

Betsy DeVos' Nomination Clears Next-to-Last Hurdle

Friday is usually reserved as a travel day for members of Congress who want to go back to their districts for the weekend and is rarely a day for business; likewise, voting at 6:56 a.m. on any business at all almost never happens, either.

If you ever wanted proof that the days of “business as usual” are coming to an end, the cloture vote Friday morning for Secretary of Education-designate Betsy DeVos would be it. Cloture is the parliamentary term for ending debate; previously, it required 60 votes in the Senate to invoke cloture, but former Sen. Harry Reid, during his stint as majority leader, removed that requirement to advance President Barack Obama’s agenda.

Now, it’s helping to put the first evangelical in charge of the nation’s education system. The cloture vote passed, 52-48, with the help of Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who have pledged to vote against DeVos in the full confirmation vote.

Her confirmation is still anything but a sure bet, although the cloture vote didn’t expose any new cracks in the GOP ranks. The confirmation vote will come Monday, and as it stands as of this writing, the vote will be a 50-50 tie, which will have to be broken by Vice President Mike Pence.

In the process, it will also mean that Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions’ confirmation will have to wait until DeVos is confirmed. As a Republican senator, his vote is needed to ensure she gets through. {eo}