CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not remind my colleagues that we still have a lot to do before we adjourn. This weekend's announcements about the first round of COVID–19 vaccines heading out for delivery were a very welcome addition to the news cycle. We owe a great deal of credit to the doctors and scientists who developed the vaccines; to those working behind the scenes through Operation Warp Speed to get those safe, effective vaccines approved; and to the truck-drivers, the shipping professionals, cold storage developers, and other essential workers pushing through a whole lot of overtime to get these vaccines in the hands of healthcare providers.

This morning, I was fortunate enough to stop by the grand opening of Cold Chain Technologies' Wilson County, TN, facility. The technology they have developed to preserve and transport these vaccines in a thermal container is truly impressive.

But don't forget that all across this country, millions of small business men and women and struggling workers are still waiting for us to agree on and pass another targeted—and I will say targeted—COVID relief legislation.

When I talked to Tennesseans this weekend, they aren't worried about politics or optics or unassociated wish list items. They want to see another round of PPP. They want to see a plus-up in unemployment insurance. They want to see money for vaccines, for testing, and for schools so that people can get back to work and children can get back to school. That is the relief Americans are looking for. And, I will add, the hesitancy from some across the aisle and over in the House Chamber, where they have admitted to playing politics with people's lives, has not set well with Tennesseans as we enter this Christmas season.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS WILSON

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this evening I want to take just a moment, in front of my colleagues, to recognize the contributions of a member of my staff: Thomas Wilson. Mr. Wilson has spent the last year working in our personal office as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs Congressional Fellowship Program.

As Thomas departs my office and returns to the Department of Veterans Affairs, I want to express my appreciation to him for his hard work and the dedication to serve veterans in Kansas and across the Nation. Thomas has served at the VA for more than 18 years. His selfless approach to service has helped countless veterans receive the care and support that they have earned. He has surely been an asset to my team as we work to serve Kansans, servicemembers, and veterans.

Before joining our office, Thomas served as the legislative director to Congressman Harold Baker, a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. He served on the Bush transition team after leaving congressional service and then went on to serve in numerous roles at the VA. These included roles as a congressional liaison for the VA and, most recently, in the Veterans Experience Office.

He is a graduate of the National Defense University and has used his experience to benefit those who serve our Nation in uniform.

Thomas is fortunate to have his loving wife Ashley and son Chase by his side. They undoubtedly contribute to Thomas's altruistic nature, and he is blessed to have their support.

Thomas joined my office in January 2019, just as I was assuming the gavel of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. His experience navigating the VA proved immensely helpful to my personal and committee staffs as we set off to advocate for veterans from all walks of life.

He was especially helpful in advocating for women veterans. Thomas led the effort to study the employment rates of post-9/11 female veterans, a cohort of veterans that experiences higher unemployment rates, more than any other demographic.

His efforts will lead to policies to support female veterans and to make certain that they have the tools necessary to succeed after their service to our Nation.

It is sad to see Thomas leave the office, but I know that his return to the Veterans Experience Office next month will produce lasting results for the many veterans who regularly interact with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thomas is an impressive public servant, and it has been a privilege to work with him. I hold him in the highest regard. He is a significant asset to our veterans and represents some of the best that our Federal Government has to offer.

Once again, thank you, Thomas, for all you have done for Kansans and for American veterans this year in association with us and our work. You have been a model of selfless service and leadership, and I know you will continue to do great things throughout your career and your life of service, wherever that path may lead.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 the nomination of Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on nomination of Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 265 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kelly	Sinema
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden