

1 BUSINESS MEETING ON THE NOMINATION OF
2 STEPHEN ALEXANDER VADEN, OF TENNESSEE,
3 TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

4 - - -

5 MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

6 United States Senate,
7 Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry,
8 Washington, D.C.

9 The Committee met at 5:57 p.m., in Room S-216, The
10 Capitol, Hon. Pat Roberts, Chairman of the Committee,
11 presiding.

12 Present: Senators Roberts, McConnell, Boozman, Ernst,
13 Grassley, Thune, Daines, Perdue, Strange, Stabenow, Brown,
14 Klobuchar, Gillibrand, Donnelly, Heitkamp, Casey, and Van
15 Hollen.

16 OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ROBERTS

17 Chairman Roberts. I now call this business meeting of
18 the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
19 to order.

20 The purpose of this meeting is to consider the
21 nomination of Stephen Vaden, the President's nominee to
22 serve as General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture.

23 Mr. Vaden is qualified to take on the role of the
24 USDA's General Counsel. I support his nomination.

25 Before I turn to the Ranking Member for remarks, I

1 understand that some members have statements to offer. I
2 recognize and appreciate the opinions of my colleagues. I
3 ask unanimous consent that all such statements be included
4 in the transcript of this business meeting.

5 Seeing no objection, it is so ordered.

6 [The prepared statements follow:]

7 / COMMITTEE INSERT

1 Chairman Roberts. I now recognize the distinguished
2 Ranking Member for any comments that she might have.

3 OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR STABENOW

4 Senator Stabenow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank
5 you, I know we have members that want to include statements
6 in the record.

7 I just want to indicate, I will be supporting moving
8 Mr. Vaden out of Committee. This was not an easy decision
9 for me, but I think most of all for me, with the 2018 Farm
10 Bill just around the corner, it is really critical the
11 Agriculture Committee continues to work in a bipartisan way
12 to fill leadership positions at the USDA.

13 I do want to say, though, that I am concerned about Mr.
14 Vaden's past legal work and there are certain personnel
15 practices at the USDA that we have had folks raise questions
16 about this weekend that I want to look more into as this
17 moves to the floor. So I will be seeking more information
18 about those issues, as we consider Mr. Vaden on the floor.

19 But I am supporting moving his nomination to the floor.

20 Chairman Roberts. Seeing a quorum has been reached,
21 the Clerk will call the roll.

22 The Clerk. Senator Stabenow.

23 Senator Stabenow. Aye.

24 The Clerk. Senator Leahy.

25 Senator Stabenow. No, by proxy.

1 The Clerk. Senator Brown.
2 Senator Brown. No.
3 The Clerk. Senator Klobuchar.
4 Senator Klobuchar. No.
5 The Clerk. Senator Bennet.
6 Senator Stabenow. No, by proxy.
7 The Clerk. Senator Gillibrand.
8 Senator Gillibrand. No.
9 The Clerk. Senator Donnelly.
10 Senator Donnelly. Yes.
11 The Clerk. Senator Heitkamp.
12 Senator Heitkamp. Yes.
13 The Clerk. Senator Casey.
14 Senator Casey. No.
15 The Clerk. Senator Van Hollen.
16 Senator Van Hollen. No.
17 The Clerk. Senator Cochran.
18 Chairman Roberts. Aye, by proxy.
19 The Clerk. Senator McConnell.
20 Senator McConnell. Aye.
21 The Clerk. Senator Boozman.
22 Senator Boozman. Yes.
23 The Clerk. Senator Hoeven.
24 Chairman Roberts. Aye, by proxy.
25 The Clerk. Senator Ernst.

1 Senator Ernst. Aye.

2 The Clerk. Senator Grassley.

3 Senator Grassley. Aye.

4 The Clerk. Senator Thune.

5 Senator Thune. Aye.

6 The Clerk. Senator Daines.

7 Senator Daines. Aye.

8 The Clerk. Senator Perdue.

9 Senator Perdue. Aye.

10 The Clerk. Senator Strange.

11 Senator Strange. Aye.

12 The Clerk. Chairman Roberts.

13 Chairman Roberts. Aye.

14 The Clerk. That is 14 ayes, 7 nos.

15 Chairman Roberts. On this vote, the ayes are 14 and

16 the nays are 7. The nomination is approved.

17 The business meeting is now adjourned. Thank you all

18 for coming.

19 [Whereupon, at 6:01 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]