Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Richard Blumenthal, Patrick J. Leahy, Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith, Brian Schatz, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to this motion be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, when Senators were last in this Chamber, our Democratic colleagues were shooting down amendment after amendment to ensure their largely non-COVID-related spending plan remained very liberal and purely partisan.

Republicans proposed amendments to cap extra government help for wealthier Americans, to ensure that direct checks would only go to citizens and legal residents and not to people in prison, and to rein in runaway State and local bailouts and refocus the bill on urgent COVID-related actual needs. But Democrats banded together to defeat every one of these commonsense changes. As the Democratic leader happily explained to reporters later on Saturday, his whole conference put lockstep party unity ahead of substance and ahead of bipartisan compromise.

So the nearly $2 trillion partisan spending spree that President Biden's Chief of Staff brags is ''the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation'' is on its way over to the House. Already, we hear reporting that this giveaway will simply wipe out the budget deficit of New York State and eliminate a big part of the deficit in San Francisco, courtesy of the taxpayers in Kentucky and Middle America. Already, we hear the administration saying they want some of these sweeping new welfare policies to become permanent, like a no-strings-attached benefit that disregards all the pro-work lessons of bipartisan welfare reform. Meanwhile, it only manages to spend about 1 percent on vaccinations and less than 9 percent on the entire health fight.

Democrats inherited a turning tide. The vaccine trends and economic trends were in place before the bill was ever voted on, before this President was sworn in, but they are determined to push to the front of the parade with an effort to push America to the left.

Meanwhile, House Democrats are wasting no time pursuing even more purely partisan legislation. Last Wednesday, the House passed H.R. 1, their effort to rewrite the ground rules of American elections and seize power from States and localities. Just like the spending plan, in both Chambers, once again the only thing bipartisan about the bill was the opposition.

This is House Democrats' bid to put Federal bureaucrats in charge of local election rules; to undermine voter ID requirements with massive loopholes that undermine them; to require every State to permit ballot harvesting, which lets paid political operatives produce stacks of ballots with other people's names on them; to overturn or change hundreds of State election laws; and to turn our highest election authority, the equally balanced FEC, into a partisan majority body to crack down on speech and ideas they don't like.

It is quite the recipe for rebuilding public faith in our democracy on all sides—a purely partisan effort to seize unprecedented power for Washington, DC, on a razor-thin majority. It is a hugely harmful idea at the worst possible time.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on a different matter, this week, the Senate is set to consider more of President Biden's nominations. I have consistently said that the President should have latitude to staff their administration with people of their choosing so long as they nominate qualified and mainstream individuals. That is why I and many other Republicans have supported many of the President's mainstream nominees.

Secretaries Austin and Vilsack were each confirmed with more than 90 votes; Secretaries Raimondo, Yellen, and Buttigieg with more than 80. Senator Blinken got 78 votes, including mine. Secretaries Cardona and Granholm each got more than 60 votes. Even with the time spent on impeachment, half of the nominees I just mentioned were confirmed faster than President Trump's nominees to the same spots, and most of them received a more bipartisan margin now than 4 years ago. So this administration is receiving perfectly fair treatment from the Senate. Frankly, the President and his team must be thrilled that Senate Republicans are proving to be more fair and more principled on personnel matters than the Democratic minority's behavior 4 years ago.

But the fact remains that millions and millions of Americans elected 50 Republican Senators—an even split—to stand against policies and personnel who lean too far to the left. That is why many of us voted against confirming Secretary Mayorkas, who stood idly by while a major crisis exploded on the border in just his first several weeks. Rather than confront the problem, he absurdly claims that a record number of unaccompanied children in custody, overflowing shelters, and catch-and-release policies during a pandemic do not actually constitute a ''crisis'' at all.

Xavier Becerra, the partisan California attorney general with no significant healthcare experience, whom the President has nominated to run Health and Human Services during COVID–19, could not even get one Republican vote to get out of committee.

So Republicans will continue to distinguish between qualified, mainstream people and nominees who are way outside the mainstream.

I have already announced I will support Judge Merrick Garland, whose nomination to be Attorney General we will vote to advance later today, but we will continue to fight hard against people who are the wrong choices for key positions. We are going to shine a bright spotlight on anyone who seems more focused on far-left ideology than serving all of the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I had a press conference this Sunday back home in Illinois to talk about what the American Rescue Plan means to our State. It is dramatic. Dramatic.

Millions of dollars will be coming to our State to buy vaccines. I can tell you, all across Illinois, people are asking: When is it my turn? When do I get my chance? And we want to make sure they get that chance sooner rather than later.

Think about what President Biden inherited just a few weeks ago. Surely they had found some vaccines—excellent vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna—approved by then, but he came to the White House to find that there was no plan to administer those vaccines across the Nation.

Vaccine is important, but it is of little value if it is not in the arms of Americans. So he set out to establish a standard that we would be distributing this vaccine across the United States as quickly as possible and the mechanism, the infrastructure to make certain that it was administered by professionals who know what they are doing. That is quite an undertaking. It is the largest vaccination in the history of our Nation. But President Biden said he needed help to do it—not just money for the vaccine but money for testing, money for the genomic sequencing necessary to detect variants that might be emerging in the United States. That was a major element of the bill that passed this Senate last Saturday.

He also put money in there that had already been promised to the American people. Remember when President Trump said $2,000 for every American? We agreed on a bipartisan basis. The first downpayment was last December, $600, and the remainder, $1,400, was included in the bill that passed on Saturday.

I have yet to hear a Republican Senator come to this floor and criticize that sum of money. All of them—I should say most of them have publicly supported it, and others say little or nothing about it, but no one is saying that it shouldn't be given as a result of the promise made. We kept that promise. That was part of what we were doing.

We also had a responsibility to millions of Americans who are still collecting unemployment. As of March 14,