

Senator Joe Manchin's Floor Remarks Before Representative Debra Haaland's Cloture Vote

Thursday, March 11, 2021

- Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today on the nomination of Representative Debra Haaland to be the Secretary of the Interior.
- Her nomination was carefully considered by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which I am privileged to chair.
- Her hearing went on for two days. Every member of the Committee questioned her. Most asked her two rounds of questions, and some asked three rounds.
- We then asked her 70 pages of questions for the record—nearly 300 questions, many with multiple subparts.
- The Committee questioned her closely on her beliefs, her opinions, the President's policies, and what she will do if confirmed.
- In the end, the Committee voted to report her nomination favorably, 11 to 9.

- I am proud to have voted to report her nomination, and I am proud to speak in favor of her confirmation today. •
While I may not personally agree with some of Congresswoman Haaland's past statements and policy positions, as Secretary, she will be carrying out President Biden's agenda—the agenda that the voters elected President Biden to pursue.
- At her hearing, she confirmed that she and the administration recognize that our country will remain dependent on fossil fuels for years to come, and a transition to a cleaner energy future must come through innovation, not elimination.
- She also affirmed her strong commitment to bipartisanship.
- She understands the need to work across the aisle to find the bipartisan solutions needed to address the diverse needs of our country and has demonstrated that she can do so effectively.

- I was also deeply impressed by the strong endorsement she received by Congressman Don Young, for whom I have the utmost respect.
- Don Young has been in Congress long enough to be able to read people and know their heart and soul.
- He took the time and trouble to appear before the Committee and testified to the productive working relationship he has had with Congresswoman Haaland and her willingness to work with him on important issues.
- That meant a lot to me and I hope it will also resonate with my colleagues.
- President Biden is in perhaps the most difficult position a modern-day President has been in, bringing us back from the brink after January 6th.
- That day changed me, and I feel strongly that with the deep divisions running through our country and the halls of Congress today, we have to have people who have demonstrated they have the temperament and the willingness to reach across the aisle.

- Congresswoman Haaland has demonstrated that she does and will.
- As the President works to bind together a nation split by deep political, racial, social, and economic divisions, he is also trying to assemble a Cabinet that reflects the rich diversity of our nation—one that looks like America.
- 230 years after Washington called his first Cabinet meeting, it is long past time to give a Native American woman a seat at the Cabinet table.
- For these reasons, I support Deb Haaland’s nomination and will vote to support her and I look forward to working with her to protect our public lands and ensure the responsible use of all our natural resources in a bipartisan manner.
- I strongly support her nomination and urge all my colleagues to vote to invoke cloture today and to confirm her nomination next week.