

Sam—who have been a big help in this effort.

This legislation, by my Republican colleague from eastern Oregon, Congressman BENTZ, is a companion bill to my bill, S.482, which would uphold promises made by the Federal Government to farmers and Tribes in the Klamath Basin. The Klamath Basin is the subject of one of the largest river restoration projects in history.

As a result of this work, new habitats are being opened up to recover culturally important fish and wildlife and provide more flexibility for managing water deliveries to farmers in the Klamath Basin. The promise that was made to agricultural communities and agreed to by stakeholders in the Klamath Basin is that they would receive support for the work that must now be completed to avoid conflict, work like putting fish screens on water diversions.

I commend the House for passing this legislation on suspension, and I am really pleased that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are going to allow us to make sure that we don't lose this critical and timely opportunity to finally live up to a promise made to these local communities nearly a decade ago.

I will close with this. I promised that I would have an open-to-all townhall meeting in every county in my State. I just cleared townhall meeting No. 1,100. That means that 1,100 times, for 90 minutes, we just said we are going to throw open the doors of government and listen to folks. I am not giving any speeches or using any teleprompters or whatever, just letting people share their views.

And it was there that I heard about this idea, this idea that is being advanced now on a bipartisan basis. Congressman BENTZ, my colleague from eastern Oregon, myself, my home is in southeast Portland, urban and rural, Democrats and Republicans, coming together to do something that makes a lot of sense.

And I want to also, while I am making these remarks, thank my senatorial colleague Senator MERKLEY, who is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee. He has been doing so much good work on the Klamath over the years.

The passage of this legislation tonight is a good win for rural Oregon, long overdue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5509

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5509 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, reserving the right to object. This bill is not the right response to address the permitting challenges at the Department of the Interior. The bill would create a duplicative database, and the database would lack privacy protections for sensitive business information. I am committed to addressing permitting challenges. This bill is not the right answer, and, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

CONGRATULATING THE LOS ANGELES GALAXY FOR WINNING THE 2024 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 936, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 936) congratulating the Los Angeles Galaxy for winning the 2024 Major League Soccer Cup.

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 936) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's (legislative day of December 16, 2024) RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF SERENA RAQUEL MURILLO

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, as we conclude the final week of the 118th Congress, and we bring to a close the historic—truly historic—Biden-Harris administration, we look back on the biggest accomplishments of this body.

Now, serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee alongside my partners over the years, Senators Dianne Feinstein, Senator Laphonza Butler, and as of last week, Senator ADAM SCHIFF, I am particularly proud to have played a role in the confirmation of a nearly record number of President Biden's Federal judicial nominees.

Today, I want to ask for your support on the final two nominees that are awaiting confirmation by this body.

So first let me introduce to you Judge Serena Murillo, President Biden's nominee to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, the proud daughter of a

waitress and a Mexican-American farmworker who went back to school to become a teacher.

Judge Murillo was born in Pomona, CA. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California-San Diego and earned her law degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. And after a year in private practice, Judge Murillo joined the District Attorney's Office in Los Angeles where she served as a prosecutor for the next 7 years.

In the District Attorney's Office, she served as both a trial and appellate attorney, and throughout her time there, she tried 68 cases to verdict. Now, since 2015, Judge Murillo has served as a judge on the Los Angeles Superior Court and was even appointed justice pro tem on the California Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, from 2018 to 2019.

Her deep experience across the whole spectrum of criminal and civil law, and her reputation for thoughtfulness, fairness, and hard work on the bench will make her a tremendous district judge if she earns this body's support. On her behalf and on behalf of the people of California, I ask for your "aye" vote for this nomination.

NOMINATION OF BENJAMIN J. CHEEKS

Madam President, now this week, we will also consider the nomination of Judge Benjamin Cheeks to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Judge Cheeks was born in Albany, GA, and raised by a single mother who worked multiple jobs to provide for him and his siblings.

Recognizing that education was the key to a better future, he worked hard and earned a full scholarship to attend the University of Miami, and he went on to earn his law degree from American University, Washington College of Law.

After law school, Judge Cheeks served as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan for 7 years. And then the light went off, and he made his way to California where he served as assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of California.

Three years later, he started his own criminal defense practice serving on a panel to represent defendants who could not afford private attorneys. And earlier this year, Judge Cheeks was unanimously selected by members of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District to serve as a magistrate judge. That says a lot. And it says a lot about the qualifications, the values, the approach, and the great service he will provide as a district judge with your support.

So two more-than-qualified, more-than-ready-to-serve nominees awaiting our confirmation. I ask you, colleagues, for your support.

TRIBUTE TO TONY CÁRDENAS

Madam President and colleagues, I rise today to congratulate and to thank Congressman TONY CÁRDENAS as he prepares to retire after 12 distinguished years of service in the U.S.

House of Representatives and 28 years in public service overall.

Since his time in the House, he has been a tremendous, aggressive, effective, and passionate member of the California delegation in particular, and one of the true stars of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

He is my fellow “tiger” from San Fernando High School. He was my first boss in politics, and, more recently—to the thrill of our wives—my roommate here in Washington. For many decades now, TONY has been a cherished friend and truly a brother in politics and in life.

TONY CÁRDENAS is a champion for the San Fernando Valley and has been for nearly three decades, and TONY’s story and legacy deserves to be celebrated and remembered. And that is why I choose to make these remarks today, so that they are a permanent record; yes, even here in the U.S. Senate.

Now, he was raised just a few blocks from where I grew up in the proud working-class community of Pacoima. ANTONIO “TONY” CÁRDENAS was born on March 31, 1963, the youngest of 11 children born to Andrés and Maria Cárdenas.

And, yes, TONY is just a few years ahead of me, but our stories followed similar paths. TONY’s parents and my father are from the same State of Jalisco in Mexico, and they immigrated to the United States in search of a better life—in pursuit of the American dream. Colleagues, that you know I fight so hard to defend.

We both attended Telfair Elementary School and went on to attend San Fernando high school. And when it came time to attend college, despite discouragement from some of our teachers, we both went on to college and earned engineering degrees.

Yet it is in part because of TONY and his passion and commitment to community that I left what could have been a very promising and fruitful career in engineering to pursue public service. When TONY first set out to make a difference and run for the State Assembly in 1996, he actually took a chance on me asking me to be his campaign manager. When he asked, I couldn’t help but be honest. I looked at him, and I said: Tony, I don’t know the first thing about running campaigns. I think he was equally honest because he looked right back at me and said: Well, I don’t know the first thing about running for office. But you know me; I know you. We are smart. We are committed. We are hard-working. We will figure this out together. And I think we kind of did.

I was pretty young at the time, like, literally, fresh out of college. But he took a leap of faith on me, and I took a leap of faith on him. Like many, many young people—right?—you are cynical about politicians and about government. But I knew who TONY was as a person. I knew his values. I knew his work ethic. I knew his moral compass, aside from having so much in

common growing up. And I knew just how committed he was to our community and to making change.

See, TONY had previously left engineering and entered real estate. He had his own very successful real estate company. He could have moved on to live anywhere else and been tremendously successful in the private sector, but he chose to leave that and enter public service to improve the quality of life of the folks that we grew up with.

And from his very first election to the State Assembly—and he was an underdog candidate, trust me, but he was successful—to the times when he and I worked together on the Los Angeles City Council to the last few years when we served together here in the Halls of Congress, I have been blessed not just because of his mentorship, not just because of his friendship, but to just have a front row seat to his public service career.

I have seen him, and I have been inspired by him and his fights for justice and opportunities for at-risk youth; him leading the charge in our Nation’s clean energy transition—again, something that started years ago in prior offices but has continued here at the national level through his work in Congress; and his advocacy for better access to mental health care. He has done so much in a number of policy areas.

But what I admire most is sort of the through line in his narrative and in his career that he has never shied away from a righteous fight. The most righteous fights, as you know, are often the most hard battles to fight. TONY never shied away from that, and he won a heck of a lot more often than he didn’t because it was the right thing to do.

And I also appreciate and reflect on his public service and the way he has gone about carving out a path for others to follow. When I mentioned his first run for the State legislature in 1996, I take you back to a time where, even in the State of California, there were not nearly as many Latinos in positions of power at the Federal or State or even the local level. But through the power of his example, he has opened the door for so many others—including me—to dream of running for office, to think of running for office, to actually run for office, to win the opportunity and to serve well. Yes, colleagues, entire generations of young Latino leaders now see running for office and having a say in the decisions that affect our communities as the norm, not the exception. And it is, in part—large part—because of the trailblazing legacy of TONY CÁRDENAS.

And I would be remiss if I didn’t take a moment to thank his wife Norma, and his four children—Vanessa, Cristian, Andres, and Alina—and the entire Cárdenas family for sharing him with us for all these years.

And while next month TONY will officially step away from his work in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have no doubt that his service to others is not coming to an end. It will continue.

I look forward to continuing to fight alongside him for many, many years to come.

I yield the floor.

(The PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. KAINE assumed the Chair.)

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a certificate of election to fill the unexpired term created by the death of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein of California.

The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate.

Hearing no objection, the reading of the certificate will be waived, and it will be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FOR UNEXPIRED TERM

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that on the 5th day of November, 2024, ADAM B. SCHIFF was duly chosen by the qualified electors of the State of California a Senator for the unexpired term ending at noon on the 3rd day of January, 2025, to fill the vacancy in the representation from said State in the Senate of the United States caused by the death of Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Witness: His excellency our Governor Gavin Newsom, and our seal hereto affixed in the City of Sacramento, this 17th day of December, in the year of our Lord 2024.

GAVIN NEWSOM,
Governor of California.

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH.D.,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator-elect will now present himself at the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office.

The Senator-elect, ADAM B. SCHIFF, escorted by Mr. WELCH and Mr. PADILLA, advanced to the desk of the President pro tempore; the oath prescribed by law was administered to him by the President pro tempore; and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Congratulations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The Senator from Vermont.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the motion to proceed to H.R. 82 be considered expired following the remarks of Senator LEE for up to 30 minutes; further, that following the motion to proceed vote, the Senate proceed to executive session; and further, that the cloture motions with respect to the Cheeks and Murillo nominations ripen at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 20.