight gain, headaches, and depression. The time switch in the fall increases seasonal affective disorder every year.

A study published in 2017 found that the transition from daylight saving time to standard time increased—the number of hospital visits for depression by 11 percent.

Permanent daylight saving time with extra sunlight in the evening will also encourage more physical activity, allow more time for people to go on walks, participate in recreational activities, and attend outdoor events. Kids will be able to enjoy more time outdoors after school with friends year-round, and older Americans will have more access to vitamin D.

Longer daylight hours in the evening have proven to stimulate economic activity, as well, because people are more likely to shop, dine out, and participate in other activities.

COVID lockdowns, which were very recent, and their crippling economic effect throughout the country underscore how valuable our small businesses are for local economies and our entire Nation as a whole.

The agriculture industry is also greatly affected by daylight saving time, as more sunshine during working hours means more time to work on their crops, which could translate into a more profitable bottom line. It could also decrease expensive energy con-

sumption on farms by reducing the need for artificial lighting and heating.

It is estimated that the time change costs the U.S. economy more than \$400 million in lost productivity annually.

Alabama, along with 17 other States, has already passed legislation to end the outdated practice of changing our clocks—17. However, the Federal Government must act to make those laws go into effect.

Congress should listen—should listen—to the people and pass the Sunshine Protection Act to make daylight saving time permanent before we readjust our clocks again next fall. The change would improve our health, bolster our economy, benefit our farmers, and put America on the path to a brighter future.

It is time for America to move forward and stop falling back.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss Phil Washington, President Biden's nominee to serve as the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, the top job at the FAA.

The FAA has been in the news far too often lately, from the software meltdown of a critical safety system in January that resulted in the first U.S. ground stop of aircraft since September 11 to recent, numerous near-misses of airliners on runways. These incidents are a stark reminder of why it is essential to have an FAA Administrator with decades of deep and real aviation experience, especially experience in aviation safety. After all, the FAA's primary mission is to keep the flying public safe.

This mission is so important that Congress has explicitly mandated, by statute, that the FAA Administrator must "have experience in a field directly related to aviation." This is not a patronage job; this is an aviation safety job. And it is, frankly, irresponsible to entrust the role of protecting the lives of millions of Americans who fly in the hands of a person who needs on-the-job training. Unfortunately, that is exactly what we have with President Biden's FAA nominee, Phil Washington.

I am deeply disappointed that the Biden White House decided to treat a critical safety position as a political spoil system, to reward a political ally rather than to ensure an experienced safety professional to keep us all safe. And as a result of the Biden White House playing politics with this critically important position, the FAA has lacked a Senate-confirmed leader for a year now.

Phil Washington is objectively, indisputably unqualified to lead the FAA. For two decades, he worked at mass transit agencies, where he was in charge of buses and trains, not planes. That experience might qualify him to serve at the Federal Transit Administration or on the board of Amtrak. Those would be reasonable nominations given Mr. Washington's experience. But buses and trains have nothing to do with airplanes.

The indisputable fact is that Mr. Washington has zero aviation experience and, in particular, zero aviation safety experience. Mr. Washington has never flown an airplane. He has never been a military pilot. He has never been a commercial airline pilot. He has never worked at an airline. He has never worked at an airline manufacturer. He has never served as an air traffic controller. He has never worked for a company that repairs airplanes.

The only aviation experience that Mr. Washington has is limited, for the last 20 months, to working at the Denver airport as the CEO. However, in that job, his primary responsibility is the physical plant there. It is the airport's shopping. It is its dining. It is its parking. It is its buildings. He doesn't have responsibility for aviation and aviation safety. In particular, as Mr. Washington admitted at his confirmation hearing, the pilots don't work for him, the mechanics don't work for him, and the air traffic controllers don't work for him. His job is not in aviation safety.

Aviation is a field involving highly technical issues. To understand these issues, to lead the FAA, the head of the Federal Aviation Administration needs to have extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise in aviation. This shouldn't be a controversial statement, and, historically, the head of the FAA has had decades of real, serious experience in aviation safety.

The FAA Administrator is supposed to be a nonpartisan position for an aviation expert. I don't want a Democrat FAA Administrator or a Republican FAA Administrator. I want someone who has some idea how to keep the damn planes in the sky. That is why the term of office is 5 years for this position—because it is not a position that is suitable to partisan patronage, but rather you need nonpartisan experts.

FAA Administrators typically stay on the job even when the White House changes hands. This is a job for someone with specialized knowledge needed to ensure the safety of the flying public.

I will readily admit, I am wildly unqualified to be FAA Administrator. No one in their right mind would put me in charge of this Agency because I don't have any idea how to fly a plane. I certainly don't know what needs to be done to ensure that they are flying safely. The sad thing is, Mr. Washington doesn't know any more than I do when it comes to this critical, specialized role.

Mr. Washington's nomination hearing confirmed what is abundantly clear in his resume: that he lacks any aviation experience. At his hearing, he was unable to answer basic aviation questions, including safety questions about aircraft certification, about pilot licensing, about airports.

I asked Mr. Washington about what caused the two tragic accidents with the 737 MAX. He was forced to answer to say he didn't know. Sadly, I believe him. But that is an enormous problem, given that 346 souls were lost in those two horrific crashes. An FAA Administrator who doesn't know what happened is not qualified to do the job.

One of the newest members of the committee, Senator TED BUDD, is a pilot. I would commend the Presiding Officer, I would commend anyone, go watch Senator BUDD's questioning of Phil Washington. Senator BUDD asked him basic questions a pilot should know, basic questions such as how close airplanes are allowed to get on runways. I will be honest. I have no idea. I am not a pilot; I am not an air traffic controller; and I am not running the FAA. But it is pretty stunning that the person nominated to run the FAA has no idea either. That person should know how to do his job.

And I will point out it wasn't just Republicans who raised these questions. At the confirmation hearing, multiple Democrats raised serious questions about Mr. Washington's lack of qualifications to lead the FAA.

As a result, State and local aviation groups from all across the country, including pilot groups from Arizona, from Montana, from New Mexico, from Minnesota, from New Hampshire—all are opposed to this nomination. One of them, the Montana Pilots Association, has said that Mr. Washington is "singularly unqualified to serve as FAA administrator."

And, unfortunately, the problems with Mr. Washington's nomination don't end with his lack of aviation experience. There are also serious concerns regarding outstanding allegations that Mr. Washington engaged in misconduct during his time as the head of the Los Angeles Metro. He has been named in multiple search warrants in an ongoing criminal public corruption investigation, and he has been the subject of multiple whistleblower complaints.

One search warrant was executed just last September, not very long ago. It contained allegations that Mr. Washington pushed forward lucrative no-bid contracts to a politically connected nonprofit to run a sexual harassment hotline that was hardly ever used and that he did so in order to stay in the good graces of a powerful politician on L.A. Metro's board.

The allegations are the kind of local corruption, sadly, we see far too often across this country in both parties. But a whistleblower who exposed the details of this alleged pay-to-play contracting scheme claims to have been

retaliated against by Mr. Washington. After Mr. Washington left the L.A. Metro, the agency settled these claims with the whistleblower for \$625,000. I practiced law for a long time. You did as well. A \$625,000 check is not a nuisance check. It is not a go-away check. It is indicative that there is real there, there. Whistleblowers don't get settlements for more than a half million dollars if their claim is baseless.

During my 11 years in the Senate, I have seen lots of nominees. I cannot recall seeing even a single other nominee who was currently entangled in an ongoing public corruption criminal investigation while his nomination was pending.

The week before his confirmation hearing, my staff contacted the California attorney general's office about the status of this investigation. Despite Mr. Washington's insistence that he has done nothing wrong, the attorney general's office stated, No. 1, that there is an ongoing criminal investigation into this public corruption scheme; No. 2, that Mr. Washington has a "material involvement in the case"; and, No. 3, that the investigation is months from being completed.

It is important to note that the law enforcement officers involved in this investigation—from the L.A. County sheriff to the California attorney general—are all Democrats. There is no issue of partisan targeting. There is no Republican who has it out for Phil Washington. This is a Democrat sheriff and a Democrat attorney general in California who are investigating Mr. Washington right now for public corruption.

Even more amazingly, when my staff spoke with the California attorney general's office, the AG's office told us that at the time they spoke, they were not aware of anybody from the White House, from the FBI, or from the Senate who had even contacted them to ask about Mr. Washington's ongoing involvement in the investigation.

That is truly stunning. That is, frankly, just not caring. It is inexplicable to me that a President, that a White House, would choose to nominate someone who is materially involved in a current ongoing public corruption investigation. Just imagine how damaging it would be to the FAA if Mr. Washington were confirmed and then months later he were to find himself indicted for public corruption. That would do real damage to an Agency that needs serious trust and leadership.

The FAA's mission to keep the flying public safe is far too important to have anyone other than a highly experienced aviation expert at the helm.

Fortunately, the FAA right now is being run by Acting Administrator Billy Nolen, who unlike Mr. Washington has decades of aviation experience. Mr. Nolen has worked as a pilot; he is a seasoned aviation safety executive; and he has been in senior leadership roles at the FAA.

At the nomination hearing and at the hearing that followed the next week with Acting Administrator Nolen, I suggested an obvious solution. President Biden has already named an Acting Administrator who is qualified and knows how to do the job. For those who are concerned about racial diversity, both Mr. Washington and Mr. Nolen are both African American. The difference is, Mr. Nolen has decades of experience in aviation safety, and Mr. Washington has none.

The Presiding Officer serves with me on the Commerce Committee. You are the newest member to join the committee. Welcome to the committee. We are glad to have you.

I don't believe Mr. Washington's nomination is going to go forward successfully. I do not believe the votes are there. I would suggest to the Presiding Officer and to every Democrat on the committee and in this Chamber, if you agree with me, pick up the phone and call the White House. Say: Hey, look, don't spend time on a nomination when the votes aren't there. Let's go with someone who knows how to do the job, who is qualified.

I stated at the last hearing, if Mr. Nolen were nominated—and to be clear, I don't know Mr. Nolen. I don't have a dog in the fight other than I would like someone who knows how to do this job. But I stated publicly at that hearing that if Mr. Nolen were nominated, that I assumed he would be confirmed quickly and with very significant bipartisan support. That should be our objective for a job like this.

And let me say this. You know, all 100 of us get on an airplane a lot. It is part of the job serving in the U.S. Senate. I was on a plane this morning. I suspect the Presiding Officer was either this morning or yesterday on a plane. We have millions of Americans who fly every year, who get on planes, who get on planes with their husbands, with their wives, get on planes with their children. And, tragically, one of the inevitable realities with that many people flying is that safety is always an issue, and there will be, at some point, a catastrophic crash. We don't know when. We want to do everything we can to prevent it, but we know at some point another plane will crash.

Let me suggest to the Members of the Senate, if, God forbid, that were to happen in the next 2 years—and I pray that it does not—I can tell you, I certainly wouldn't want to be a Senator who voted to confirm an Administrator of the FAA who has never flown a plane, who doesn't know anything about aviation safety, and has no idea why the plane crashed. I don't know how I would go home and explain to 30 million Texans that, well, you know, my political party nominated him, and so I went with party loyalty and voted to confirm the guy, even though he didn't have the experience to do the job.

I don't believe Mr. Washington is going to be confirmed. Personally, I re-

spect his military service. When he testified before the committee, he seemed like a decent and capable man. But he is also a man who doesn't know anything about airplanes. And if there is any job in the entire Federal Government where you need to know not just something about airplanes, a lot about airplanes, it is to be the Administrator of the FAA. We need a Senate-confirmed leader in this job quickly. And I would urge the President to withdraw this nomination and nominate either Acting Administrator Nolen or, if not him, somebody like him, with decades of real experience, so that we can have a Senate-confirmed leader with the knowledge and judgment and expertise to do everything humanly possible to keep your family safe and my family safe and to keep the flying public safe. We have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to do this right.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

U.S.-MEXICO RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, my State, the great State of Texas, shares 1,200 miles of common border with America's southern neighbor. Along the border, you will see big cities, small towns, rural farms, and ranches. You will find successful businesses that depend on free-flowing, legitimate trade and travel with our southern neighbor. You will meet countless people who are proud of the strong ties our country has with Mexico and many who have relatives on both sides of the border. These influences can be seen throughout our State, from the names of cities, like San Antonio, to the food we eat, to the music we enjoy and the diversity of people in our communities.

A strong U.S.-Mexico relationship has been a boon to Texas, but it is also vital to the rest of the country. Mexico is our second largest trading partner for both imports and exports. It is a major market for American energy, machinery, chemicals, and agricultural products. We import everything from transportation equipment to avocados. It is not uncommon for certain products, such as automobiles, to cross the border multiple times throughout the production process before eventually making their way to consumers in the United States.

A strong relationship with Mexico is important to our economy, but Mexico isn't just a trading partner. It is not just about the economics between our countries. Mexico is also a necessary and vital security partner because our countries share, in total, a 2,000-mile border and work together to protect the safety and security of our communities on both sides of the border. It is critical that we work in a complementary fashion.

The United States has supported Mexico's efforts to counter cartel violence and root out corruption in its judicial system. Mexico, in turn, has worked with the United States to ensure orderly migration and stop illicit

drugs from coming into our country. Obviously, what we are doing is not nearly enough on either side of the border.

Over the years, our security cooperation has promoted safety and security in both countries. As the American people are seeing every day, the Mexican Government is, unfortunately, failing to meet its side of the responsibilities. We can see that because people coming through Mexico, coming to the United States, have come in unprecedented numbers, which is a devastating humanitarian and public safety crisis. Then there are things like fentanyl and other dangerous drugs that are being manufactured in clandestine labs in Mexico and smuggled across our border every day.

Of course, these same criminal organizations are terrorizing law-abiding citizens in Mexico through their violence and their territorial disputes. Earlier this month, an out-of-control cartel violence incident harmed American citizens who were visiting Mexico. Four Americans were caught in a deadly shootout and kidnapped, and two of those individuals were killed.

In the face of these growing problems, the Mexican Government has not shown, in my view, enough willingness to work together to address these problems. Make no mistake, this is not something we can do or they can do alone; we have to do it together.

The Government of Mexico hasn't expressed adequate concern, in my opinion, over the cartel violence, the drug trafficking, or the migration crisis. Unfortunately, in public, Mexican President Lopez Obrador underplayed the security problems in his own country. I believe he knows differently based on the conversations we had when the TV cameras were not present. He has falsely claimed that Mexico is safer than the United States. We know that is not true. He said that Mexico was not responsible for the fentanyl coming into our country. We know that is also not true. It is a well-known fact that the vast majority of illicit fentanyl comes to the United States from Mexico, manufactured by precursor chemicals coming from China.

Well, here is the disparity between what you see in public to the TV cameras and what actually happens on the ground. Just weeks before claiming Mexico doesn't have a fentanyl problem, the Mexican Government raided what its army described as the "highest-capacity synthetic drug production lab on record." That is what the Mexican Army, SEDENA, said. It seized nearly 630,000 fentanyl pills, along with hundreds of pounds of powdered fentanyl and methamphetamines.

At that time, President Lopez Obrador said the lab seized by elements of the Mexican Army—that that lab had a value of roughly \$80 million, but just a few weeks later, the same government said it had no record of fentanyl production in Mexico.

It doesn't take a detective or an investigative journalist to see that the

Mexican Government is not taking these problems seriously enough, and it is to the detriment of their own citizens. Throughout Mexico, law-abiding citizens are being terrorized by these cartels. Migrants, we know, are being extorted and abused by the very people who are smuggling them up through Mexico into the United States. We know that communities across this country are experiencing waves of drug overdose or what some call fentanyl poisoning from the drugs that are smuggled from Mexico into the United States.

Frankly, the Lopez Obrador administration is not doing nearly enough to work together with us on this problem that we share in common, sadly to say. Given the severity of these challenges, there is a clear need for action. But we have to proceed carefully because while Mexico ultimately has many problems, it is our southern neighbor, and our economies are interconnected through the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, the successor to NAFTA. We know that its success, Mexico's success, will ultimately benefit the United States in terms of a better economy, more prosperity, more trade, more jobs. Our countries are inextricably linked together in terms of security and prosperity, and we need to find a productive path forward.

Countering cartel violence will require more cooperation with the Mexican Government. Stopping the fentanyl epidemic will require Mexico's cooperation. Addressing the border crisis will require Mexico's cooperation.

Although it may make us feel good at times, we can't just simply lash out in anger or say, we are going to do this, knowing that maybe it might get you a hit on TV, but it doesn't actually solve any problems. We need to make strategic decisions together with Mexico that will lead to real change.

As the Presiding Officer knows, we had a bipartisan congressional delegation to Mexico this weekend to learn more about the ongoing security challenges so we can figure out with our Mexican counterparts what kinds of changes need to be made and what exactly those changes would look like.

We had 12 Members of Congress—House and Senate—join the trip. From the Senate, we had Senator MORAN, Senator LEE, Senator CAPITO, Senator COONS, Senator MURPHY, Senator SINEMA, Senator WELCH, and myself. From the House, we had a bipartisan delegation: Congressman CUELLAR, Congressman TONY GONZALES, Congresswoman ESCOBAR, and Congresswoman SALAZAR.

Suffice it to say, between the 12 of us—Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—we have varying political views and many differences of opinion on a host of topics, but on this weekend trip to Mexico, we all agree the ongoing crisis in Mexico is unsustainable and something needs to change. We wanted to visit Mexico so we could learn for ourselves what the facts are,

not as they are spun by either elected officials or by the media. Before you solve a problem, you have got to understand the full scale of what you are up against, and that was the goal of this trip.

We got briefings from American intelligence officials, leaders from the Drug Enforcement Administration, and others about their work in Mexico. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico is the largest Embassy in the world and employs 3,400 people and 9 consulates in the main Embassy in Mexico City.

We spent some time with our outstanding Ambassador, Ken Salazar, a former colleague of ours in the Senate who went on to be Secretary of the Interior and now serves as our Representative in Mexico.

Ambassador Salazar was delighted we could come visit because he knows firsthand the challenges that Mexico faces and the challenges that the U.S.-Mexico relationship create and the importance of finding solutions to those differences and those challenges.

I want to thank President Lopez Obrador, even though I have said some critical comments here about how he has misrepresented the security situation in Mexico and the United States. I want to thank him publicly for meeting with us for a total of 4 hours. We not only met with Lopez Obrador; we met with the entire Cabinet. That would be as if a delegation, let's say, from Mexico of 12 senators and House of Deputies members came up and sat down with President Joe Biden and his Cabinet for 4 hours. It was an unprecedented exchange of information and points of view, and I think it demonstrated the Mexican Government's desire to have a closer working relationship with the U.S. Congress and the United States of America.

At the top of the list of the things we have talked about were the ongoing security challenges, which have had a deadly impact on both countries. Members of our delegation didn't pull any punches. We did it respectfully, but we forcefully presented our frustration with the ongoing cartel violence, the drug trafficking, and unchecked migration. That is what friends do, Mr. President; we have frank exchanges even when we disagree. We are friends with Mexico, and we have to work this out together, and we have to start with a common understanding of what the facts and the challenges are.

We told President Lopez Obrador that his administration must do more to address these challenges, and we emphasized that the failure to do so will have a negative impact on our historically strong and important partnership.

There are many ways to improve the security cooperation between our countries, and our delegation stressed our willingness to work with President Lopez Obrador's administration and the Government of Mexico to support their efforts to defeat the cartels.

Overall, our conversations with the Mexican President were extremely can-

did and tough, but they were respectful—respectful of not only the high office that President Lopez Obrador holds but also of the fact that we were dealing with the head of a sovereign country.

We have seen the positive impact in my State of a strong relationship with Mexico, but it also redounds to the benefit of the Nation. And as I said earlier, the better Mexico does by defeating the cartels, by interdicting the drugs and the precursors that come from other parts of the world, the better the quality of life, the safety and security will be for the people who live in Mexico—the Mexican people—and it will also be to our benefit here in the United States.

Ultimately, what I believe both countries want are a safe and prosperous country, and we can do this together. Our close ties are extremely beneficial to both countries, and I hope President Lopez Obrador took our good faith and candid comments about the failures to deal with security and migration to heart. We certainly expressed our views, as I said, in a candid, a civil, and respectful way, but I think we delivered the message clearly, and I hope he will take that to heart.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the 36th annual Women's History Month.

This year in Maryland, we have some special advancements to celebrate. In Maryland, voters chose Brooke Lierman as the first-ever woman independently elected to a statewide office as our new comptroller. Marylanders also elected Aruna Miller as our second female Lieutenant Governor and first woman of color and immigrant elected to statewide office in Maryland.

Here in the U.S. Congress, we have the highest percentage of women serving in history—28 percent across both the House of Representatives and here in the Senate. They build on the legacy of pioneers like former Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski. She was the first Democratic woman to win a seat in both the House and the Senate and until recently held the record as the longest serving female Senator, having now been surpassed by Senator FEINSTEIN of California.

As the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said:

Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. President, I was proud to testify recently at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing regarding the Equal Rights Amendment, the ERA. At the most basic level, the ERA is a continuation of the centuries-long process of expanding what is meant by "We the People."

The main clause of the amendment simply states:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

The vast majority of Americans will hear this and think, Of course, this should be part of our Constitution.

In fact, many Americans believe that it is already part of our Constitution. It has been overwhelmingly supported by the American public, regardless of political affiliation. A poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in the spring of 2020 found that 78 percent support the Equal Rights Amendment being added to the Constitution. A separate poll from AP-NORC similarly found three-quarters of Americans in support of the ERA, with large majorities of both Democrats and Republicans in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment.

In addition, 22 States, including my home State of Maryland, have established State-level ERAs. Six more have some form of explicit prohibition against sex discrimination in their constitution. Other States are actively in the process of adding the ERA. For example, in January, the New York State Legislature sent a State-level ERA to the voters for consideration on their 2024 ballot. So we already have it in the majority of the constitutions among States. It is time that it be added to the U.S. Constitution.

Indeed, 85 percent of countries have explicit prohibitions against governmental discrimination on the basis of sex. The United States is the only—the only—industrialized democracy that does not include an explicit provision in their Constitution. We want the United States to continue to be the gold standard when it comes to women's equality, opportunity, and protection against discrimination. Our inaction on this issue is an outdated barrier to our credibility on the global stage.

When Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment and sent it to the States for ratification, it included a 7-year time limit for the States to ratify in the preamble of the resolution proposing the Equal Rights Amendment to the States. This deadline was later extended for 3 years until 1982, but a total of 35 of the 38 States ratified the amendment by the extended date of 1982. There is nothing in the Constitution that provides for a time limit on a ratification of a constitutional amendment.

In 2017, Nevada activists, led by State Senator Pat Spearman, reignited the push for the ERA through the first State ratification since 1977. Illinois followed in 2019. Virginia became the 38th and final State required by the Constitution to ratify the ERA in 2020.

Since then, the only major remaining barrier has been the ambiguity caused by the fact that the three final ratifications occurred after the time set in the original resolution passed by Congress.

With Senator LISA MURKOWSKI of Alaska, I introduced a joint resolution

to resolve that ambiguity—to remove that last barrier. Thirty eight States have ratified; it should be part of our Constitution. It would remove the arbitrary deadline that Congress once set and to recognize the ERA as validly ratified by the required 38 States. Our S.J. Res. 4 is cosponsored by 52 U.S. Senators, including Senator COLLINS and all Senate Democrats and Independents.

This action is well within the Congress's broad power over the amendment process laid out in article V of our Constitution. As the ERA Coalition put it, this is the first time in our history that an amendment has fulfilled all ratification requirements under article V and has not been recognized.

There is precedent both for constitutional amendments to be ratified after significant periods and for Congress to pass resolutions to recognize amendments as validly ratified. There is simply no constitutional reason nor court ruling that bars us from taking this step. I point out to my colleagues that the 27th Amendment to the Constitution which deals with congressional pay increases was ratified. It took over 200 years to ratify it, and it is now part of the Constitution of the United States.

There are many reasons why it is important that we do act. The reality is that women still face serious challenges on account of sex and that our existing legal framework does not always provide a sufficient remedy.

As the 28th Amendment, the ERA would serve as a new tool—for Congress, for Federal Agencies, and in the courts—to advance equality in the fields of workforce and pay, pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment and violence, reproductive autonomy, and protection of the LGBTQ+ individuals.

The ERA would serve as a constitutional backstop for existing and new legislation. It would also signal to the courts that they should apply a more rigorous level of review to laws and government policies that discriminate on the basis of sex. Enshrining this protection in the Constitution also ensures enduring protections for all Americans across the country.

Through this action, we can finish the work started by the generations before us in order to secure the future of the generations to come. Our strength is in our values, and no value is more American than equality. There should be no time limit on equality.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this month, during this year's first open hearing for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, national security and military leaders gave a worldwide threat assessment of our country and of our way of life.

They described threats to our homeland, to our key allies, to our trading routes, to data privacy, and to our infrastructure, including crucial space assets.

There was a common theme in the concerns that we heard from our military and national security leaders; but, also, from what I have heard, these things are confirmed by Kansans and Americans.

The People's Republic of China is our greatest foreign threat to democracy, to our peace, and to our prosperity. At no time—this is not just a throwaway line. At no time in my life have I been more concerned about the enormity of the challenges our country faces.

The Chinese Communist Party, led by President Xi Jinping—the most powerful leader of the CCP since Chairman Mao—is on a determined, calculated mission to overtake the United States in fields that will shape the 21st century.

Beijing is intent that rather than the United States of America influencing world events in a way that favors and bends toward our principles of a free and open world, they want China's authoritarian model and they want the world bent their way.

China and its supporters would have the world move away from the principles that have advanced global prosperity and toward the basic belief that underwrites an autocratic authority, where the weaker are destined to be ruled by the stronger.

We have seen this with China's political, economic, and direct provision of nonlethal support to Russia, as Russia wages an unprovoked war on Ukraine.

China operates the world's most advanced techno-surveillance state that consolidates its power by monitoring, controlling, and subjecting their people. And China is engaged in an ambitious, expansive plan to export this model and the means of accomplishing it beyond their borders.

The threat is to us and to those like us and to the rest of the world. They want media, Big Tech, sports teams, and businesses to toe the CCP line, to be ignorant of—or at least silent on—the gross violations of basic human decency against the Uighurs, against Hong Kong, and elsewhere across their country in response to COVID.

The CCP pursues a world, including America, under the thumb of their power.

In a speech in April of 2020, Xi noted his intentions to increase global supply chain dependencies on China, with an aim of controlling key supply chains and being able to then use those supply chain dependencies to threaten and to, ultimately, cut off foreign countries during a crisis.

As of the latest worldwide threat assessment, China produces 40 percent of the world's key vaccines and medical ingredients; and by 2025, it is estimated that it is on track to control 65 percent of the important lithium-ion battery market—used in phones and cars and almost every other device and appliance—and fabrication of one in five semiconductors in the world.

China does not want the 21st century to be another American-led century. They want the century to be one that witnesses the replacement of American leadership with the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Two-thirds of global trade flows by ocean through the regions around the South Pacific—what the Department of Defense calls the Indo-Pacific. The goods that Americans export and the imports that we depend upon require a safe and reliable trade zone.

For decades, the U.S. military, at great expense, have kept the oceans and airways safe and open. By those means, Americans have kept the global commons safe for the benefit of our own peace and prosperity and for the benefit of the world.

When America is militarily strong and our sovereignty secure, we can shape and influence the terms of international commerce, international behavior. The way we do business is the standard, and that reflects our principles and leaves our fingerprints on the world.

Maintaining a strong U.S. economy requires trade agreements with partners who adhere to agreed-upon rules ranging from market access to the protection of intellectual property.

Our failure to participate in such agreements or update them to meet the realities of the 21st century opens the door to greater Chinese influence. This is a call for this administration and this Congress to react and respond differently than we have done to date on trade and trade agreements.

It is to our benefit and that of our trading partners to tie more of the world to the United States and its economy and reap the benefits of a vibrant international commerce. A stable Europe in which we coordinate closely with our partners on military and economic challenges is necessary to thwart China's rising influence.

America remains a coalescing force in Europe. Yes, I want Europeans to do more in Europe, but America remains a coalescing force, and our contributions have been essential to supporting Ukraine in its defense against Russian aggression. With our continued assistance and an increasing European leadership and resources, Ukraine will be able to continue to push back Russian forces and preserve its sovereignty. A defeat of Ukraine by Russia further emboldens China.

Separately, our commitment to NATO remains and must remain resolute, and any threat to NATO territory must be met and will be met decisively.

Our intelligence community assesses that it will take years for Russia to rebuild its conventional military capabilities. NATO allies must use this window, this opportunity to strengthen their defenses and assume more responsibility for their security as we necessarily increase support for allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. It is important for us to be able to pay attention to the Pacific, and we expect and hope our European allies to be able to take a closer look and watch the issues facing Europe today and in the future.

Despite its failures in Ukraine, we cannot ignore that Russia remains a threat. Russia possesses a massive nuclear arsenal, and Moscow has significant cyber, anti-satellite, and underwater capabilities.

Strikingly, China views Russia as an essential partner in the struggle against democratic values. As I speak now, President Xi is in Moscow meeting with President Putin, strengthening the relationship in pursuit of offering an alternative to American leadership, and by "American," I mean something more than just the country of the United States of America; American values and Americans' care and concern for people around the globe.

The threats to American freedom, to world freedom and world security and prosperity, are not all challenges we face from foreign militaries. We also require vigilance on our border. All States really are border States, and when we fail to enforce this Nation's geographic sovereignty, we harm our Nation. There is no nation, in fact, without borders. Perhaps there is no greater tragic effect of our current failed border policies than the fentanyl and other drugs, sent from China to Mexico, coming across our borders.

We also must produce and we must manufacture goods here in the United States. The United States cannot be reliant upon our adversaries. We cannot hope for something to be delivered in the future in times of crisis. We have to be reliant on ourselves for our critical supplies of medicine, of food, of technology, and energy. We have to learn from our earlier errors discovered during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes prioritizing American manufacturing and educating a technically skilled workforce. That is why we must fully and faithfully implement the CHIPS and Science Act that was signed into law last year.

A democratically and economically stronger America will be a more respected America. It is not enough to enlist and maintain the support of wealthy democracies in our vision of a free and open world. Our diplomats must be able to compete to convince countries that have grown skeptical of American leadership that we have not lost our way.

As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, a Kansan, wrote, "We must better communicate the good that we do." This includes our generosity to countries after natural disasters and

our support in fighting global hunger. Each of us here and Americans across the country know that our Nation faces many challenges, but if we can have the eyes to see the thread that runs through those challenges, we will recognize that we have a determined adversary who is waging a new cold war.

Our domestic disagreements run deep, but the myriad of challenges we face from abroad should help us see the need to work together in this Senate, in this Congress, with this administration, and across the country, to work together to urgently address the threats we face. We need to be the democracy that remains the shining light on the hill. We need to be the role model Nation. Our divisions among ourselves and allegations that divide us only harm our ability to lead in this world, to meet the challenges we face from our adversaries.

We have a great inheritance. This country remains the best place on Earth to live. We live in a nation founded on principles, and those principles are of human equality, of the rights of men and women. We understand that basic rights come from God, not from government, but that government is here and is instituted for the purpose to secure and preserve those rights.

We ought to debate, argue, and discuss everything that our country faces together, but the ultimate outcome has to be one of common purpose, of preserving the freedoms that were created by our Founding Fathers in a Constitution that is sacred and making certain that those who have forgone their lives on behalf of us in previous battles, that their honor is preserved and their lives they lost were not lost in vain.

When America is strong and secure, we ensure that Americans are free and prosperous and that the entire world has a greater chance to join us, to remain with us in the pursuit of those freedoms and that prosperity.

I have a personally renewed determination to work with all of my colleagues to steward the privilege and responsibility that have been bestowed upon me by Kansans and all of us by our fellow citizens so that this century remains an American century, with liberty and human well-being better secured for all around the globe.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks in full before the vote.

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

S. 316

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, 20 years ago, in the early, overcast hours

of March 19, 2003, American stealth bombers and Navy cruise missiles hit Baghdad in the first strikes of the Iraq war.

When I think about that war today, I think about the costs—the costs to the Iraqi people, who suffered so terribly, including the families of the hundreds of thousands killed in the insurgency, and the sectarian and ethnic violence that followed the U.S. invasion.

I think of the costs to the brave American servicemembers who answered the call, who didn't ask whether it was right or wrong but just answered the call—almost 5,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice—and to the tens of thousands more who were wounded; to the countless sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, friends and loved ones who had to grieve those they lost and care for those who came home wounded, with scars both visible and invisible, changed by combat forever.

I think about the financial costs—almost \$2 trillion that could have gone to rebuilding America's infrastructure, caring for America's sick and aging, and educating our next generation.

I also think about the costs of something very close to my heart, which is the cause of freedom and the fight for democratic values.

Our Nation's democracy, as Ronald Reagan said, was a shining city on a hill, an example to the world of something to aspire to; but the Iraq war undermined our credibility with our partners and allies, with our enemies, and with millions of American citizens who were against it. For too many around the world, the Iraq war made a mockery of U.S. support for democracy and freedom.

Today, I proudly remember my vote on the floor of the House of Representatives back in 2002. Life in America was tense in the wake of 9/11. Everything we stood for had been attacked on our own soil—just miles from where I still live. Those of us who resisted the march to war were called naive or worse, but some of us knew what we had to do. We felt the weight of history on our shoulders, and we voted against the war.

I spent a lot of time in reviewing the documents that were available to Members of the House. I saw no clear and present danger, no imminent threat, and, above all, no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. And I understand. If the cause is right and America needs it, I will send my son and daughter; but if the cause is not right, I won't send my son and daughter nor will I vote to send anyone else's sons and daughters into harm's way.

Two decades later, we have the chance to make history again but, this time, for the better. We have the chance to repeal the 1991 and 2002 AUMFs and honor the legacy of those who fought and those we lost—to end a war we are no longer waging; to exercise Congress's war powers—the most solemn duty of this body—because Saddam Hussein has been dead for 20 years

and his regime is gone; because the Iraq of 2023 is, obviously, not the Iraq of 2003; because Kuwait has been a secure, sovereign, and committed U.S. partner for over three decades; and because the threats that these authorizations address no longer exist.

The United States is no longer an occupying force. Iraq is now a strategic partner. It is time to confront the challenges of the region and of the world together. Repealing these authorizations is an important step forward. It removes an irritant in the bilateral relationship, and it cements our partnership. It helps Iraq move forward, independent and more integrated with its Arab neighbors.

So, Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support, in the strongest terms possible, the repeal of the 1991 and 2002 authorizations for use of military force against Iraq once and for all.

Let's mark the 20th anniversary this week of the Iraq war by paying tribute to the Iraqis who have suffered, to the Americans we lost, and to the American families who have provided unconditional support for those who have served every day for the last 20 years.

We will never forget the sacrifices they made in defense of the values we hold most dear. Let's honor those values by doing what Congress is supposed to do. When there is a need, it declares war, and when that is over, it is time to end the declaration and the authorization. That is what we have the power to do today.

With that, I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 63 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Collins	Hirono
Bennet	Coons	Hoeben
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Johnson
Booker	Cramer	Kaine
Braun	Daines	Kelly
Brown	Duckworth	King
Budd	Gillibrand	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Grassley	Lee
Cardin	Hassan	Lujan
Carper	Hawley	Lummis
Casey	Heinrich	Manchin
Cassidy	Hickenlooper	Markey

Marshall
Menendez
Merkley
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Paul
Peters

Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schmitt
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester

Van Hollen
Vance
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden
Young

NAYS—28

Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Capito
Cornyn
Cotton
Crapo
Cruz
Ernst
Fischer

Graham
Hagerty
Hyde-Smith
Kennedy
Lankford
Mullin
Ricketts
Risch
Romney
Rounds

Rubio
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker

NOT VOTING—5

Barrasso
Durbin

Feinstein
Fetterman

McConnell

The motion was agreed to.
(Mr. WARNOCK assumed the Chair.)

REPEALING THE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 316) to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 15

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 15.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BIENNIAL REPORT ON AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT PUBLIC SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS INSPECTIONS—116TH CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Biennial