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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our refuge and strength, we thank You that You have set the star of hope in our life's sky; that in the darkness, we can see Your brightness; that in times of shadow, we can enjoy Your guidance.

Lord, we confess today our deep inner need for a fresh inflow of Your spirit. Remind us daily that human flesh is as fleeting as fading flowers. Teach our lawmakers to number their days, to labor not simply for time but for eternity. Lord, give them the wisdom to believe that nothing can separate them from Your love.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 23, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK,

a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

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—Resumed

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 15, to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

S. 316

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the AUMF, negotiations to reach a deal on AUMF passage continue here in the Senate. We had a number of votes yesterday evening on Republican amendments, and I expect we are going to see a few more later today.

Senate passage of the AUMF is now a matter of when, not if, and today we

are going to continue working to make sure it happens as soon as we can. Americans want to see an end to endless Middle East wars. Passing this AUMF is a necessary step to putting these bitter conflicts squarely behind us.

I thank my colleagues for their work. I look forward to this bill's passage very soon. We are allowing amendments, but we shouldn't just be dilatory. We should move forward.

EXTREMISM

At the start of this Congress, I urged Republicans in both the Senate and the House to rid themselves of MAGA extremism and work with Democrats for the good of the country and even for the good of their own party. We believe MAGA Republicanism hurts their party, because so many Americans on both sides of the aisle reject it.

Well, over 3 months later, Republicans have failed in so many ways to abandon MAGA extremism. If anything, they have doubled down and embraced it even more tightly—again, to the detriment of their country and to the detriment of their party.

If you just want to know how extreme the GOP has become in the majority, look no further than what is happening on the House floor today and tomorrow. As early as this afternoon, House Republicans will try resurrecting their doomed attempt to protect retirement investors from considering governance ESG factors when making investment decisions.

Republicans talk a lot about their love of free markets and letting the private sector do its work, but their obsession—obsession—with eliminating ESG would do the opposite. By turning “ESG” into a dirty new little acronym, Republicans are trying to force their own views down the throats of every company and every investor.

President Biden has already vetoed this nakedly partisan measure, and it is clear the votes do not exist to override this veto in the House. It won't even come close.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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So it is bad enough that House Republicans are wasting time on show votes, but it is even more astonishing that this show vote, of all things, is designed to restrict the private sector on purely ideological grounds. It is a sad sign of how radicalized and divisive the GOP has become over the past few years.

But that is not all. Today's potential vote on the ESG override is the appetizer. Tomorrow's main course is even more horrifying.

As we speak, House Republicans are considering a sweeping piece of legislation that would nationalize school policy, endanger billions in nutrition funding, and accelerate the trend of book bans across the Nation. The House Republicans' school control bill is Orwellian to the core, and it will not see the light of day here in the Senate. If passed, schools across the Nation would be forced to adhere to a panoply of Federal regulations that take power away from parents and school districts.

Again, let me repeat that. It would take power away from parents and school districts, away from educators, and put it in the hands of elected politicians. Again, the GOP that treasured small government and local control is long since gone, replaced once again by hard-right MAGA ideologues.

The bill could be devastating to our communities. According to one report from CBO, schools that fail to comply with these MAGA mandates would be excluded from Child Nutrition Programs, impacting over 9 million kids who rely on schools for their meals.

That is it. Punish the poor kids. Make sure they don't have a meal if the school board doesn't comply with these extreme provisions.

The GOP would also expose school districts to even greater risks of book banning, censorship, and intimidation. Last year alone, there were over 2,500 book bans across the country on titles that oftentimes aren't remotely offensive but would still draw the ire of the hard right.

One school librarian in Pennsylvania—listen to this; it is crushing—was reportedly forced to remove a poster quoting Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel for violating district policy—Elie Wiesel, violating district policy.

What was the quote in question?

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

That was removed.

What is going on here with the extreme right? They are just losing it. There is something deeply malicious going on within the hard right when even the quotes of Holocaust survivors are seen as too "woke" or "offensive."

Again, rather than abandon the MAGA hard right, the Republican Party as a whole seems to be doubling down.

Legislation like the GOP's radical school control bill would only make

matters worse, and I will assure the American people and school children that if this bill is passed, it will meet a dead end when it comes to the Senate.

BUDGET

Mr. President, finally, on the budget, in the aftermath of major bank collapses, House Republicans have spent this week not calling for calm but sowing chaos. Chaos seems to be their calling card.

Earlier this week, House GOP Members, including the chairman of the House Budget Committee, said now is "the best time" to double down on debt ceiling brinkmanship and hostage-taking.

They suggest, absurdly, that Democrats and Democratic policies are somehow to blame for what went wrong with Silicon Valley Bank, and they are trying to link the bank's collapse with the debt ceiling debate.

This is a stupendously bad idea. This is an idea that has no logic. It has no linear thinking in it at all. It is just throwing things together, throwing spaghetti on the wall. Threatening the full faith and credit of the United States is never appropriate, but, at a time when markets require stability, it is supremely reckless.

Republicans should remember that poor management and deregulation under President Trump made these bank collapses possible. It wasn't Democratic policies.

And I would remind my Republican colleagues of this very important and telling fact: Inflation and interest rates are impacting institutions everywhere, but the vast majority of banks that have been properly managed are not in crisis.

So the Republican convoluted argument falls very, very flat. If this environment is so bad for the banks, why aren't all banks affected? No, it is the few that are mismanaged. It is the few that were not regulated properly by the regulators.

So to link the collapses with the debt ceiling—to suggest that these incidents should justify even more brinkmanship and hostage-taking—is stunningly reckless.

Instead of trying to promote financial catastrophe, Republican leaders should stop hiding from the American people, stop coming up with diversions and subterfuges, and finally show us your plan.

Today is March 23. It has been long enough.

I yield the floor.

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. THUNE. 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.

TRADE

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this morning, the U.S. Trade Representa-

tive is testifying before the Senate Finance Committee on President Biden's 2023 trade policy agenda, and I look forward to asking her about the details of the Biden administration's plans—or lack thereof—to boost trade opportunities for American workers, farmers and ranchers, and businesses.

Trade has been a very low priority on the President's list throughout the first 2 years of his administration. To name just one example, it took the President a year and a half to nominate a confirmable chief agricultural negotiator at the U.S. Trade Representative's office even though agriculture is a U.S. industry that depends upon trade.

If the President has deemphasized trade, he has really deemphasized trade—that is, removing trade and tariff barriers and increasing market access for American producers. The administration is currently negotiating exactly zero comprehensive free trade agreements; and its so-called trade initiative frameworks are, largely, flowery rhetoric with little to nothing in the way of tangible and durable benefits for American workers.

Tariff reduction and increased market access—the hallmarks of free trade agreements—are notably missing in action from the Biden administration's trade initiatives. In fact, President Biden's Trade Representative has openly said that the Indo-Pacific economic framework—perhaps the President's signature trade initiative—was designed not—not—to include tariff reduction.

So why is this a problem?

Well, first of all, it is a problem because trade is essential to our economy. More than 41 million U.S. jobs depend on trade, and that includes a lot of jobs at small businesses. In fact, 98 percent of U.S. exporters are small businesses—a stat that includes many farmers and ranchers in South Dakota and around the country—and ignoring or deemphasizing trade puts those jobs in jeopardy.

But it is not just that our economy already depends on trade, it is that trade, specifically free trade—trade characterized by low or no tariffs and fewer market barriers—is a powerful engine of prosperity and economic growth. To name just one example, U.S. farm and food product exports grew from \$46.1 billion in 1994 to more than \$177 billion in 2021, largely due to greater market access opportunities for American exporters.

Free trade helps create economic prosperity. It opens new jobs and opportunities for American workers. It helps grow U.S. businesses and, by extension, our economy. President Biden has tended to deemphasize the benefits of trade for our economy and for American workers and has suggested that trade and a robust U.S. manufacturing footprint are somehow in competition. But increased trade actually helps domestic manufacturing. Sixty percent of U.S. imports are intermediary goods or

materials for use in American manufacturing. Removing unnecessary barriers to trade in those goods would generally lower the prices for those materials, which would help and not hurt manufacturing.

And while we are talking about lowering prices, I should note that expanding U.S. free trade would promote lower prices for a lot of the goods that Americans buy and would help ease some of the supply chain problems we have been experiencing. That could help alleviate the historic inflation crisis that the President and Democrats have helped to create and improve the economic outlook for Americans. But while economic benefits are a leading reason to prioritize increased trade, they are far from the only reason.

Free trade agreements don't just provide an opportunity for economic growth; they also provide an opportunity to develop important strategic relationships and foster ties with our allies. Free trade agreements don't just cement economic ties between countries; they cement friendships. They also provide an opportunity to advance U.S. priorities abroad—security priorities, economic priorities, diplomatic priorities, and more.

As I said, the President has deemphasized trade during the first 2 years of his administration; but while the U.S. has been inactive in the trade space, the rest of the world has not. For example, China recently joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership—a trade agreement that eventually will eliminate more than 90 percent of tariffs on commerce in 15 member countries. China is also negotiating or implementing a number of new trade agreements to add to those of which it is currently a part.

And China is far from the only country pushing ahead with free trade agreements while the United States is sitting on the sidelines. We may be a world superpower, but we have just 14 free trade agreements currently in effect with 20 countries, meaning that many of our goods and services face significant tariff barriers in most places around the globe. Now, by comparison, the European Union has 46 trade agreements with 78 countries, meaning that European goods often have a leg up on the global stage.

Under the Biden administration, the United States is getting left behind when it comes to global trade, and if we don't meaningfully reenter the trade arena, we are going to slip further and further behind. I believe that an excellent way to reenter the trade arena would be to conclude a free trade agreement with one of our closest friends and allies, the United Kingdom—something that is long overdue.

Earlier this month, I introduced a bipartisan bill with Senator CHRIS COONS. It is called the Undertaking Negotiations on Investment and Trade for Economic Dynamism Act, or the UNITED Act—the acronym. The legislation is designed to advance a free

trade agreement with the United Kingdom. Our legislation would authorize the administration to negotiate and conclude a trade agreement with the United Kingdom to open export opportunities for businesses of all sizes, increase the resilience of critical supply chains, and advance economic prosperity for people in both of our countries.

At a time of financial and geopolitical turbulence, cementing our relationships with our allies should be a top priority; and an agreement with the United Kingdom—our Nation's fifth largest export market and our largest services trading partner in the entire world—would further strengthen the ties that bind our two nations while resulting in economic gains for both British and American citizens.

Important groundwork toward a comprehensive free trade agreement has already been laid, including the bilateral negotiations initiated by President Trump's and President Biden's attempts to strengthen economic cooperation through the U.S./UK Dialogue on the Future of Atlantic Trade; and with the recently announced Windsor Framework, which provides a pathway on post-Brexit trading arrangements in Northern Ireland, the timing is right to kick-start negotiations.

An agreement with the United Kingdom would further strengthen the ties that bind our two nations while resulting in economic gains for both American and British citizens.

While the administration may have put trade at the bottom of its priority list over the past 2 years, the President's Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, seems to have at least kept the door open to working on increased market access—that is, tariff reduction—and real trade agreements. For the sake of our country, I hope the administration will follow through.

The Biden administration may have gotten off to a very slow start on the trade front, but it is not too late to turn things around. I strongly urge the President to turn his focus to a more ambitious trade agenda, one that will provide durable economic and security benefits to American workers and businesses and advance American leadership in the world.

I yield the floor.

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

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

S. 316

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to urge my colleagues to support S. 316. I congratulate and thank Senators Kaine and Young for their leadership on this issue. It will give us an opportunity to finally repeal the

1991 and the 2002 authorizations for the use of military force in regard to Iraq.

We are not at war with Iraq, and we have seen—particularly with the use of the 2001 authorization for the use of military force, which was centered on Afghanistan—that it can be used by administrations well beyond the intent of Congress. So it is our congressional responsibility to remove these authorizations and to finally repeal them.

I want to make it clear: I voted against both of the Iraq authorizations when I was in the House of Representatives in 1991 and 2002. The 2002, particularly, was passed by false pretenses. It was passed because of the belief that Iraq was involved in the attack on our country on September 11 when, in fact, they were not. It was based on the fact that they had weapons of mass destruction that could be used against U.S. interests, and that was also false.

Today, the U.S. forces in Iraq are there by the invitation of the government. There is no need for Congress to authorize the use of military force in regard to Iraq. If there are any issues in regard to protecting U.S. interests that may fall within Iraq that would require the use by the President of the military, he has that authority under article II of the Constitution, and he also has the authority given to him by the War Powers Act to utilize that process if, in fact, it is needed.

It is Congress's responsibility to declare war, clearly, in the Constitution of the United States. It is our responsibility to authorize when our men and women should be put in harm's way. We have a responsibility to make sure that the authorizations for the use of that force are in compliance with our security needs. And, clearly, we need to eliminate the authorizations that we passed in 1991 and 2002, and we are going to have the opportunity to do that.

It is very important that we pass those bills. As I said earlier, it could be used by a future administration, by a President, to go well beyond the intent of Congress. Maybe 5 or 10 years from now, a creative use of that authorization could be used to introduce troops clearly against the intent of Congress.

Now, why do I say that? Because it has happened before. Let me give you a case in point. The 2001 authorization for the use of military force, which was passed shortly after the attack on our country on September 11, 2001, was aimed at going after the organizations in Afghanistan that were partly responsible for the attack on our country.

Let me, if I might, read into the RECORD the 2001 authorization for use of military force because I think Members of the Senate and certainly the public would be very surprised to see the specific language that was used in 2001 and how it has been misused by four administrations.

It states "That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines

planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.”

That is the language of the AUMF. Yet we have seen that being used now by four Presidents far beyond the intent of Congress. They are using them in countries and against organizations that didn't even exist in 2001. It has been used in Yemen and Somalia, far from Afghanistan. Presidents have used the 2001 authorization in places and against organizations that we never imagined 22 years ago.

Now, I have heard some of my colleagues say: Well, these are affiliates of organizations that existed in 2001. Well, the concept of affiliate is nowhere in the authorization for use of military force that Congress passed. It was used by legal counsel and administrations to justify the use of force.

It is our responsibility to give that authority, and we didn't. Yet Presidents are using this to justify the use of force. Presidents have used the 2001 authorization in places and against organizations never imagined by Congress. The notice under the War Powers Act has been given to over 20 countries using the 2001 authorization, and military activities have been used well beyond Afghanistan under that authority—in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Niger—never intended by Congress.

Congress needs to pass S. 316. Let me make that clear. We need to get this bill passed to take off the books the Iraq authorizations that we have, and then we need to repeal and replace the 2001 AUMF. It is our responsibility.

President Biden agrees. Let me just quote from the President's statement in support of S. 316. He says:

Furthermore, President Biden remains committed to working with Congress to ensure that the outdated authorizations for the use of military force are replaced with a narrow and specific framework more appropriate to protecting Americans from modern terrorist threats. Toward that end, the Administration will ensure that Congress has a clear and thorough understanding of the effect of any such action and of the threats facing U.S. forces, personnel, and interests around the world.

Chairman MENENDEZ has also indicated and Senator KAINE has also indicated and understand that we first must pass S. 316, and then we need to take up the 2001 authorization for a repeal and replacement. I will introduce legislation in the very near future that does exactly that, that gives us the opportunity to carry out our responsibilities. I have done this in previous Congresses. It will sunset the 2001 authorization with enough lead time for the administration and Congress to pass, as President Biden has said, a narrow and specific framework more appropriate to protecting Americans from modern terrorist threats. That is our responsibility to do that.

We must take action on all fronts: Repeal the authorization that was passed in 1991 and 2002 related to Iraq and then move with dispatch to repeal

and replace the 2001 authorization that was aimed mainly toward Afghanistan.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, later today, we are going to vote on an amendment offered by my colleague Senator LEE, and this is a really important amendment. And this is a really important debate for us to have: the question of how long authorizations of military force should last.

We are able to have this amendment vote because of the great work that Senator KAINE and Senator MENENDEZ have done to bring to an end authorizations of military force that have been on the books for decades, authorizations of military force that most Americans didn't even know existed. So, first, I am grateful to my colleagues and to Senator YOUNG as well for having brought us to this moment where we can make the collective decision, Republicans and Democrats, to take off of the books these expired authorizations of military force that are dangerous so long as they allow a President of the United States to pervert the original meaning of the authorization of force—to go to war against Saddam Hussein in Iraq—for other means and mechanisms.

I think this is really important, both spiritually to show that Congress is still in the game of setting foreign policy alongside the executive branch but, practically, because we have seen these authorizations occasionally be sort of picked up, unearthed from the grave, and used to justify military action that can't find a justification in article II power or in other AUMFs. So I couldn't be more supportive of the underlying measure.

But Senator LEE is asking us to look prospectively and to take a step to not repeat the mistakes of the past. His amendment would suggest that every future authorization of military force—and we pass very few of them on this floor—would be limited to 2 years.

Full disclosure: I have introduced that legislation with Senator LEE as part of a broader piece of legislation that he and I have introduced to reform the War Powers Act, to reform our arms sales processes, and to reform a President's emergency powers to try to right-size the balance of authority between an outsized executive branch and, I think, an underwhelming legislative authority.

I think Senator LEE's amendment is a good idea. The only reason I wouldn't support it is if it jeopardizes the underlying bill; but if it doesn't, then I am going to support Senator LEE's amendment, in part, because I have intro-

duced legislation to do the same thing alongside him, but because I think it is time that we started putting this Congress in the position to flex that muscle that is given to us in article I, which is to be codeterminants of American foreign policy alongside the executive branch.

Notwithstanding the good work of Senator MENENDEZ and Senator KAINE, we have, over the course of the last several decades, completely outsourced that responsibility to set the national security policy to an executive branch and a national security apparatus inside the executive branch that has become bigger than the Founding Fathers' wildest dreams.

There is a wonderful book by Walter Isaacson called “The Wise Men.” It is about the individuals who set up the post-World War II order, but it is also an interesting examination of how things used to be when Congress was doing its job: regularly passing legislation, setting the parameters of American foreign policy.

One of the most extraordinary stories that is told in “The Wise Men” is the story of Robert Lovett, who at the time, I believe, was the Deputy Secretary or an Under Secretary at the Department of Defense. He eventually went on to become Secretary of Defense. And on a regular basis—I believe it was multiple times a week—Robert Lovett, on his way home from work, would stop and have a drink or dinner with Arthur Vandenberg, the then-Senate chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Every single week, multiple times, the administration would send one of their most important policymakers to sit down with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to work together on setting American national security policy in the wake of World War II.

Senator MENENDEZ is a very powerful chairman, but I don't think he gets that kind of deference from the administration because the administration knows that they can make national security policy largely without or around the U.S. Congress because we have made a collective decision to outsource that responsibility.

Now, that has become convenient in a world in which our enemies are a lot harder to define. They are shadowy. They are diffuse. They change names.

It is an era where victory is just as hard to define. We don't have peace treaties any longer with our enemies—our nonstate-actor enemies, at the very least. So we have been content to just let the administration decide whom we fight, when we fight them.

We have let the Department of Defense get so big that we can barely track what they do. We don't even demand much information from them.

I learned last week that the Department of Defense sees very little responsibility to engage Members of Congress when it comes to briefing us on contract award decisions, despite the statute mandating that Congress receive information when requested.

There is just an imbalance of power, and it is created by our decision to only have debates on national security policy every long, random, infrequent "once in a while."

Senator LEE's amendment says this. If you are going to pass an authorization of military force, every Congress, you have to come back and debate that authorization of military force.

When you are talking about our most sacred responsibility—putting the men and women who protect us in harm's way—I think we owe it to them, I think we owe it to our voters, to make sure that those authorizations of military force are not being expanded or perverted beyond their initial scope.

The 2001 AUMF is still on the books. It is important because it is our sole authorization of military force against extremist groups.

Let me tell you, I cover the Middle East on the Foreign Relations Committee. There are still groups there that are thinking about plotting attacks against the United States. We need to chase them. We need to keep them on the run. But the 2001 AUMF has a scope and a size today that would be shocking to most Americans. The 2001 AUMF, which everybody at the time knew was about fighting al-Qaida and those that harbored al-Qaida, which at the time was a fight in Afghanistan, has been used to justify airstrikes, operation, and support for counterterrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Cuba, Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kenya, Kosovo, Jordan, Lebanon, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, and Turkey.

I don't think anybody who voted for the 2001 AUMF believed, at the time, that it was an authorization for military force and counterterrorism operations in that many countries. And if we were required to come back and have the debate on the 2001 AUMF, or other AUMFs, we would be able to check with our public, to check with the people we represent, and see if they still believe that it is necessary to send American forces that far and wide.

Maybe some of the most disastrous military engagements of our history, like the war in Iraq, would have come to an earlier close had this Congress been required to debate those measures on a regular basis, instead of just allowing those AUMFs to persist.

And so I come to the floor to, frankly, thank Senator LEE for bringing this piece of our bigger bill before the Senate. I am going to certainly consider voting for it. I want to make sure it doesn't compromise the underlying legislation. These amendments are moving fast.

But my last hope for our body is this: that this isn't the last time that we have a debate on this floor about the scope of American military operations abroad. We should repeal and rewrite the 2001 AUMF. It is way too broad and cuts Congress out of some the most important decisions about where our troops fight.

That is a complicated endeavor, but I know Senator MENENDEZ is committed to it. I know there are many Republican colleagues committed to it.

But I think history has shown that without a forcing mechanism, it is unlikely that Congress is going to make those very difficult decisions, which is why a sunset on AUMFs is a worthy idea of consideration.

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.

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

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

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we are abdicating our constitutional duty. Sometimes we do this when we delegate law-making power to the executive branch. Sometimes we do this when we shirk in our responsibility to declare war.

Today, I want to focus on the latter. By passing my amendment, we have the opportunity to ensure that all Americans have a voice in matters of war and peace.

For decades, Presidents of both parties have used authorizations for use of military force to conduct military operations without meaningful oversight or accountability to Congress.

The Founders jealously guarded war powers and the power to authorize military force. They understood what it meant to be subjected to an executive with unfettered military authority. And, indeed, this is one of the essential distinguishing characteristics between our system of government and that of England.

Prior to the American Revolution, our Founders became very familiar with the British system, under which one person, the Monarch, could take the entire country to war. It was up to Parliament, at that point, to fund it and up to the people to fight it. But one person could take the country to war.

The Founders understood this, and they understood that unchecked and unaccountable wielding of military force is, in fact, the stuff of Monarchs, of dictators and tyrants, which is exactly why the Founders entrusted this authority only to the people's representatives, in the branch of the Federal Government most accountable to the people at the most regular intervals.

Throughout history, when Kings waged war, it was the people who fought and died. One of the many things that makes our system of government unique is this principle our Founders enshrined into our Constitution, which gave every American a voice when they were faced with the prospect of sending their sons and daughters to war. Unfortunately, we have strayed from our founding principles.

My amendment, which can pass today, is a recognition that we, as elected representatives, have a duty and an obligation to reclaim the authority to declare war that rightfully belongs to the American people. My amendment does precisely that. It implements a 2-year sunset for all future authorizations for use of military force, absent renewal by Congress.

In no way would my amendment hinder military planning or weaken our national security posture. To the contrary, it would induce a proactive approach rooted in the present day and time. It would reaffirm our resolve and strengthen our military planning. It would show that we, as representatives of the American people, are committed to conducting military operations with oversight and accountability.

It accomplishes this by requiring a joint resolution of extension to renew future AUMFs each Congress. Under this process, Congress may choose to let an AUMF expire or renew it under a joint resolution of extension with expedited procedures. This is a fast-track process, requiring only a simple majority in the Senate, designed to make AUMF renewals as easy and seamless as possible, so as not to hinder military planning.

My amendment gives Congress the ability to review and reevaluate our involvement in the wars and adjust them, if necessary, to better meet the specific objectives of the conflict or engagement. This flexibility and agility is nearly impossible under the current system, which has opened the door for overly broad applications and interpretations of existing AUMFs, sometimes past decades before the moment of a particular conflict or engagement, which in turn leads to endless wars. It would be a way for Congress to rein in this abuse without hindering our ability to adequately respond to present-day national security threats.

Now, some have argued that we don't enter into wars to withdraw; when we must fight, we must win. But this argument has it exactly backward. What could be stronger than a resolution reaffirming our commitment to a given conflict?

And given that every Member of the House of Representatives is up for reelection every 2 years and one-third of the Members of this body in the Senate are up for election every 2 years, we resolve some of the uncertainty that our partners and our adversaries might see, might fear, might wonder about if, in fact, we are not regularly renewing each AUMF in each Congress.

This is about accountability to the public. It is about the republican form of government as a whole. It is about restoring Congress's article I authority to declare war and authorize the use of military force.

Let us do what we were elected to do: ensure that all Americans have a voice in matters of great importance, especially when it comes to matters of war and peace, and that no President has

the power historically reserved for Monarchs, despots, and tyrants.

I implore my colleagues to pass this amendment and thus restore the balance of powers mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

AMENDMENT NO. 22

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 22 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report the amendment by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah [Mr. LEE] proposes an amendment numbered 22.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide for the termination of authorizations for use of military force after two years)

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 3. TWO-YEAR TIME LIMIT FOR AUTHORIZATIONS FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any law authorizing the use of military force that is enacted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act shall terminate two years after the date of the enactment of such law unless a joint resolution of extension is enacted pursuant to subsection (b) extending such authority prior to such termination date.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF JOINT RESOLUTION OF EXTENSION.—

(1) JOINT RESOLUTION OF EXTENSION DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “joint resolution of extension” means only a joint resolution of either House of Congress—

(A) the title of which is as follows: “A joint resolution extending the [] for a two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this joint resolution.”, with the blank being filled with the title of the law authorizing the use of military force that is being extended pursuant to subsection (a); and

(B) the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is the following: “Congress extends the authority for the use of military force provided under [] for a two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this joint resolution.”, with the blank being filled with the title of the law authorizing the use of military force that is being extended pursuant to subsection (a).

(2) INTRODUCTION.—A joint resolution of extension may be introduced by any member of Congress.

(3) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—If a committee of the House of Representatives to which a joint resolution of extension has been referred has not reported the joint resolution within 10 calendar days after the date of referral, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution.

(4) CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

(A) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—A joint resolution of extension introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(B) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If the Committee on Foreign Relations has not reported the joint resolution within 10 calendar days after the date of referral of the joint resolution, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution and the joint resolution shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

(C) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the Committee of Foreign Rela-

tions reports a joint resolution of extension to the Senate or has been discharged from consideration of such a joint resolution (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution, and all points of order against the joint resolution (and against consideration of the joint resolution) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order.

(D) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to a joint resolution of extension shall be decided without debate.

(E) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto message with respect to a joint resolution of extension, including all debatable motions and appeals in connection with the joint resolution, shall be limited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

(5) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) TREATMENT OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION IN HOUSE.—In the House of Representatives, the following procedures shall apply to a joint resolution of extension received from the Senate (unless the House has already passed a joint resolution relating to the same proposed action):

(i) The joint resolution shall be referred to the appropriate committees.

(ii) If a committee to which a joint resolution has been referred has not reported the joint resolution within 2 calendar days after the date of referral, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution.

(iii) Beginning on the third legislative day after each committee to which a joint resolution has been referred reports the joint resolution to the House or has been discharged from further consideration thereof, it shall be in order to move to proceed to consider the joint resolution in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on the joint resolution. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

(iv) The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against the joint resolution and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except 2 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the sponsor of the joint resolution (or a designee) and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the joint resolution shall not be in order.

(B) TREATMENT OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION IN SENATE.—

(i) If, before the passage by the Senate of a joint resolution of extension, the Senate receives an identical joint resolution from the House of Representatives, the following procedures shall apply:

(I) That joint resolution shall not be referred to a committee.

(II) With respect to that joint resolution—(aa) the procedure in the Senate shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the House of Representatives; but

(bb) the vote on passage shall be on the joint resolution from the House of Representatives.

(ii) If, following passage of a joint resolution of extension in the Senate, the Senate receives an identical joint resolution from the House of Representatives, that joint resolution shall be placed on the appropriate Senate calendar.

(iii) If a joint resolution of extension is received from the House, and no companion joint resolution has been introduced in the Senate, the Senate procedures under this subsection shall apply to the House joint resolution.

(6) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—This subsection is enacted by Congress—

(A) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, and supersedes other rules only to the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

(B) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 22

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. LEE. 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 California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL).

The result was announced—yeas 19, nays 76, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Leg.]

YEAS—19

Blackburn	Lummis	Schmitt
Braun	Markey	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	Merkley	Vance
Gillibrand	Murphy	Welch
Hawley	Paul	
Lee	Sanders	

NAYS—76

Baldwin	Daines	Lujan
Barrasso	Duckworth	Manchin
Bennet	Ernst	Menendez
Blumenthal	Fischer	Moran
Booker	Graham	Mullin
Boozman	Grassley	Murkowski
Britt	Hagerty	Murray
Brown	Hassan	Ossoff
Budd	Heinrich	Padilla
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Peters
Capito	Hirono	Reed
Carper	Hoeven	Ricketts
Casey	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cassidy	Johnson	Romney
Collins	Kaine	Rosen
Coons	Kelly	Rounds
Cornyn	Kennedy	Rubio
Cortez Masto	King	Schatz
Cotton	Klobuchar	Schumer
Crapo	Lankford	Scott (SC)

Shaheen	Thune	Whitehouse
Sinema	Tillis	Wicker
Smith	Van Hollen	Wyden
Stabenow	Warner	Young
Sullivan	Warnock	
Tester	Warren	

NOT VOTING—5

Cramer	Feinstein	McConnell
Durbin	Fetterman	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). On this vote, the yeas are 19, the nays are 76. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 22) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—AMENDMENT NO. 4

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to consider Rubio Amendment No. 4; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided prior to a vote in relation to the amendment and 60 affirmative votes will be required for adoption, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I call up Senate amendment No. 4 on behalf of Senator RUBIO and ask that it be reported by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], for Mr. RUBIO, proposes an amendment numbered 4.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a certification)

On page 2, line 10, insert “30 days after the President certifies to Congress that Iran has stopped providing financial, technical, and material support to terrorist organizations and other violent groups in Iraq and Syria” after “hereby repealed”.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I want to take a minute to speak against this amendment.

This underlying bill is to repeal two war authorizations—one is 32 years old, and one is 20 years old. This amendment would turn 20- and 30-year-old wars into endless wars.

The amendment would say that no repeal could become effective until the President certifies that Iran is no longer providing any material or technical or financial support for bad activities in either Iraq or Syria. So even if they are doing nothing in Iraq, the Iraq war still isn't over as long as they are doing something in Syria.

Let's not turn 20- and 32-year-old wars into forever wars. The American Legion opposes this amendment. I would urge my colleagues to oppose it as well.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for all time to be yielded back.

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

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 4

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

The result was announced—yeas 32, nays 63, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 68 Leg.)

YEAS—32

Barrasso	Graham	Rounds
Blackburn	Hagerty	Rubio
Boozman	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Britt	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Capito	Kennedy	Sinema
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Mullin	Thune
Crapo	Ricketts	Tillis
Cruz	Risch	Tuberville
Ernst	Romney	Wicker
Fischer	Rosen	

NAYS—63

Baldwin	Heinrich	Padilla
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Paul
Blumenthal	Hirono	Peters
Booker	Hyde-Smith	Reed
Braun	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Budd	King	Schmitt
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Lee	Shaheen
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Lummis	Stabenow
Cassidy	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Van Hollen
Cooms	Marshall	Vance
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Warren
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Welch
Grassley	Murphy	Whitehouse
Hassan	Murray	Wyden
Hawley	Ossoff	Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cramer	Feinstein	McConnell
Durbin	Fetterman	

(Mr. PADILLA assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 32, the nays are 63.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is not agreed to.

The amendment (No. 4) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to consider the Risch amendment, No. 43, and that the Senate vote in relation to the amendment at 1:45 p.m. without further intervening action or debate.

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

The Senator from Colorado.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. I object, and I will give the reasons why. I am happy to explain all of the holds on my nominations, and I am glad to see my colleague, the Senator from Ohio, who will be here in just a moment to support these efforts.

My friend from Colorado says this hold is unprecedented. It is not unprecedented at all. In fact, there is very recent precedent. Just a couple of years ago, the junior Senator from Illinois, a Democrat, held more than 1,000 military nominations. The reason she held them was over one single officer she wanted promoted.

My colleague from Colorado threatened to do the same thing just a few weeks ago.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a news article from January 24.

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

[From defenseneews.com]

COLORADO DEM THREATENS TO HOLD PENTAGON NOMINEES OVER SPACE COMMAND HQ

(By Bryant Harris)

WASHINGTON.—Republican lawmakers spent the last year stalling President Joe Biden's defense nominees, but the latest threat to filling the Pentagon's top jobs is coming from the president's own party.

Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., said he's threatening to delay the six remaining Pentagon nominees because Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin refuses to meet with him over the Trump administration's decision to move U.S. Space Command from its current location in Colorado Springs to Huntsville, Alabama.

The potential roadblock comes after the Senate made significant progress on its Pentagon confirmation backlog, confirming at least four long-stalled Defense Department nominees in December. Then on Monday, the Senate voted 60-35 to confirm Brendan Owens as assistant secretary of defense for energy and installations in its first floor vote of the year.

Bennet and fellow Colorado Democrat Sen. John Hickenlooper joined Republicans in voting “no” on Owens because their letters to Austin have gone unanswered.

“We simply have received no response,” Bennet told Defense News Tuesday. “When the stakes are as high as they are, when our national security is at risk, when [former

President] Donald Trump made a political decision that overruled the best advice of the Air Force's generals who examined the question of where Space Command should be, I think we should hear from the secretary of defense."

Two years ago, during the final days of the Trump administration, the Air Force announced Huntsville, Alabama—the site of the Army's Redstone Arsenal and home to the Missile Defense Agency—would serve as the new location for Space Command headquarters, moving it from Colorado Springs.

The decision infuriated Colorado's congressional delegation, who asked the Air Force to review the decision. Several Colorado Democrats argued it was an act of political retaliation because Biden won the swing state in the 2020 election.

A Defense Department Inspector General report in May found the Air Force followed all relevant laws and Policies when selecting Huntsville. But the report also found the rules themselves may have been flawed, resulting in a less than optimal decision.

A separate June report from the Government Accountability Office found the Air Force did not follow best Practices when making the basing decision.

Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall is reviewing both reports' findings and will make a determination about whether to revisit the basing process. SPACECOM Commander Gen. James Dickinson said in early December he expects that decision "shortly," but the service declined to provide a more specific timeline to Defense News.

"We are engaging the senator on this," a senior defense official told Defense News, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss Bennet's threat on Pentagon nominations. "More broadly, we continue to have conversations with senators from both parties as we work to confirm our nominees."

'PREROGATIVE OF SENATORS'

Senate Armed Services Chairman Jack Reed, D-R.I., told Defense News "we can and we should rapidly resolve [Bennet's and Hickenlooper's] desire for a meeting" with Austin.

"And then I think they'll withdraw the holds," he added.

Any senator can block the expedited procedures generally used to confirm Pentagon nominees with broad bipartisan support. This forces Senate leaders to devote scarce hours of floor time on the numerous procedural votes needed to confirm these nominees.

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., placed a blanket hold on all Pentagon nominees in 2021 over Biden's hasty Afghanistan withdrawal. Hawley had initially demanded Austin and other top Biden administration officials resign, but ultimately agreed to allow up-or-down votes on nominees such as Owens after Congress passed Hawley's legislation banning TikTok on federal devices.

Reed repeatedly denounced Hawley's blanket hold on the chamber's floor last year, but drew a distinction between Bennet's tactic and that of the Missouri Republican.

"That's a prerogative of senators," he said. "Continuous holds, I think, are just self-destructive because they take away the talent the Department of Defense needs."

Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee, also defended the increasing instances of individual senators holding up nominees as leverage over the executive branch.

"It's a tool we have at our disposal," Wicker told Defense News. "It's part of our oversight abilities, and sometimes it's important to get the attention of unelected officials."

Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, also has holds on two Pentagon nominees over a separate dispute with the Interior Department regarding a mine project in his state. Those nominees are Laura Taylor-Kale, tapped to serve as assistant secretary of defense for industrial-base policy, and Radha Plumb, nominated to be deputy undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment.

Ravi Chaudhary and Lester Martinez-Lopez are also awaiting floor votes to respectively serve as assistant Air Force secretary for energy, installations and the environment and assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

The Senate Armed Services Committee must also hold nomination hearings for Nickolas Guertin to be assistant Navy secretary for research, development and acquisition as well as for Ronald Keohane to be assistant defense secretary for manpower and reserve affairs before voting to advance them to the floor.

Joe Gould and Courtney Albon contributed to this report.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. The headline reads: "Colorado [Democrat] threatens to hold Pentagon nominees over Space Command [Headquarters]." That Colorado Democrat happens to be my colleague opposite me as we speak.

He has given us emotion and opinion. Let's talk about the facts.

Last summer, the Supreme Court returned the decision to regulate abortion to the States. In response, the Department of Defense claimed that this was a threat to the readiness of our Armed Forces. They said this without any evidence at all.

On July 15 of last year, Republican members of the Armed Services Committee asked Secretary Austin how the Department came to this conclusion. It wasn't until November that the Department scheduled a briefing with Senate offices to give us some answers. However, minutes before the briefing was scheduled to begin, the Department canceled.

On December 5, 2022, I sent a letter to Secretary Austin letting him know I would hold all civilian and general and flag officer nominees until we got some answers. Less than 24 hours later, we got answers. The answers were disturbing.

We learned the Pentagon intended to go well beyond what has been authorized by Congress. Federal law only allows the military to provide abortions in three very narrow circumstances: rape, incest, and threat to the life of the mother. Yet the Biden administration has turned the DOD into an abortion travel agency. They did it by using just a memo.

The Biden administration wants abortion-on-demand for not just those enlisted in our military but their family members as well. This would expand the policy to millions of people. Now, the American taxpayers are on the hook to cover nonchargeable paid time off and travel costs for abortions for our military and their families. Again, nobody voted for this. This goes beyond the law.

We still have a Constitution in this country to go by, and the Constitution is clear: Congress makes the laws. The executive branch enforces the laws.

Secretary Austin seems to think he can make a change in the law without going through Congress. It would be irresponsible for the U.S. Senate to allow an administration to walk all over the legislative branch. Secretary Austin cannot change the law by memo. Congress cannot be replaced by a post on the Department of Defense website.

In December, I warned the Department that I would hold their nominees if they tried to force abortion-on-demand on our military, and they did it anyway. The Department knew what the consequences would be. It was clear. This was their choice.

I will continue to hold these nominees until the Department of Defense follows the law or Congress changes the law. In the meantime, we should do our job and vote. If these nominees are so important to the Democrats, then the Democratic leader can find time to get them on the floor.

Frankly, I wish Democrats were this concerned about our enlisted servicemembers. We have a recruiting crisis in this country. The Army missed its recruiting goal by 15,000 last year. That is an entire division. One of the causes of this crisis is the policies of the Biden administration.

At yesterday's Armed Services hearing, I talked about the Navy's training materials. Many of these materials denigrate religious Americans, who are the majority in this country.

Democrats seem a lot more worried about these nominations than about our recruitment, the people who actually fight wars.

If Democrats are so worried about the nominations, then they can bring them up for a vote. We have more than enough time to vote on nominees. We have voted on plenty of nominees this year. That is about the only thing the leader has let us do so far.

I will continue to come down here and lay out the facts for as long as my colleague from Colorado wants to. We talked about this less than a month ago. The facts have not changed. My position has not changed. So I reserve the right to object.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the Senator from Alabama coming back down here, and I am sorry for inconveniencing him, but I think that we have had a difference of opinion about this that really matters and is real.

First of all, I appreciate the fact that he read a rare headline about my work here, but he mischaracterized what I did, which is to hold only two civilian nominees at the Defense Department—two civilian nominees. He has held every single—all flag officers, promotions of uniformed flag officers from the Department of Defense. That has not happened in the history of the U.S. Senate since 1789. And certainly my hold of two civilians is not precedent for what he is doing.

He talks about how the Defense Department can't change the rules on its own. Nobody said the Defense Department changed the rules on its own. I didn't see him come down here when the Defense Department said they would pay for travel for LASIK. I didn't see him come down here and complain when they said they would pay for travel for bunions. That is not in the statute either. That is not our responsibility; that is DOD's responsibility.

DOD, with a set of reasonable rules, is trying to deal with the aftermath of Dodd, trying to help women in uniform access care. And I believe the aftermath of Dodd created a real threat to our national security and to our readiness. Women are the fastest growing population in the military.

The Senator from Alabama said it exactly right: They are having huge recruiting challenges. It is very hard for me to see how American women who have had access for 50 years to a fundamental constitutional right and have now had it stripped away by the Supreme Court of the United States are going to enlist if they have no way to know whether or not they are going to have access to reproductive care. And that is not me saying it; the last time the Senator from Alabama and I, my friend, were on the floor, he said there would be thousands and thousands of people who would be affected by this—thousands and thousands. That is a readiness issue.

As the Senator from Alabama knows very well, when people volunteer to serve in our Armed Forces, they don't get to decide where they are going to serve, but before Dodd, they had at least some assurance that their fundamental rights would be protected, that their right to reproductive health care or to abortion would be protected—not anymore because the Supreme Court has ripped that right away. After Dodd, we have seen the effect of that.

Eighteen States have banned abortion. Eighteen States have banned incest; 9, even in cases of rape and incest.

They passed or they have introduced restrictions to travel.

Alabama doesn't have exceptions for rape and incest, and a doctor can go to prison in Alabama for 99 years if they perform an abortion.

There are even State legislatures down there that are trying to use chemical endangerment statutes that are meant to deal with methamphetamines to charge women who have accessed abortion.

In Texas—my friends in Texas—there are \$10,000 bounties that are being put out there to try to stop friends and neighbors from driving their loved ones to the clinic.

Florida is trying to ban abortion at 6 weeks. One in three women in this country who are pregnant don't know they are pregnant in 6 weeks. I don't know if the Governor of Florida understands that—or maybe he does understand it. I don't know which is worse.

After Dodd, it is not hard to see why women might think twice about signing up.

Rand has said that there is going to be more attrition, that it is going to hurt readiness. To help address these challenges, the Pentagon announced three policies: a travel allowance so that people could actually have help being paid to go from a State they hadn't asked to go to, to one where they could have access to care; absence without leave so they wouldn't be charged—you know, they are paid leave to be able to address something that other people in the military don't have to address; and more time to notify their commanding officers of what happened. That is it. Those are the three things.

Those policies are so unreasonable in the mind of the Senator from Alabama that he has done something that no Senator has ever done, which is to put a blanket hold on all flag officers and their promotion in the Department of Defense. And that is just the three modest things. That has nothing to do with basing. It has nothing to do with how DOD is going to address Dobbs in the future.

I don't think that people in these States who have not volunteered to be in these States should have to be subject to the draconian laws of these States and not have the opportunity, if they want to have the opportunity, to travel and have their travel paid for, just as we do with LASIK surgery. That is what he calls an "abortion travel agency"—the Senator from Alabama.

Again, we didn't hear about this when it was about LASIK. We didn't hear about it when it was about bunions. We heard about it when it was about a 50-year fundamental right on behalf of the American people.

This hurts our security. It hurts our readiness at a time when Russia and China are combining together.

So I beg the Senator from Alabama to relent. We can have a disagreement about—we will have a disagreement. I come from a State that was one of the first States—the first State in America—to codify a woman's right to choose before Roe v. Wade was decided. I come from a State that was the first State in America to ratify a woman's right to choose in the wake of the Dobbs decision. And he comes from a State that views it very differently.

I respect his position on this, just like I do everybody in America who disagrees with my position on this. What I don't respect is the idea that we can't move past this blanket hold on every single flag officer that is up for promotion just because the Senator doesn't agree with the majority position that is reflected in the Department of Defense's modest rules.

I know that the vote is coming, and, at this point, I will relent and yield the floor.

I will just say to my friend from Alabama: I wish him luck, and I wish Ala-

bama luck tomorrow night. I look forward to the next time that we are here addressing this fundamental disagreement because I believe the American people are staggered by what the Dobbs Court has done. I believe the American people are staggered by what has happened because an originalist majority of the Supreme Court—something that was unimaginable when I was graduating from law school, not that many years ago—has now decided, if it was not a right in 1848, it is not a right in the United States of America today.

I don't believe that is where the American people are, and I don't believe that is where the Department of Defense is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I am speaking about Social Security.

Secretary Yellen spoke before the Senate Finance Committee last week, and, to me, it was incredibly frustrating. When asked if the President would be willing to work with Congress, she held up a piece of paper and read that he stands ready to work with Congress, to meet with Senators to find a solution to Social Security. We are speaking about the President personally meeting with us. There is no evidence that is true. That has not been our experience.

It has been well reported in the press that there is a bipartisan—bipartisan, bipartisan—group of Senators working to find a solution to save Social Security. The President knows this. We have been unable to get an appointment with the President.

The reason we keep requesting a meeting with him is because we are told that no deal will be made without his personal signoff. He has to be the one who tells those who work for him that this is the deal he wants. So if the President chooses to do nothing, that choice guarantees that someone currently receiving Social Security will get a 24-percent cut in the benefits she receives.

Let me just emphasize that. I was on talk radio with KEEL in Shreveport, LA. Erin McCarty says: Well, I will be OK.

I don't know how old she is, but she thinks that, because she is of a certain age, she will not be affected.

No, current law is, if the President chooses to do nothing, Erin and everyone else who would be currently receiving Social Security would get a 24-percent cut in their current benefits. Someone who is depending upon this income to pay her bills and buy her groceries, she gets a 24-percent cut in the amount she is receiving.

There needs to be a choice between a massive, by law, 24-percent benefit cut—again, current law—and a real plan, a real choice to strengthen, to save, and to secure Social Security.

To reference President Reagan, this is a time for choosing. We can't wait

because the longer we wait, the more expensive and the more drastic the solution becomes. And we shouldn't allow politicians to use Social Security as a political weapon to beat people into submission to claim that one side wishes to do something and they are going to rescue it while offering nothing to stop this scheduled 24-percent cut. It may be good politics, but it is irresponsible.

I will point out that President Biden's two Democratic predecessors, Obama and Clinton, both offered serious plans to address this looming Social Security fiscal cliff; President Biden, no plan, not in his budget. In fact, when I asked Secretary Yellen if they had modeled any of the things she was referencing as a solution, they have not modeled it, which tells me they have not worked on it.

There should absolutely be a sense of urgency. He should feel it the way that I feel it. I used to work in a hospital for the uninsured. Many of my poor patients depended upon Social Security to pay their rent, to buy their groceries, to pay their utilities. I know what a 24-percent cut would mean to them.

By the way, on the solutions that we have been trying to come up with—an approach, if you will, certainly not a final plan—there is a lot of partial and inaccurate information. By the way, we did that on purpose. The President has a right to have an imprint upon the final thing that we come up with. So we have things which are, yes, we could do it this way, but maybe do something else.

We do add something to it, though. We think it is a novel solution that helps Social Security bridge the solvency and protects the Americans that rely upon it.

We have added some things. One thing we have spoken about, perhaps locally but not nationally, is that those who are most cut by a 24-percent cut will be the police officers, firefighters, teachers, and many other State and local government officials who are unfairly penalized by two provisions in current law known as WEP and GPO. From my perspective, repealing WEP and GPO should be part of any conversation we have with the President, if he agrees to meet, and should be part of any final proposal.

But Americans of all generations—the Silent Generation, baby boomers, Gen X, Gen Z—they want to know that the program they paid into their entire lives will be there when they need it.

It is a political truth that some issues are seen as a “political third rail.” I say choosing to do nothing, which means choosing that Social Security benefits will be cut by 24 percent, should be the third rail. We can't be guided by the fear of politics. We should be guided by the courage of our commitment to the American people and, particularly, that American senior—that he or she will not get this 24-percent cut.

I ask once more: President Biden, please personally meet with a bipartisan group of Senators. If I said something I shouldn't have to Secretary Yellen, I will, at that point, apologize.

President Biden has a reputation as a dealmaker. Let's make a deal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

TRIBUTE TO JEFF SANCHEZ

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on a topic I have been dreading for months, the departure from my office of my senior adviser and close friend, Jeff Sanchez.

After 4 years of dedicated, tireless, outstanding service to me, the people of Delaware, my family, and our country, Jeff is moving on to an exciting new adventure.

He didn't want a big farewell party, but he is going to have to endure, before he goes, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of the U.S. Senate reflecting the contributions of this remarkable public servant.

Jeff is from California, a graduate from Chapman University. He spent a decade on the Hill working for STENY HOYER, Senator PATTY MURRAY, and Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ.

In my office, he has risen quickly, four promotions in 4 years. He became a central part of my senior team, giving me valued, strategic advice on a whole range of issues, from policy and politics to operations and communications. My team in DC and Delaware quickly came to rely on Jeff.

While I have a lot of very positive and humorous input from them, given the press of time, I will read just a few.

One staffer said:

[Jeff] was the air traffic officer for the office but also [at times] the pilot guiding all staff to a smooth departure with our member and a safe, comfortable landing.

Another staffer said:

Jeff is a Swiss Army knife. There is nothing this guy can't do. Tireless worker. Great writer. Strategic thinker. Gets the policy and the politics.

And my favorite:

When Jeff walks in[to] a room, everything just starts working better.

His first role in my office was moving me. I mean, physically moving me. I quickly became respectful of his skills. We have driven the streets of DC and Delaware, from Georgetown to Capitol Hill. And while he mostly stayed under the limit and obeyed traffic laws, when it came to getting me to Union Station and getting me home, he was more Mario Andretti than Uber. Sometimes my blood pressure was elevated, but we always arrived safely and on time.

From the snows of Davos to the hills of San Francisco and from the streets of Madrid, we traveled to remarkable places together. One of the most striking things about Jeff is the more time you spend with him, the more time you want to spend with him. As we got to know each other better and spent time talking, during our drives, about our families and our hopes for the future,

we became closer, and I am so grateful. Jeff has allowed me to offer what I hope has been meaningful advice on life's challenges and opportunities.

I have lots of things to poke fun at Jeff. He has a mischievous wit, his own share of quirky habits, and charming preferences. Like a hobbit, he eats a first and second lunch, always from Cups. During late nights when I was tied up here on the floor, he would turn down the lights and deejay for our colleagues—something called Club Jeff. And while he is a foodie, his highest culinary loyalty is Cheesecake Factory.

Jeff's parents, Maria and Carlos, are wonderful people from Quito, Ecuador. He is proud of them, and I hope you know, we are proud of you. To Maria, Carlos, Shane, Ronald, his beloved nanny Eloysita, and grandmother Rosa, it is important for you to hear that you raised an amazing and incredible young man, whose integrity and work ethic exceeds anything I have seen among others, and you are the base for his success here in the Senate and in life.

I have been blessed to know Jeff, both professionally and personally, and we have come through some of the most challenging and difficult moments in our country's recent history together: President Trump's two impeachments, Joe Biden's Presidential campaign, my own reelection to the Senate, January 6, the whole Biden Presidency, and two of the most legislatively frenetic years in history and a global pandemic.

During the pandemic, a core group of six of us came into my offices day in and day out and worked hard. We spent a huge amount of time together—hard days and long nights, working through that crisis. Through the pandemic, Jeff was always there.

He has made me a better Senator and a better colleague. He is responsible for and shares in my biggest successes, and his contributions to me, to the country, and to our State are too numerous to mention.

I will close with James 2:18:

Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

In a town that has its fair share of self-promoters, Jeff has devoted himself to others and does so with humility, discretion, and poise. In an institution where there is often a scramble to occupy the spotlight, Jeff chose to labor behind the scenes and give credit to others. In a culture where some feel entitled to professional awards, Jeff has earned everything he has achieved many times over.

It was no surprise that once Jeff decided to look for new opportunities, he has had many compelling options. I am proud of him and the next steps he will take in his life.

When I shared the news that Jeff would be moving on from our team, the three most important women in my life—and I don't mean Morgan, Chelsea, and Trinity of our office, but I

could; I mean my mother, my wife, and my youngest, Margaret—were so sad to see him go because they have come to trust and admire him the way so many of his colleagues do. He is genuinely a member of our family, and we will deeply miss him.

While Jeff is leaving my office next week, he will always be a part of that small group of people I most appreciate, admire, and respect. I look forward to the lifetime of friendship I know we will share.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

AMENDMENT NO. 43

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I would like to call up Risch first-degree No. 1, also known as amendment No. 43.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Idaho [Mr. RISCH] proposes an amendment numbered 43.

Mr. RISCH. I ask unanimous consent to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 2, line 10, delete “hereby repealed” and insert “repealed effective 30 days after the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress that legal authorities permitting the detention of terrorists and the litigation position of the United States regarding the detention of terrorists held in whole or in part under the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243; 116 Stat. 1498; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note) would not be weakened by such repeal”.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, fellow Senators, I rise today to present this amendment as part of the process, as we process this repeal of the 2002 AUMF matter before the Senate right now.

This particular exercise that we are doing, the amendment process is frequently fraught with political messaging. I am happy that so far the amendments that we have been processing have not been that sort of amendment and that is that it was intended to be a political message. This one is not. Prior ones are not. The ones that are pending really are not.

And the reason for that is what we are doing here in discussing the 2002 AUMF repeal is taken seriously by every single Member of this body—Republican, Democrat, everyone is acting in good faith as they process this.

This is one of the most important things each of us do as a U.S. Senator, that being the question of committing our young men and women to actual kinetic force on the field.

When this was put in place, it was considered deeply and seriously by this body, and as we look to repeal it, the same is true. And I think everyone is headed toward the same objective and that is to see that this is done properly.

That is the purpose of this amendment to the actual repeal that is in

front of us. This amendment would conditionally repeal on a certification from the Secretary of Defense that detention authorities and the litigation position of the United States with respect to detention would not be weakened.

And this is offered in good faith. It is offered because yesterday, just as an example—yesterday we had a hearing with the Secretary of State. And I asked him three questions about this, about whether they actually use it, whether it was important, and whether repealing it would weaken our position on detention and on litigation regarding detention, and the Secretary of State said that it would.

So the purpose of this is to clear up what I think is a flaw here. It certainly isn't intended by anyone. I think everyone would want us to have as strong a position as we possibly could when we are in detention or litigation. So this simply requires us to replace the language with some other language, and then we would get the certification or a determination by the lawyers.

So I offer it in good faith. I think it is an absolutely correct thing to do if indeed the body is going to move to actually repeal the 2002 AUMF.

Again, I want to congratulate every Member of this body for working on this very important issue in good faith. I think this moves the issue further to a better position.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. I would seek permission to speak for a minute in opposition.

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

Mr. KAINE. This is offered in good faith—and I appreciate my colleague—but it is completely unnecessary for the following reason: The White House and the Department of Justice have both stated, there is no one currently detained pursuant to the 2002 authorization. It is not being used as a ground for detaining anyone.

I was at the hearing yesterday, and my colleague from Idaho is correct, Secretary Blinken talked about repeal of the 2001 authorization could affect detention and said we should not do a repeal if there is not a replacement.

But the administration's position on the 2002 authorization is that there are no military activities, including a single detention, where we are using the 2002 as justification.

I would urge my colleagues to vote against the certification requirement. Keep this bill a clean repeal of the 1991 and 2002 authorizations.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 43.

Ms. HASSAN. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The result was announced—yeas 41, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 69 Leg.]

YEAS—41

Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rosen
Britt	Hagerty	Rounds
Budd	Hoeben	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	Mullin	Wicker
Daines	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Ricketts	

NAYS—52

Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schmitt
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Braun	Klobuchar	Sinema
Brown	Lee	Smith
Cantwell	Lujan	Stabenow
Cardin	Manchin	Tester
Carper	Markey	Van Hollen
Casey	Menendez	Vance
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hawley	Paul	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NOT VOTING—7

Cramer	Fetterman	Sanders
Durbin	McConnell	
Feinstein	Moran	

The amendment (No. 43) was rejected.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The senior Senator from Texas.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, every day, I hear from my constituents, the people I represent in Texas—some of the 30 million people I have the honor of representing—and they ask me why they aren't seeing more solutions offered by the U.S. Congress to the problems that they confront in their everyday lives.

Family budgets are being clobbered by inflation. People are spending significantly more money just to get by on housing, groceries, utilities, and other basic expenses. Inflation has remained at 5 percent or higher for each of the last 22 months. Of course, we have seen it soar to the highest level in 40 years, but it consistently outpaces wage growth, giving the average worker a pay cut, and folks—too many of them—feel like they just can't catch a break.

As if that weren't a big enough financial headache, some are now questioning the stability of the U.S. banking system. In the last 2 weeks, two U.S. banks—big banks—have collapsed, and a group of major banks has now launched a rescue mission to save another from meeting the same fate. Texans are wondering: Are these isolated events or a sign of worse things to come? The memories of the 2008 financial crisis are fresh in many people's minds, and they are terrified that we will soon find ourselves in familiar territory.

But families aren't just stressing about their finances; they are also worried about their safety. The surge in violent crime that began in 2020 hasn't let up. In many places, it is getting worse. Given the wave of fentanyl overdoses, especially among teens, parents are terrified that their child could become the next victim. They are outraged that fentanyl and illegal drugs are flowing across the southern border, and they want to know why more isn't being done to stop it.

Of course, folks in Texas and across the country aren't just worried about the illegal drugs that came across the border and took the lives of 108,000 Americans last year. That is bad enough. They are also worried about the flood of unchecked migration across the border. Over the last couple of years, the Biden administration has broken nearly every record in the books when it has come to border crossings. We have seen a complete breakdown of law and order as thousands of migrants cross the southern border each and every day. And, yes, my constituents are baffled when they read news stories that say that some of the migrants will have to wait 10 years before they can even begin immigration court proceedings. With all of these problems, folks are trying to understand, how did we get here, but, more importantly, they want to know what are our leaders doing about it.

Across the country, each and every day our constituents are asking for answers, and they want to see some action. Every day, I get phone calls from folks back home or people who write to me about these problems, whether it is inflation or crime or drugs or the border crisis or one of many other topics.

They ask me: When will the U.S. Senate take action? Unfortunately, I can't offer them much reassurance based upon the Democratic-led Senate's track record so far this Congress.

No doubt about it, the majority gets to control the agenda here in the Senate, whether it is at the committee level or here on the floor. As a Member of the minority, there is not anything I can do under the Senate rules to force the majority leader to take action on a particular topic or to insist that a chairman of a committee that has jurisdiction actually mark up legislation or hold hearings.

So, clearly, Democrats control the Senate. Their leadership continues to

put all of these important and pressing issues on the back burner.

Just look at what the Senate has done or, rather, look at what it has not done since the beginning of this year. The Senate confirmed several Federal judges and a handful of other nominees in the last 4 weeks. We overturned a dangerous DC crime bill, which would have softened penalties for criminals and endangered the lives of residents and visitors to our Nation's Capital. We nullified a Department of Labor rule that encouraged fiduciaries to support woke policies at the expense of Americans' retirement accounts and pensions. That is the end of the list.

Those are the only items the Democratic-controlled Senate has passed in the last 4 weeks—nothing to address the border crisis, nothing to combat inflation, nothing to stem violence, nothing to deal with the drugs that are taking the lives of our sons and daughters all across America.

The irony is, the two resolutions that did pass were Republican priorities. These weren't even things that our Democratic colleagues initiated. We were able, under the Senate rules, to force action, fortunately, on those. But we have seen in one case that the President has already vetoed one of those congressional review actions. Senator HAGERTY from Tennessee led the effort to overturn the dangerous DC crime bill. Senator BRAUN from Indiana pushed to stop the administration from gambling away Americans' retirement savings.

If you look at every vote the Senate has taken since the start of this Congress, you won't find much more—lots of nominations, a resolution designating January as National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month, which rightfully passed unanimously, but that is about it. That is what the American people have gotten from this Democratic majority in the Senate.

To be fair, it appears the Senate will soon vote on a bill to repeal the authorization for use of military force in Iraq. We took that procedural vote on this legislation last Thursday, which marked the first time this Chamber voted to even consider a standard piece of legislation this Congress—the first time. We voted on many nominations and a few resolutions, but that was the first true piece of legislation. It took 2½ months for our Democratic colleagues to put a bill on the floor—2½ months.

At the start of the 116th Congress, Republicans held the majority in the Senate. Members were sworn in on January 3, a Thursday. The following Tuesday, the Senate voted on a bill related to U.S. policy in the Middle East—sworn in on Thursday; Tuesday we were voting on substantive legislation. That is what leadership looks like: Identify your priorities; hold hearings; build consensus; put bills on the floor; and let Members do what they came here to do, which is to legislate, which is to address the priorities

of the American people, which are being ignored by this Democrat-led Senate.

When voters put your party in charge, you are expected to lead, but that is not what we are seeing. As we witnessed over the past 2 years, our friends across the aisle haven't used their majority to address the problems facing American families. They have simply been missing in action.

While inflation, crime, and the border crisis were raging, our Democratic colleagues who controlled the Senate agenda, the House, and the White House for the last 2 years had the power to pass just about any bill they wanted to address these priorities of the American people, but here is what the American people got instead: \$2.6 trillion in partisan spending bills, tax increases, handouts for labor unions, subsidies for wealthy people to buy electric vehicles, and nothing to address the concerns of working families.

Now that the Republicans hold the majority in the House, the era of one-party rule has come to an end, which is, frankly, great news. This new chapter of divided government requires Republicans and Democrats to work together. Unfortunately, we can't make any progress in the Senate or in the Congress unless the majority leader allows us to take up, amend, and to vote on legislation—legislation that addresses the priorities of our constituents, the people we represent.

I hope this sluggish pace, this snail's pace, will change. At some point in the coming months, Congress will need to address the debt ceiling. Given the current status of inflation and the instability of the banking system, defaulting on our debts is the last thing we need to do.

Given the current state of our fiscal house, it is also critical that we pass regular appropriations bills on time and through regular order in a transparent and open manner, unlike the bill the majority leader put on the floor last December, an omnibus appropriations bill which was the only way to fund the Federal Government because he would not allow the Senate to do its work in a transparent and orderly sort of way. So Members of the Senate had two choices: vote yes or vote no and shut down the government.

We also need to pass an annual defense authorization bill—something we have done for more than the last 60 years in each year—to make sure that our military leaders have the certainty they need to address the threats of today and prepare for the threats of tomorrow. I don't recall a more dangerous time for our country and for the world than we currently are living in; certainly, not in my time in the Senate, probably not since World War II, where you have a major power—the Russian Federation—inade a sovereign neighbor, as the Russians did in Ukraine; you have North Korea shooting off long-range missiles with nuclear weapons' capability; you have

Iran seeking to build a bomb; and then you have China threatening to invade a neighbor in Taiwan. So we need to pass that Defense authorization bill.

The Federal Aviation Administration needs to be reauthorized by the end of September; hopefully, addressing some of the near misses we have seen in some of the air traffic recently. My friend Senator CRUZ from Texas is leading these efforts on our side of the aisle.

We also need to reauthorize the tools that we need—namely, section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—to know what our enemies are doing, to prepare for those, and to deploy countermeasures.

We need to take action to address the humanitarian and security crisis at the southern border, to bring down drug prices for consumers, and to unleash the power of American energy.

We have seen what happened when Europe was dependent almost entirely on Russian oil and gas and then when Putin weaponized that dependency, what that meant to the countries of Europe as they scrambled for alternative sources of energy. The United States, as an energy producer, is part of the answer to that energy security problem, but we can't solve that problem, we can't continue to provide good, well-paying jobs for people who work in that industry, unless the government is willing to get out of the way and take its boot off the neck of the producers.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done, and I know the Presiding Officer wants to be part of that solution. We need more people in this Chamber, in this city, in this country who want to be part of solving these problems, but we can't do it until the majority leader who controls the Senate is willing to put bills on the floor that actually address the priorities and concerns of the people we represent. I hope he will give us that chance.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Tim Kaine, Tina Smith, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher Murphy, Catherine Cortez Masto, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, March 23, be waived.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if cloture is invoked on S. 316 on Monday March 27, it be in order to consider the following amendments: Sullivan, No. 33; R. Scott, No. 13; Ricketts, No. 30; Cruz, No. 9; Hawley, No. 40; and Johnson, No. 11; that, if offered, the Senate vote in relation to the amendments at a time to be determined by the majority leader following consultation with the Republican leader on Tuesday, March 28, and that 60 affirmative votes be required for the adoption of these amendments, without intervening action or debate.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. So, Mr. President, before I finish the rest of the business, I just want to explain to everyone what happened.

A few moments ago, we entered into an agreement that puts the Senate on a path to repeal the Iraq AUMFs by early next week. By filing cloture today, we set up a vote for this coming Monday. If cloture is invoked, we will hold votes on additional amendments before final passage.

This has been a good process here on the floor. I was asked by several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to have a reasonable amendment process and then we could move the bill forward. I think we did, on a vote that got 70 Republican votes—or 70 total votes, or close to 70, on cloture last week. We have 11 amendments, and I think just about every Republican amendment that was asked for as of today was accommodated.

So this is a good thing, and I hope it can be a model for the future. We in the majority will allow amendments. Sometimes those votes are tough to take, but at the same time, the minority will not just be dilatory and allow us to move forward. That is what happened this week on AUMF, and I hope it portends good things to come as we work together to make this country an even better country.

Now back to other business.

MORNING BUSINESS

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 67, on the Lee amendment No. 22, to provide for the termination of authorizations for use of military force after 2 years. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted nay.

I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 68, on the Rubio amendment No. 4, to require a certification. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted nay.

I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 69, on the Risch amendment No. 43, to provide for a delayed, conditional repeal of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted nay.●

REMEMBERING RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the life and leadership of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, a global spiritual leader known universally as the Rebbe, and head of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

The Rebbe was born in 1902 and lived through the darkest periods of history, escaping the evils of Russian communism and the horrors of Nazi Germany. In 1941, the Rebbe and his wife Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka arrived safely on the shores of the United States, where he worked tirelessly to resuscitate, rebuild, and guide world Jewry after the holocaust.

The Rebbe exemplified an ideal and value we need today: to give of ourselves selflessly for the betterment of those around us. The Rebbe urged us all to become ambassadors for goodness and kindness and explained that education must not be limited to the academics necessary for making a good living, but rather focus on the ethics, morals, and values that serve as the bedrock of civilization.

One result of the Rebbe's leadership is the Chabad-Lubavitch movement which, by following his teachings and example, became the world's largest Jewish educational organization. Today, there are more than 3,500 permanent Chabad-Lubavitch centers providing educational, religious, and humanitarian programming in all 50 States, including in my home State of South Dakota, and in 109 countries. The Rebbe's teachings and scholarship are published in more than 400 volumes and are translated in dozens of languages.

The Rebbe recognized America's unique role as a force for good and had meaningful relationships with several of our Nation's leaders, who saw him as the moral guide of so many. For the Rebbe, America was a beacon of light of historic proportions to be utilized in influencing the moral betterment of all humanity, and he often pointed to the words "In God We Trust" enshrined on our currency as a defining element of the great American story.