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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HURRICANES HARVEY AND IRMA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, let me say that my heart goes out to the people of America who are, right now, dealing with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and their aftermaths.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE GLEASON AND DONNA BRITT

Mr. President, ALS, which I think most of us refer to as Lou Gehrig’s disease, has hit us hard in Louisiana. It has hit our world hard, but it has hit especially hard in my State.

A number of my colleagues and a number of Americans, I hope, were watching the night the New Orleans Saints returned to the field after our State was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. That night in the Superdome, a young man named Steve Gleason became a legend. I know it was just a football game, but he blocked a punt deep in the territory of the Saints’ opponent, the Atlanta Falcons, for a touchdown. It was more than just a touchdown; it was a declaration that Louisiana was going to come back, that our spirit was not broken.

Today, Steve Gleason is battling ALS. The medical term for ALS is “amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.” We call it, as I said, Lou Gehrig’s disease. It is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that destroys nerve cells in the brain and in the spinal cord. Regrettably, there is no cure. Steve, however, is determined to thrive and help others who have ALS.

Within the past few weeks, we have also learned that another Louisianan has ALS—well-known Baton Rouge television news anchor Donna Britt. I will tell you, like Steve, Donna is showing true grit in the face of this horrible disease. She probably is probably curled into a fetal position and cry if we were told we had a progressive neurodegenerative disease that is almost always fatal—but not Steve and certainly not Ms. Donna Britt. Their valor and their courage is inspirational to me and, I think, to all Louisianans. As Donna herself put it, she is going to continue living as a living person and not as a dying person.

There is a famous line in a famous movie. The main character says: I have a choice here—it is time to get busy living or get busy dying. Donna has chosen to get busy living. She is going to keep going to work, and she is going to keep caring for her family. Donna is educating herself about ALS. She has ordered a state-of-the-art wheelchair with Bluetooth technology, and she is adding words to a voice bank for when she can no longer speak because of this horrible disease. Donna Britt—I am not surprised—is determined to meet every challenge.

Let me say it again. This is pure valor. It is the type of courage in the face of adversity that inspires us all. It is also Donna. I do not know how to put that any other way. That is Donna Britt. Donna is a person who plays the oboe and who has survived breast cancer. She donates books to school libraries, and for charity she sings outside the Walmart during the holidays. She delivers the news. She is a voice of comfort to all of those in her television media market, and she loves her family. She and her husband Mark Ballard have a son and a daughter. Her daughter Annie is a scientific journalist. I am proud that Steve and Donna are inspiring all of us with their valor and their courage.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tem. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:05 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. FLAKE).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kevin Allen Hassett, of Massachusetts, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 20 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. WARREN, spoke, and placed the campaign trail, Donald Trump promised working families that he would subject every proposal he saw in the White House to a simple test: “Does it create more jobs and better wages for Americans?” He claimed he wasn’t “going to let Wall Street get away with murder,” and he said he was going to “drain the swamp.”

Such great talk—and then he got to Washington. His first order of business was to put together a team of people who had spent decades as executives at big banks and large corporations—people who are determined to tilt the playing field in favor of Wall Street and against working families. You don’t need to look very far to see them. His top economic advisers—Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, and the senior counselor for economic initiatives, Dina Powell—together, those three have spent nearly a half a century combined working for Goldman Sachs. When it comes to our economy, this isn’t the Trump administration; this is the Goldman Sachs administration.
Now President Trump has lined up another top economic adviser, Kevin Hassett, who has been nominated to serve as the Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Mr. Hassett hasn't worked at Goldman Sachs. No, his stopgap perspective was that he spent his career advocating for policies that favor the wealthiest Americans.

The Council of Economic Advisers plays a critical role in developing this country's policies. It was created by Congress to, as Dr. Hassett has put it himself, give the President "unbiased, scientific, and objective advice" about the economic impact of the President's policies on the American economy. They have their fingers in all sorts of policies from trade to healthcare, to taxes, to financial regulation.

So what kind of an economy does Dr. Hassett want? He hasn't been shy in telling us. Dr. Hassett wants an economy that favors those on top, and if it leaves working families further behind, that is just too bad.

Start with taxes: Dr. Hassett gets really excited by cutting taxes on giant corporations. In fact, when he was working for Mitt Romney's Presidential campaign, he wrote that the new President's top priority—the No. 1 act, the first thing he should do when he stepped into the Oval Office—was cut the corporate tax rate. His argument was that if we cut taxes for big businesses, they will give those savings to their workers and be more productive, improving the economy for everyone. That is just plain old trickle-down economics: Give more money to corporations and the wealthy, and they will surely pass it along to everyone else. It hasn't worked so far, and it isn't going to work in the future. Well, it isn't going to work for anyone who isn't already wealthy. For them, that works great.

On trade, Dr. Hassett also sings the corporate tune. Dr. Hassett wants to double down on the same kind of trade agreements that enrich giant corporations and leave the workers eating dirt. Dr. Hassett embraces trade deals that make it harder for small businesses to compete, trade deals that weaken our consumers and building up risks that could blow up the financial system again.

There is no end to Dr. Hassett's bad judgment. He is wrong on the minimum wage, calling the proposal to raise the minimum wage to $3 an hour "wrongheaded" and saying that raising the minimum wage was a "dishonest approach" to alleviating poverty.

He is wrong on the environment. In a column, he advised the President to "frack away." And, most of all, he is wrong about the fundamental problems in our economy, calling income inequality a myth and saying it was "ludicrous" to believe that our society is "rigged or fundamentally unjust." He sounds as if he thinks we are all just going to have to get along just the way the economy works for those at the top and pretty much for no one else.

Dr. Hassett has consistently advocated for the interests of corporations over working people. If he is confirmed, I am confident that he will be one more voice in the White House speaking up for the rich and the powerful. No doubt he will fit right into the Goldman Sachs administration.

But Congress has a say in this. The last time there was another economic adviser who wanted to tilt the playing field even further in favor of corporate America, I opposed this nomination, and I hope other Senators will too.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I am concerned about the White House in which he will work. I am concerned that at that White House, it often looks like a retreat for Goldman Sachs executives. The President's tax proposal benefits the wealthiest Americans and the largest corporations. Its budget is based on GDP predictions that are unrealistic. In fact, when it came to the issue of Social Security solvency years ago, Dr. Hassett found a sustained 3-percent growth rate too optimistic for planning purposes. That is the same rate—that same rate is what the Trump budget uses to gloss over its true costs.

I plan to support Dr. Hassett. I think he is an honorable man. I disagree fundamentally on a lot of these issues. I again implore him, as I cast my vote in support of him—because the President is entitled to an adviser and to choose within a band, of course, of support from whom he wants—but I am hopeful, especially, that Dr. Hassett remembers what it was like when he grew up in Greenfield, MA. Greenfield is a town not much different from my hometown of Mansfield, OH, where bad tax policy and bad trade policy have dashed the dreams of far, far too many people in those communities, moved jobs overseas, and that he will be transparent about embracing ideas about economic growth that are not supported by empirical evidence. I hope my new colleagues will listen to him.

For too long, our trade policy and tax policy have encouraged a corporate business model that shuts down production in Hamilton or Middletown or Mansfield or Toledo or Youngstown, gets a tax break, cashes in a tax break, then moves production overseas and that are unrealistic. In fact, when it came to the issue of Social Security solvency years ago, Dr. Hassett found a sustained 3-percent growth rate too optimistic for planning purposes. That is the same rate—that same rate is what the Trump budget uses to gloss over its true costs.

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Kevin’s nomination has received support from an ideologically diverse group of notable economists, including past CEA Chairmen. Additionally, the Senate Banking Committee approved his nomination by voice vote.

I am pleased to support Kevin’s nomination today. Kevin has a loving wife, Kristie, and their sons, John and Jamie, all of this in new chapter of their lives.

Mr. BROWN. I suggest the absence of the quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

All time has expired.

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORKYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. Rubio).

Further, I present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NEILSEN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 16, as follows:

(Roll Call Vote No. 194 Ex.)

YEAS—81

Alexander Jack
Balanced Paul
Barrasso John
Bennet Mike
Blunt Roy
Boozman John
Brown Jon
Cantwell Maria
Capito Shelley
Cardin Ben
Carper Bob
Cassidy Ron
Cochran Thad
Collins Susan
Coons Chris
Corker Lamar
Cory Gardner Cory
Cotton Kay
Crapo Mike
Cruz Ted
Donnelly Sherrod
Enzi Jon
Ernst Jon

NAYS—16

Blumenthal Edward
Booker Cory
Cortez Masto Catherine

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose unauthorized, unneeded, and unconstitutional war.

I think that what we have today is basically unlimited war, anywhere, anytime, anywhere upon the globe.

My amendment would sunset in 6 months the 2001 and 2002 authorizations for use of force. What does that mean? This was legislation passed many years ago to go after the people who attacked us on 9/11. I supported that battle, but I think the mission is long since over.

I don’t think anyone with an ounce of intellectual honesty believes these authorizations from 16 years ago and 14 years ago—I don’t think anyone with intellectual honesty believes they authorized war in seven different countries.

Not only is it lives we are losing, the American soldiers, the brave young men and women who are sent to distant lands and asked to give their lives for their country without the Senate taking the time to authorize the war—

I think that is terribly unjust and should end.

There are some who argue that we don’t even need to vote at all. Some of the Presidents, Republican and Democratic, have said they have article II—this is the second article of the Constitution—they say that by the Constitution, they can do what they want, when they want, where they want, where they want—Congress never has to approve their authorization and never has to give authority to go to war. These advocates of perpetual war argue that these powers are implicit and that no one can stop a President who wants to go to war.

This is diametrically opposite of what our Founding Fathers thought. Madison in particular disagreed. Madison wrote that the executive branch is the one that must go to war; therefore, the Constitution, with studied care, vested that power in the Congress. Our Founding Fathers saw the