

Prepared Statement of Ranking Member Richard Burr
Executive Session to Consider Nominations at the Department of Labor,
Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and the National Mediation Board

October 26, 2021

Thank you for holding this markup in our committee hearing room.

While these nominees may serve necessary roles, I'm very disappointed that we haven't yet had a hearing or markup of a nominee to be the FDA Commissioner.

Janet Woodcock is doing a fantastic job as acting commissioner, and I hope she can stay as long as she wants, but the FDA needs a full time commissioner. This is a dereliction of duty by the Biden Administration and they need to do better.

I also want to talk about something else that should be considered in a legislative markup in this room: reconciliation instructions that this committee report out legislation to spend three quarters of a trillion dollars over the next decade.

You can understand why we're confused on this side of the aisle amid all of the secrecy and back room deals that are being cut.

When parents around the country rise up in concern about dangerous and shoddy educational curriculum being sneaked into the classroom, about hiding sexual assaults from the parents because it doesn't fit a convenient narrative, and

when the Attorney General threatens to use the Patriot Act against parents that are upset about these developments, I'd probably want to hide the ball on that agenda too.

But when liberal activists harass a democratic senator and follow her into the bathroom to demand she submit and become compliant, and when they paddle up the river to disturb a senator and his neighbors, we're told all is well and that's just part of the process.

So, when a conservative agenda is pursued you use a tool that calls them terrorists, but when a liberal agenda is pursued everything is on the table as part of the process.

I guess that explains why the traditional process, working things out in the light of day, in a hearing and a markup with colleagues across the aisle, is so much less appealing. It's easier to have a proxy harass someone in the bathroom than take a tough vote in a committee room.

But today I'm proud to remind my colleagues that on this committee, one with instructions to spend three quarters of a trillion dollars, we have some of the most able members of the Republican caucus who know how to get results.

Susan Collins has been in the senate for 25 years. She has an unending supply of bipartisan laws signed by Presidents and more bills on the way because

she knows how to get things done. Susan is a proven ally in securing funds for child care, community college and access to health care.

Rand Paul is a medical doctor and a noted contrarian. But his questioning and forceful advocacy for individual liberty often leads to improved legislation.

Dr. Cassidy is a proven leader in mental health, and education and for children with disabilities. He's demonstrated a willingness to think outside the box and pursue novel approaches to legislation.

Lisa Murkowski is a fierce defender of Alaska and reminds us all regularly that what works in the lower 48 doesn't translate well to her home state. She knows the costs of child care and college are sky-high and brings decades of experience in working across the aisle to find lasting solutions.

Mike Braun is a proven leader in health care, a businessman who actually lowered health care costs for his employees, he knows that solutions come not from government but from innovation and experience.

Mitt Romney brings a deep knowledge in private sector management and public service. As one of two former governors on this committee he knows how state budgets work. He knows the importance of getting things right the first time because cleaning up someone else's mistakes is tough and expensive.

Tim Scott is a fierce defender of parents and children and has fought his whole career to help families get access to high quality education. He knows that supporting parents control over their child's education is the moral thing to do.

Roger Marshall is another medical doctor who knows a fair bit about how to make health care more affordable, and he wants to fix the broken CDC, and improve our ability to respond to the next pandemic.

Tommy Tuberville is new to the senate, and elected politics. But Coach has deep knowledge of how to build a team, the power of education, and knows that working together only makes our country stronger.

Republicans waived our rules to allow two Kansans to serve on the same committee so Jerry Moran could serve with us. He knows the importance of looking out for rural communities and allowing flexibility in programs to best serve counties that are almost as big as some of our smaller states.

These are all serious legislators with broad expertise and knowledge. They bring different world views and perspectives that add tremendous value to bills before this Committee, if only given the chance.

Shutting them out of the process, denying them the opportunity to question witnesses and offer amendments doesn't bring our country together. It doesn't create a platform for long term solutions.

It further weakens the bonds that are so important to this institution.

I hope the course will be changed.

Maybe then we can get back to the reason the voters sent us here: to work together to improve their lives on ideas we all agree on not just growing government for the sake of growing government.

I'll remind my friends, as Ronald Reagan pointed out, that socialism only works in two places: heaven where they don't need it and hell where they already have it.

I yield back.