

The Mnuchin rule just hasn't held up. It is beyond being on the ropes. It is not going anywhere at all. In fact, the early proposals only make this extraordinary unfairness, the unfairness at the heart of America's Tax Code, even worse.

So what we have is another Trump nominee who, in my view, doesn't meet the test of standing up for working families in those communities all across the country who are waiting for economic recovery to show up in their neighborhood. They are the ones who have seen the factory close and seen the foreclosures and seen their neighbors laid off. And they would like to see people in these positions advocate for them, advocate for them because they need somebody who is going to stand up for them, and they were told in the campaign that is what they were going to get.

The fact is, Mr. Mnuchin is yet another Trump nominee who, instead of standing up for those working families, has a different set of priorities and, in addition to that, has the ethics alarm bells sounding.

He appears to be withholding information requested by Members of this body. My view is, he misled the Finance Committee and the public about his bank's foreclosure tactics. The Mnuchin rule—the first promise he made, the very first promise he made on policy, which he was proud to have described as a rule named after him, already has been broken.

So I am not going to be supporting Mr. Mnuchin to lead the Treasury Department. I urge my colleagues as well to reject this appointment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Mnuchin nomination?

Mr. HATCH. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 63 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Heitkamp	Schatz
Cantwell	Hirono	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote on the nomination, and I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of David J. Shulkin, of Pennsylvania, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I want to make a statement that has not been heard much around these Halls or these Chambers in a couple of years. But on February 7—this month—the Veterans' Affairs Committee reported by a vote of 17 to 0 the name of David Shulkin to be the next Secretary of Veterans' Administration. That is a unanimous vote. Nine Republicans and eight Democrats—everybody voted for this man to be Secretary of the VA. I am going to ask each Member in the Chamber today: Let's do it as an entire body and find one person, one thing we agree upon.

They are not Republican veterans or Democrat veterans; they are American veterans who went to the battlefield and fought for us. It is time we fought for them.

Dr. Shulkin is the right man at the right time for the Veterans' Administration. On March 15, 2015, we hired him to come in and take over and be Under Secretary of Veterans Health. The President looked around to find the best man to run the VA and found him in David Shulkin.

David Shulkin is committed to the following: fixing the problems at the Veterans' Administration, making sure the Choice Program works, making sure every veteran gets the care they deserve, the care we all want them to get, and seeing to it they get it from us.

I am going to ask each Member to cast their vote today for David Shulkin

but also cast their vote for our veterans. This is a time for us to send a message to them: We don't want to privatize the VA. We don't want to reorganize the VA. We want to make the VA work, to give our veterans access to every bit of care they can possibly get, and follow in the line of the great leaders who have been in the Veterans' Administration before.

I am very pleased to serve with JON TESTER of Montana as my ranking member. We have worked together as a team—Democrats and Republicans—to make this happen.

I yield the remainder of my time to JON TESTER of Montana on the nomination of David Shulkin to be Secretary of the VA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise, as did the Senator from Georgia, in support of the nomination of Dr. David Shulkin to be Secretary of the VA.

First, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Senator ISAKSON for his leadership of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and throughout this confirmation process—and throughout the many processes—as chair of the committee.

Look, I think it is critically important that we have a Secretary of the VA to serve our veterans. I think Dr. Shulkin is the perfect person for that position. The solutions to the VA's problems should be based on common sense rather than partisanship or an extreme agenda. I think Dr. Shulkin recognizes that. He is committed to our Nation's veterans above all. Through the conversations I have had with him over the last year and a half, I think he understands the challenges ahead of us in the VA.

The Choice Program, for example, which has been a wreck by anybody's standards, is looming with dramatic funding shortfalls and is a program we need to work on here in Congress—and we will on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee—to fix, and I think Dr. Shulkin is on top of it.

I have many letters from veterans across Montana about how the Choice Program has not worked. It is not that it isn't a good idea. When we passed it, we all agreed that it was a good idea. But it needs to be changed to fix the needs of our veterans and make it more workable.

One other thing is a big problem, and that is the workforce problem we have within the VA. The hiring freeze has made this problem even worse. We all talk about the backlog, and the backlog is real. But we need to make sure the VA has the people they need to serve the veterans in this country, whether reducing that backlog or whether it is making sure they get the care they need.

Finally, and Johnny talked about this: privatization. He has reassured me he will oppose efforts to privatize the VA. Typically, this isn't a problem, but the administration has talked about it extensively. I think it would

be a path that is reckless for our veterans, and I think the veterans service organizations would tell us that.

Again, I express my support for the nomination of Dr. Shulkin to be VA Secretary. I believe he will stand up for our veterans. I believe he will put them above politics.

Moving forward, I look forward to working with him and other Members in this body to make sure we serve our veterans the best we possibly can. Our veterans deserve no less.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the Senate has spent the last few weeks considering controversial nominee after controversial nominee, it is a refreshing break to consider Dr. David Shulkin to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Shulkin is a man defined by his professionalism, competence, and dedication to the mission of the agency he is tapped to lead.

The son of an Army psychologist and an experienced hospital system administrator, Dr. Shulkin was selected by President Obama to restore trust and confidence at the Veterans Health Administration after years of struggles punctuated by the horrible scandal of wait times in Phoenix. Under his leadership, the VA has made great progress. Amid a sea of questionable Cabinet nominations, Dr. Shulkin is one about which I have no question.

Of course, Dr. Shulkin will face immense challenges. The VA needs significant overhaul, not just in its practices and policies, but in its facilities and technology. In eliminating the backlog for access to health care and in the midst of tackling the backlog in claims, facilities have been short-changed with respect to needed improvements and upgrades, while experiencing increased usage. New technologies provide new opportunities for providing care, but they also require new investments.

Areas that are finally receiving the attention required include mental health, posttraumatic stress, and other lingering invisible wounds of war. It has been one of my priorities to ensure that the best science and practices with respect to mental health and posttraumatic stress can be spread to the communities where veterans live and work, like the rural communities of Vermont. Only then will we see progress in improving the lives of veterans in those areas.

Dr. Shulkin must also rebuild the confidence of a VA workforce that has been unfairly targeted and vilified by some for the actions of a few. The Federal employees who work at the VA are among the most dedicated anywhere. Their devotion to improving care for veterans is inspiring, but their jobs have been made more difficult by both the disappointing actions of some individuals and the frustrating policies and organizational structures that sometimes get in the way of them serving veterans.

I believe that Dr. Shulkin is up to this challenge. It is evident from his

testimony before the Veterans Affairs Committee and through his public statements that he believes in the VA and in the importance of its mission. It is evident that he understands the value of looking to the community for health care answers when that makes sense and that he also understands that the Nation should never ignore its solemn responsibility to care for veterans through all possible avenues. I am also reassured by his pledge not to dismantle the VA or turn its delivery of care into a voucher system. It is evident that he intends to speak his mind about what makes the most sense for leading a missive health care system focused on providing quality care to each individual veteran.

I will support Dr. Shulkin's nomination, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am proud to support Dr. David Shulkin's nomination for Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, faces massive challenges in delivering care to our veterans, but I believe that Dr. Shulkin is well equipped for the task at hand.

Dr. Shulkin has committed to fully implementing the Veterans Choice Program as Secretary and will work to expand this program to provide a network that meets the needs of veterans, their families, and providers in the community—every veteran deserves access to care, whether that be at the VA or in the community.

Through the Veterans Choice Program, we have seen more than 7 million appointments made for veterans in their communities, a network expanded by 350,000 providers and over 1.5 million veterans that have benefitted from using the Choice Card. I will seek to build and expand upon this progress and look to Dr. Shulkin's support for legislation that would bring care in the community under an integrated and coordinated system that utilizes a Veterans Choice Card. This will ensure access to timely, flexible, and quality care that our veterans have earned and deserve.

I believe that Dr. Shulkin is the person that can repair the culture of the VA to focus on the veteran and restore honesty and accountability to the Department. I thank him for accepting this challenge to serve our Nation and look forward to working with him in the days ahead.

Thank you.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I support the nomination of David Shulkin to be Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

President Obama nominated Dr. Shulkin, a medical doctor, to be Under Secretary for Health for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Chief Executive of the Veterans Health Administration. The Senate confirmed Dr. Shulkin in June 2015 by a voice vote. Since then, he has led the VA's health care system, with more than 1,700 care sites and 9 million veterans using the system each year.

Before joining the VA, Dr. Shulkin served as president and CEO of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City and president at Morristown Medical Center, Goryeb Children's Hospital, and Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute, and the Atlantic Health System Accountable Care Organization. Dr. Shulkin also previously served as the chief medical officer of the University of Pennsylvania Health System, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University Hospital, and the Medical College of Pennsylvania Hospital. He had been chairman of medicine and vice dean at Drexel University School of Medicine. And Dr. Shulkin founded and was the chairman and CEO of DoctorQuality, a consumer-oriented source of information for quality and safety in health care.

Veterans groups are cautiously optimistic that Dr. Shulkin will continue to improve the timeliness and quality of medical care our veterans receive. They are also hopeful that he will begin much-needed reforms in the administration of veterans' benefits, including the reform of the appellate review process.

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides important services, care, and peace of mind for our Nation's 21 million veterans. The VA has more to do to make sure that the care that it provides is worthy of those who served our Nation. I believe that Dr. Shulkin's experience and training has prepared him well to continue that effort, and I support his nomination.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic time has been yielded back.

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Montana and urge every Member of the Senate—Republican, Independent, Democrat—to cast their vote for our veterans, cast their vote for our country, and cast their vote for David Shulkin to be the new Secretary of the Veterans' Administration.

I yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Shulkin nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 64 Ex.]

YEAS—100

Alexander	Bennet	Booker
Baldwin	Blumenthal	Boozman
Barrasso	Blunt	Brown

Burr	Hassan	Peters
Cantwell	Hatch	Portman
Capito	Heinrich	Reed
Cardin	Heitkamp	Risch
Carper	Heller	Roberts
Casey	Hirono	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sanders
Collins	Isakson	Sasse
Coons	Johnson	Schatz
Corker	Kaine	Schumer
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott
Cortez Masto	King	Shaheen
Cotton	Klobuchar	Shelby
Crapo	Lankford	Stabenow
Cruz	Leahy	Strange
Daines	Lee	Sullivan
Donnelly	Manchin	Tester
Duckworth	Markey	Thune
Durbin	McCain	Tillis
Enzi	McCaskill	Toomey
Ernst	McConnell	Udall
Feinstein	Menendez	Van Hollen
Fischer	Merkley	Warner
Flake	Moran	Warren
Franken	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Gardner	Murphy	Wicker
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Graham	Nelson	Young
Grassley	Paul	
Harris	Perdue	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 16, MICK MULVANEY to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of MICK MULVANEY, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Mick Mulvaney, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, Tim Scott, Johnny Isakson, James M. Inhofe, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, Michael B. Enzi, Lindsey Graham, David Perdue, Orrin G. Hatch, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, James Lankford, John Hoeven, Chuck Grassley.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 15, Scott Pruitt to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Scott Pruitt, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, Tim Scott, Johnny Isakson, Lindsey Graham, James M. Inhofe, David Perdue, Shelley Moore Capito, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, James Lankford, John Hoeven, John Thune, Deb Fischer.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 3, Wilbur Ross to be Secretary of Commerce.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Wilbur L. Ross, of Florida, to be Secretary of Commerce.

Mitch McConnell, John Hoeven, Deb Fischer, John Thune, Johnny Isakson, Tom Cotton, Marco Rubio, Dan Sullivan, Mike Rounds, James M. Inhofe, Tim Scott, Lindsey Graham, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, John Kennedy, Patrick J. Toomey.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 8, RYAN ZINKE to be Secretary of the Interior.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of RYAN ZINKE, of Montana, to be Secretary of the Interior.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Ryan Zinke, of Montana, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, Orrin G. Hatch, Roy Blunt, Steve Daines, Tim Scott, Chuck Grassley, John Hoeven, Michael B. Enzi, John Barrasso, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Mike Crapo, James M. Inhofe, Joni Ernst, John Cornyn.