CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 110, Amber Faye McReynolds, of Colorado, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2026.

Charles E. Schumer, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tammy Duckworth, Jon Tester, John Hickenlooper, Tammy Baldwin, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Tina Smith, Cory A. Booker, Christopher Murphy, Debbie Stabenow, Richard Blumenthal, Sheldon Whitehouse, Chris Van Hollen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Alex Padilla.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 112.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Donet Dominic Graves, Jr., of Ohio, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Executive Calendar No. 112, Donet Dominic Graves, Jr., of Ohio, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

Charles E. Schumer, Jon Ossoff, Margaret Wood Hassan, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Ron Wyden, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jacky Rosen, Cory A. Booker, Tammy Duckworth, Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Edward J. Markey, John Hickenlooper, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, May 10, be waived.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I yield the floor.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrea Joan Palm, of Wisconsin, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APRIL JOBS REPORT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, some economists have another name for the recession that we are living through, the one that was caused by the COVID pandemic. They call it a ''she-cession'' because the economic hardships and job losses have fallen disproportionately on women, especially on working mothers. It is ironic that we are having this conversation the day after Mother's Day and reflecting on the current state of American families in the midst of a pandemic but, equally important, on the state of American families and the state of the mothers of those families and the economic realities that they face.

There are 2.5 million American women who have dropped out or were pushed out of the workforce since the start of this pandemic. In a recent ABC News poll, 25 percent of women said they are worse off economically now than they were a year ago compared to 18 percent of men. A survey last fall found that almost 40 percent of working mothers in my State of Illinois—40 percent—lost their jobs or are working reduced hours. Nearly half of all working mothers of color reported the same.

There are many reasons that this recession has been so economically devastating for so many women, but the two biggest reasons are these: Women are overrepresented in the industries that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic: restaurants, retail, leisure and hospitality. Women are also the primary caregivers—in some cases, the only caregivers—in the vast majority of American families. With schools and childcare programs closed, what choice does a working mother have besides stepping back from work?

For millions of American mothers and their families, the stimulus payments, the enhanced unemployment checks, the increased child tax credits, and other economic benefits in the American Rescue Plan have literally been a lifeline. They have enabled these mothers and families to feed their kids and to keep their homes during the worst recession since the Great Depression.

So it has come as a bit of a surprise that our Republican colleagues would choose to start Mother's Day weekend by vowing to end enhanced unemployment benefits for more than 8 million American workers. They cite the April jobs report as their justification. After we added 770,000 jobs in March—a strong showing—we learned last week the U.S. economy added only 266,000 jobs in April. Immediately, our Republican colleagues cited the disappointing jobs numbers as proof that the recovery has clearly stalled and that we have to do more to get people back to work, as if it justifies ending enhanced jobless benefits.

They seem to think that additional unemployment benefits make American workers lazy. They imply that Americans would rather sit at home, watch nonstop Netflix, and eat chocolate-covered cherries rather than go back to work. They must not know many American workers. Americans want to work. Americans work longer and harder than their counterparts in almost every nation in the world. We should be proud of that work ethic and what it has meant to America.

The reason many workers haven't returned to the workplace isn't because they are lazy. People remain afraid of this coronavirus. They lack adequate, affordable childcare. They may be caring for older family members or be dealing with personal health conditions. That is the reality of life in families and, particularly, in struggling, working families. Taking away the enhanced unemployment benefits they need to be able to feed their kids and

pay their rents or mortgages does nothing to change that reality except to make it worse.

Our Republican colleagues will say that the April jobs report is the reason for their renewed determination to stop sending these enhanced checks to the jobless families. The truth is—the real truth is—these Republicans think the Federal Government ought to do the bare minimum to help working families weather this pandemic. That is their credo: Government isn't the solution; government is the problem even during a once-in-a-century health crisis. Whether the economy is adding jobs quickly or slowly, whether the COVID infection and death rates are rising or falling, the Republicans have fought to scale back Federal unemployment benefits for workers.

Not one of our Republican colleagues—let me repeat that—not one of our Republican Senate colleagues voted for the American Rescue Plan. Remember that one? That was the plan by President Biden that put more money into the purchase of vaccines; that finally set up a nationwide effort to administer those vaccines; that sent the $1,400 cash check to working families—a check that had been promised by the previous administration—that gave an additional helping hand to small businesses to get through the pandemic; and that did, in fact, increase or, I should say, lengthen the period of time that people would be eligible for unemployment benefits.

That is a pretty good, important package; don't you think? When you look at what it did for America, it came just in the nick of time for many. You would have thought, wouldn't you, with 50 Republican Senators, that one—one—Republican Senator would have supported those things. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case.

There are things we can do to get this economy moving again. We need to encourage more Americans to get vaccinated, No. 1. President Biden has done a remarkable job, but we still have work to do. We shouldn't sit back and relax. Every person vaccinated is another person protected. Also, the people around them are protected. The fundamental fact remains, as we talk about all of the economics and all of the government philosophy, our economy cannot recover completely until this virus is under control.

In addition, if the Republicans want to solve the problems facing our workforce, there are pretty obvious answers: Sit down, and talk to a working mother who lost a job, who has a child at home, perhaps a young child, and ask her: Well, how soon can you get back to work?

Her question back to you: Senator, how soon can you take care of my little boy? How much is it going to cost me?

That is the reality. The daycare center is probably closed, and the babysitter may not be available. There are lots of reasons. It just may be too expensive. That is the reality of work for American workers today. That mother isn't lazy. That mother faces a challenge that not one of us wants to see in our families. Either our children or grandchildren, we don't want them to be pawns in this whole public debate about when we are going to start or stop helping families.

We need to face this workforce problem because it is really key to it, this childcare crisis in this country. Do we care enough about families and children to make sure there is affordable daycare? President Biden does. He is talking about a program nationwide, thank goodness, which will finally address this issue and put a goal in place to keep the cost of daycare manageable for every family regardless of its means.

So what did the Republican Senate leader say last week? He said he was 100-percent focused—100-percent focused—on stopping the Biden administration. That is an echo of what he said in the first, early days of the Obama Presidency. He came to the floor, and instead of talking about what we could do to work together to try to find some bipartisan ground, he said that he hoped to do everything he could to make sure that Barack Obama was a one-term President. It didn't take him long to come back with a similar statement with regard to the Biden Presidency.

It is not encouraging, but I am encouraged by the fact that there are some Republicans who just don't agree with it. I hope that they will step up. I hope that they will show that we can still work on a bipartisan basis. This ''100-percent'' stopping the Biden administration from Senator MCCONNELL cannot be the basis for a successful congressional session.

The Senate Democrats have an agenda; it is true. We are 100-percent focused on getting this pandemic under control and building a better future for our families. We would like to work with our Republican colleagues to do it. Although they didn't join us, for example, on the child tax credit, I do believe that they really care about the children in America, particularly the poor children in America, and care enough to want to help them with daycare, with early kindergarten classes, with extending the school year beyond the 12th grade for skills that are needed.

The Presiding Officer knows this well because we come from the same State. Last week, I had an exciting visit in Normal, IL. Things are not normal in Normal, IL. They are exceedingly beyond normal. I visited the Rivian plant. The Rivian plant has an incredible story.

It used to be the Mitsubishi auto plant. Six years ago, it closed. One thousand workers were on the payroll at the time they lost their jobs, good-paying jobs. And there sat that empty factory out on the cornfields just west of Bloomington-Normal.

The mayor of the town, Chris Koos, called me a year after the Mitsubishi plant had closed and said: ''Senator, I think I've got a buyer.'' I said: ''Chris, what are you drinking?'' ''No,'' he says, ''I really believe there's a new company that makes electric vehicles that's really interested in the Mitsubishi plant.''

Well, he was right, and thank goodness he was. Fast forward 4 years later, and a visit last week, he showed this amazing facility, which is now going to be expanded because of the plant that is going to build electric vehicles. They already have models on the floor that you can see of SUVs, trucks, and delivery vans for Amazon. Amazon is a major investor in Rivian.

And we are not just seeing it in Normal. We are seeing evidence that our State, the State of Illinois, has a chance to become an EV State.

I looked up in the Will County area. The Governor was there last week, talking about help for a plant that is going to build the heavy trucks and buses that are needed—electric vehicles for the future.

Go to Libertyville, IL, and there is a Dutch supplier of power generating equipment that is relocating some of its facilities in our State.

And at the same time, Argonne Laboratory has been doing research on battery technology and leading the Nation in doing it for years, and we believe it is a combination that really pays off.

So how will our State or any State tap into this new economy? With trained and skilled workers, with families that don't have to worry day in and day out about daycare.

We have to make sure that we are ready in Illinois and across the Nation for this opportunity. President Biden does. He understands it because he understands the challenges to working families.

I can't understand the opposition of the Republicans in Congress to President Biden. They seem to be determined to make sure that America always finishes a solid second. The Biden administration disagrees, and I do too.

We have the capacity to continue to lead the world and to continue to lead the world's economy, but it isn't by sitting back and patting ourselves on the back and talking about who won the last election. We have to roll up our sleeves on a bipartisan basis and get this workforce ready and stand behind our families that send these workers into the plants that are going to create the products that are going to make a success story out of the 21st century. That is what President Biden is for, and I couldn't agree with him more.

I want to sit down and talk with any Republican who is willing to be honest and serious about doing this together, and we also ought to take on the other issues that we know plague our economy and our families—reducing the cost of prescription drugs, building an infrastructure for the 21st century.

The truth is that last week's job report is a ringing endorsement for the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan of President Biden.

Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, more than 220 million shots have been administered, and more than 100 million Americans have been fully vaccinated, allowing businesses all across America to start to reopen. We need to build on the success of the American Rescue Plan, not dismantle it piece by piece. We need to work together to invest in workers and families for the 21st century, not grind Congress to a halt, as some might prefer.

The American Jobs Plan will enable American workers and businesses to build on those successes. It will help reduce barriers for entry to many workers. It will direct billions of dollars toward helping dislocated workers develop new skills and secure a stable, well-paying job, building wind turbines or electric vehicles or making other American-made goods that will be in high demand in the years to come.

Another priority for Democrats is throwing a lifeline to working parents. Fortunately, we have made some progress on that front with the child tax credit expansion and other provisions in the American Rescue Plan. Those policies put more money in the pockets of middle-class and low-income working families in the midst of the worst economic recession we have seen in decades.

When President Trump left office, 30 million Americans couldn't afford to put food on the table. Think about that. Just 1 month after the American Rescue Plan, that number was reduced to 17 million, and we should never accept that or any number as acceptable in the future. We have cut the number of Americans going hungry by nearly half since President Biden took office, but we still have work to do.

We need to provide more relief to parents so they can work a full-time job, if they choose, without having to worry about finding a safe, reliable place for the kids. We have to ensure that low- and middle-income families pay no more than 7 percent, that is what President Biden is asking, no more than 7 percent income on high-quality childcare. And that is on top of billions of dollars in funding the American Jobs Plan would invest in building and retrofitting childcare facilities across our State and Nation.

Last week's job report is a wake-up call. We can't just wish this crisis away. We have to act and act together. We can't reopen our economy fully until the virus is under control, and then we can't wait for 10 years to get back on track to where we were a year and a half ago.

We can't build a prosperous economy for the future unless we address some of the systemic shortcomings that prevent too many workers from participating fully. Even if next month's job report exceeds expectations, such as the one in March, we need to rebuild our economy and put working families at the center of it, and make bold investments in the future right now.

We can keep good jobs in America and build industries that have a future if we are ready to invest in American families.

I hope our Republican colleagues will not say: Let's go slow; let's be satisfied with second. You know, maybe we just can't compete with some other countries in the world.

I don't buy it. If we believe in America and its workers, we need to invest in them and their future. It is time to think bigger. It is time to believe that this country has a future which is going to be bright if we come together and do our job to stand by working families and the men and women—and, in this moment, particularly the women—who need that helping hand.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from Alabama.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, President Biden promised unity to bring the country together during his inaugural address. I was there with my 26-year-old son Tucker. We listened together and hoped that President Biden would live up to his words. I assumed that when he said he would be a President for all Americans, it also included the 75 million Americans who voted for Donald Trump.

I was ready, and I still am, to work with President Biden in good faith to find commonsense solutions to problems facing the country and to ensure the voices of Alabamians are heard. But, so far, the President has neither united nor reached across the aisle. His actions have shown that he is fine to play along with the divisive tactics of the progressive left, rather than unite a large and diverse country.

President Biden is acting like he is the President of New York and California, not the United States of America. The progressives can barely contain their excitement. The President received glowing reviews from leading progressive Members of Congress, saying the President has ''exceeded expectations.''

The left have been waiting a long time for an administration to implement their vision. They need to use a Trojan horse to put that vision into practice because it is remarkably unpopular with a majority of the American people.

Their vision is unpopular because it centers around a core belief of imposing their vision on everyone. But to achieve this, that means taking away your freedom—freedom to think differently, freedom to worship differently, freedom for you and your family to live differently, freedom to spend your hard-earned money the way you want to spend it.

Taking away those freedoms—freedoms that are the foundation of America—is not progress. It is called socialism.

When progressives talk about equity, they mean equal outcomes, not opportunities. They want a government that is so powerful it owns everything and chooses how wealth is distributed to ensure equal outcomes. That, in essence, is socialism, and the folks promoting this vision are channeling the same energy as the Marxists and communists of the 20th century.

Well, so far, President Biden has been a more willing partner to champion the progressive vision and export it from New York and California to every corner of the entire country. Just look at what has happened lately. One of President Biden's first moves was to signal to the world that America's borders are open. The result? Absolute chaos. And the administration shows little interest in fixing it. We cannot have a country without borders. That is common sense.

Democrats were so eager to undo all the work President Trump did at the border just because President Trump did it, not because there was merit in rolling back these policies. Because of this insane, open-door policy, the American taxpayer—not the Biden administration but the American taxpayer—is footing a $60 million bill a week—$60 million a week—to cover the cost of housing unaccompanied minors at the border—60 million.

In the same rush, Democrats are working to undermine the integrity of the election process through H.R. 1 and S. 1, the Federal Government takeover of our elections.

They are working to force millions of workers to join unions. They all want to strip States of their right-to-work laws, called the PRO Act.

Democrats are using things Americans desperately need, like traditional infrastructure, as a smokescreen for things Americans desperately don't want, like the fantasy Green New Deal.

And now Democrats in both Chambers have introduced legislation to expand the Supreme Court. And because they don't have the votes to ram this through the Senate—such an extreme agenda—many Democrats want to eliminate the filibuster, despite the fact that many wrote a letter asking to keep the filibuster just a few years ago, when they were in the minority.

The bottom line is that the Democrats want to change the rules so they can get their way, because they are to the point where they want to transform our country, so said some of our leaders.

As concerning as each of these actions have been, even more alarming are the progressives' efforts to indoctrinate our children by favoring fringe theories over actual learning. For example, the California Department of Education is considering using a curriculum that says: ''The concept of mathematics being purely objective is unequivocally false.'' Their goal is to ''dismantle racism in mathematics.''

Apparently, two plus two does not equal four anymore because it is not