

Martinez, who are ready to contribute their talents to getting our economy back on track, support will build for passing the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform. President Obama has given temporary protection to DREAMers. Now let's pass the law. Let's do the right thing for people just like Carlos all over the United States.

Mr. President, I have listened carefully to some of the statements made after the elections by those on the other side of the aisle, many of whom have opposed the DREAM Act from the start, and I have been heartened and encouraged that so many are now speaking out in favorable terms about doing something finally for young people like Carlos. Let's get this done. This used to be a very bipartisan measure, but filibusters have stopped it year after year. We can pass it, and we should pass it. In 2007, the first time the DREAM Act came to a vote on the floor of the Senate, 52 Senators—a bipartisan majority—voted for it, but still the Republican filibuster stopped us. We didn't get the 60 votes we needed. Three years later, in December of 2010, the DREAM Act was again considered on the floor of the Senate. The gallery was filled with DREAMers in their caps and gowns. It was an inspiring sight to look up and see them in those seats. That day 55 Senators voted for the DREAM Act. It was a majority but not enough; we needed 60 to overcome another Republican filibuster. The President and the vast majority of Democrats continue to support the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform.

Let me add that the DREAM Act is very important to me, but equally if not more important is comprehensive immigration reform to help not only Carlos but many like him—their parents and members of their family—who may not qualify under the DREAM Act but deserve a chance as well.

I believe most of my Republican colleagues understand that immigration is good for America. Immigration is America. We are all immigrants but for the Native Americans who welcomed to the shores the occupants of the Mayflower. Former President George W. Bush led the attempt to reform legislation, and he said, "Family values don't stop at the Rio Grande." I disagree with George W. Bush on many things, but on the issue of immigration, he was genuine and committed, and I agree with what he said. I have been heartened by comments from Speaker BOEHNER and others in the last week. I believe Democrats and Republicans of good will can come together across the aisle, roll up our sleeves, and do something good for America and fix our broken immigration system so that it is true to our American values as a nation of immigrants.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4114 and that the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4114) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2012, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 4114) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SPORTSMEN'S ACT OF 2012— MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES
SERGEANT JASON M. SWINDLE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, at a time when we are seeing reports of violence in areas all around the world, we must never forget that the men and women of the U.S. military are out there fighting on our behalf day in and day out so we can live in a safe environment here at home. Our servicemembers are well aware of the risks they face as they serve this Nation, and it is our duty to do all we can to honor those who fight and pay the ultimate price for our freedoms.

Today I am here to pay my respects to SGT Jason M. Swindle, an Arkansan who, at 24 years of age, laid down his life for our country while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Sergeant Swindle attended Cabot High School in Cabot, AR, and joined the Army in 2005. He was assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, GA. He was serving his third combat deployment. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

His family and friends describe him as being a fun-loving guy who was very patriotic and very proud of the work he was doing in the Army.

In addition to being a soldier, Sergeant Swindle was also a husband and a father. He leaves behind his wife

Chelsey, who is currently expecting their second child, and a 1-year-old son, Paxton.

Mr. President, it is people such as Jason Swindle who are the true American heroes. I ask my colleagues to keep his wife, children, and the rest of his family in their thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time. I humbly offer my sincerest gratitude to Jason for his selfless sacrifice in the service and defense of this great Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, first I would like to add my condolences and sympathy to the family in honor of Sergeant Swindle. I appreciate what the Senator from Arkansas had to say, and I join all my colleagues in recognizing the sacrifice of this soldier and many others who have made such a tremendous sacrifice and have created opportunities for us as Americans.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. President, we have just come through a divisive and expensive campaign. Hopefully that divisiveness and that expense is a thing of the past, and I come to the floor today—during Global Entrepreneurship Week—to ask my colleagues to now work together to pursue policies that are guaranteed to improve our economy. There have been too many opportunities in the past year to pursue issues and policies that divide us. Now we must come together around something that can unite us—entrepreneurship, innovation, and startup businesses.

The story of America is really a story of entrepreneurs. Our history is filled with examples of determined individuals who risked their livelihoods to pursue ideas they believed could solve problems and improve the quality of life of people around the world. These entrepreneurs built the foundation of the American economy from its earliest days, pushing forward innovative solutions to some of our most complex problems.

They pursued success, and that success built the American economy and the jobs it provides.

Entrepreneurs have continued to be the driving force in the U.S. economic growth and expansion in recent times as well. Data from the Kauffman Foundation shows that between 1980 and 2005, companies less than 5 years old accounted for nearly all new jobs created in the United States. Since 1977—the first year data was collected—new businesses have created an average of 3 million jobs each year.

At a time when millions of Americans remain out of work and our country is mired in debt, we need to do more to support the entrepreneurs who create American jobs and hold the promise of our growing economy.

Started in 2008 by the Kauffman Foundation, Global Entrepreneurship Week is a worldwide celebration of entrepreneurs and like-minded individuals. Since its founding, Global Entrepreneurship Week has grown to include

129 countries with some 35,000 activities that engage millions of people.

In the United States, more than 1,300 partners are planning events in all 50 States this week. These events allow participants to interact with entrepreneurs and share their passion for innovation and creativity. In my home State of Kansas, 35 events are taking place this week. Last Friday, November 9, I participated in one of these events at the University of Kansas.

To kick off this week, the University of Kansas Schools of Business, Engineering, and Journalism organized a half-day event to expose students to entrepreneurship as a career path, introduce students to startup companies in the region, and to learn the role of government in enabling entrepreneurship, innovation, and company creation, as well as the importance of our free market economy.

While most of us think first of Silicon Valley as a hotbed of entrepreneurship in our country, entrepreneurs are found everywhere. In Kansas, we have a rich tradition of entrepreneurship. It is a place where innovators have felt free to pursue their ideas, start businesses, and pursue dreams. This tradition includes many stories of risk and reward—of entrepreneurs whose businesses succeeded when others were betting against them.

Kansas's great entrepreneurs include Cleyson Brown, who founded Brown Telephone Company—now the Sprint Corporation—in the town of Abilene, KS; Walter Chrysler, of Chrysler Corporation, who began his career as a machinist in Ellis, KS; Clyde Cessna, who left the booming automobile industry to explore the exciting field of aviation. He founded Cessna Aircraft Corporation in Wichita in 1927; and, Dan and Frank Carney, who borrowed \$600 from their mother to open their first Pizza Hut in Wichita in 1958.

With persistence and hard work, these entrepreneurs and their businesses created thousands of jobs and grew into some of the world's most successful companies. Now a new generation of Kansas entrepreneurs is continuing that tradition.

In Atwood, KS, SureFire Ag Systems has built products that specialize in the control and application of fertilizer, seed, and chemicals. These products have been delivered to customers in 42 of our States and internationally as well.

In Leewood, KS, a company called Instin reimagined how students and teachers managed homework assignments by using mobile apps. Their app, myHomework, has been downloaded over 100,000 times in the Google Play Store alone.

In Olathe, KS, Lantern Software is connecting homegrown businesses to new markets through high-value, real-time, location-based deals delivered to mobile devices.

In today's high-tech economy, the future of Internet-based applications such as these is limitless, which is why

Kansas entrepreneurs are excited about Google's decision to make Kansas home to a new fiber project.

Google Fiber is equipping Kansas entrepreneurs for innovation that few places in the United States have. With Google Fiber, Kansans now have an opportunity to innovate on Google's ultra high-speed network, which is 100 times faster than typical high-speed Internet.

Kansas City, which has set the goal of becoming America's Most Entrepreneurial City, is building what they call the Digital Sandbox, in partnership with many Kansas businesses. The goal of the Digital Sandbox is to significantly accelerate the development of information technology startups in Kansas City, where IT is already a major economic engine.

These developments are empowering the next generation of Kansas entrepreneurs with new tools to innovate and build successful businesses.

Today's entrepreneurs may use different technology to develop products and reach potential markets than their predecessors, but the work ethic and passion to do something new remains the same.

This week, I encourage my colleagues to explore the impact of entrepreneurs in their communities and to engage with startup companies working to make the lives of Americans better.

I met with entrepreneurs in Kansas and across the country during the last 18 months. The passion and creativity of these entrepreneurs has encouraged me. One refreshing observation is that these entrepreneurs, while competitive, want to see their fellow entrepreneurs succeed. They are also building new tools that empower others to make their businesses better.

But in conversation after conversation, I have also learned there are common challenges these entrepreneurs face—some of which can be solved by Congress if we follow the entrepreneur's example of seizing an opportunity, rolling up our sleeves, and working together.

Entrepreneurs in America are finding it increasingly difficult to start a business and to grow that business. Consider the following:

In 2010, there were approximately 394,000 new businesses started in the United States. This, unfortunately, is the lowest number of new businesses since 1977. While these new businesses created more than 2.3 million jobs, that number is well below the historical average and represents the third fewest number of jobs created by new businesses in more than 30 years. At the same time, at least seven other countries during this Congress have approved legislation to welcome and better support entrepreneurs while America has done nothing.

To help more entrepreneurs start a business and to help those new businesses grow more quickly, I introduced Startup Act 2.0 with my colleagues Senator WARNER, Senator COONS, and Senator RUBIO. Startup Act 2.0 address-

es critical needs facing entrepreneurs today. The legislation provides new opportunities for highly educated and entrepreneurial immigrants to stay in the United States where their talent can fuel economic growth and create jobs for Americans. By making new visas available for foreign students who graduate with an advanced degree in a STEM field from an American university, Startup Act 2.0 will provide a much needed way for fast-growing startups and businesses in America to get the talent they need to continue to grow and to create jobs. This is a critical and growing challenge.

The Partnership for a New American Economy projects that the United States will face a shortfall of more than 223,000 workers with advanced degrees in STEM areas by 2018. If the current trend holds, there will only be 550,000 American workers with the needed skills—far short of the projected demand. Without these workers, American businesses will be at a distinct disadvantage and unable to grow in our country.

Startup Act 2.0 also makes changes to the Tax Code that will help startups grow and create jobs. By exempting capital gains taxes on investments held in startups for 5 years or more, the bill would unlock \$7.5 billion in new investment in startup. The legislation will also help universities bring good ideas to market by redirecting current grant dollars to support innovative university initiatives to accelerate commercialization.

Finally, Startup Act 2.0 will make changes to the Federal regulatory process so the costs of new regulations do not outweigh the benefits and will encourage State and local policies that make starting businesses easier in their States.

As our economy continues to struggle, Congress is left with two options: We can remain in gridlock, maintain the status quo, continue to leave Americans under- and unemployed, and spend away our future or we can work together to support the American entrepreneur and businessperson.

This week, during Global Entrepreneurship Week, I urge my colleagues to join in the latter—in coming together behind commonsense legislation such as the Startup Act 2.0 to unleash the power of entrepreneurship in America. The result will be more new businesses, more new jobs, innovation that allows the United States to aggressively compete in a global economy, and the empowerment of every American to pursue the American dream.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPERSTORM SANDY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, we have come back here from a few turbulent weeks, and not the least of which is the continuation of President Obama with his work and his responsibilities. For most of us, I would say, that was a very positive thing. But something else happened during these very difficult weeks, and that was in my home State of New Jersey and the east coast. We were hit by storms never, never before seen in our State and maybe never ever to be seen in our country in terms of the volume of destruction.

My home State of New Jersey is known for a number of things: being the home of innovators, such as Thomas Edison; the place where Alexander Hamilton—at my birthplace, Paterson, NJ—helped start the industrial revolution; and it is also known as a State with a beautiful seashore, recreation areas. Unfortunately, the wrath of Superstorm Sandy 2 weeks ago destroyed so much of our shore. Its storm surge wrecked boats, homes, and even took trains—whole trains—off the tracks. Its winds reached 89 miles an hour, uprooting trees across our State, destroying everything in its path, and leaving millions—2½ million—without electricity and staying in the dark.

The force of this storm is so hard to describe in words, so I point out a picture here of one of our beachside communities, showing what was left of a house. The destruction was so total. And it was not just the possessions that were lost, it was the memorabilia, it was the pictures, it was the precious moments that were identified with trinkets or mementos. It was a terrible period. I am here to say that we are going to stand with those who have lost so much, and we are going to help them recover and rebuild their lives.

Superstorm Sandy was one of the most powerful storms in American history, and it was the largest Atlantic hurricane on record, with wild winds that stretched more than 1,100 miles. We are aware of at least 119 Americans who lost their lives as a result of this storm, including 33 in my home State of New Jersey.

The human toll of this storm defies description. Roughly 8 million homes lost power during this storm, including more than 2½ million in my home State. Food rotted in refrigerators, water treatment plants closed down, and when temperatures dropped, thousands were left cold and hungry and forced into hotels and temporary shelters. Many families slept in their cars to get out of the bad weather. They had no choice. When people finally returned home, many found nothing there. Imagine seeing the home you worked for your whole life—the place you raised your children and created so many memories—gone.

If we look at this picture, we see a depiction of despair, as it was portrayed by this person who obviously stood in front of a destroyed home—

nothing but timbers and concrete, everything else gone.

We saw devastation across our State, not just at the seashore. I went to Hoboken—one of our most attractive communities in northern New Jersey—in the days after the storm. Half of that city was underwater, and the National Guard had to rescue those who were trapped in their homes without heat or supplies.

We also saw train stations that were flooded and inoperable. Water levels reached more than 6 feet. Can you imagine a room that seated people waiting for their trains 6 feet high in water?

New Jerseyans depend on our public transportation and rail systems. Commuters in our State take nearly 1 million trips per day, including going back and forth to New York and into Pennsylvania. And the entire country depends on the goods that come into our ports and go out by rail.

Our transportation system was torn apart. Tunnels were flooded, critical equipment was ruined, and rail lines were warped or buried by debris.

Here in this picture we see an example of what took place. This is of a rail line, New Jersey Transit.

Each one of our 21 counties in New Jersey was declared a major disaster, but the seashore communities were hit especially hard. The boardwalk is the defining image of the New Jersey shore. Many of us remember walking on that boardwalk in wonderment of the attractions. The boardwalk has been a constant in the lives of those who live there or visit the shore. But for communities such as Belmar, Seaside Heights, Atlantic City, and others, much of that boardwalk no longer exists—just the pillars where the boardwalk used to be, as we see it shown here in this picture. It was a magnificent boardwalk that had people in wagons that were pushed along, and you would view the sea and the attractions on the other side. It was painful to see the destruction of the part of the boardwalk in Atlantic City firsthand that day.

I joined President Obama in his visit to the area. For many people in my State, the boardwalk is not just a source of pride, it is a source of critical income to our State. In 2008, tourism brought in \$38 billion and supported more than 300,000 jobs in the State of New Jersey. Families came from all over the country to walk the boardwalk in Atlantic City or take a fishing boat out of one of our ports, Port Pleasant or one of the others, or ride the roller coaster at a pier in Seaside Heights.

This is what Sandy did to that roller coaster. Look. This is almost impossible to conceive that this roller coaster sits in the water. It is a terrible end to a lot of thoughts and pleasant memories. People in New Jersey have lost their homes, their belongings, and their jobs. Much of that public infrastructure has also been destroyed. But

we are tough people in New Jersey. We will fight our way back from this storm.

I saw that spirit in emergency shelters in our State. Families whose lives were upended by the storm were welcomed into a safe, warm place by strangers, given a hot meal, and had camaraderie during these very difficult moments. Nurses and EMTs evacuated babies from hospitals. They were carrying these children out so they would not be overwhelmed by flooding. Firefighters went from house to house saving lives as the water rose.

Gas station owners who had lost power pumped gasoline by hand so people could run their generators and keep their families warm. At one point, the lines were hours long waiting to get gas. One of the people from my office got up at 4:30 in the morning to go to a gas station and wound up 4 hours later before he could get gas. It was a terrible period.

We saw the worst of Mother Nature in this storm, but we also saw the best of the American people. One thing was established, that there is a place in government, in our country, for government service when it is needed. We cannot simply say: We will turn it over to the private sector and let them take care of what FEMA does. FEMA was critical in salvaging whatever we could have saved there. There is no doubt in my mind that there is an understanding now that did not exist before. We saw the fiber and the character of our people in these terrible moments. It was wonderful. This is a town not on the seashore. This is one of the communities in New Jersey where a lot of people commute to or work in the various industries around. This is where they had to go in order to save themselves from a worse situation than that which already existed.

People reached out to save people. It was under the supervision of FEMA and our emergency facility organizations. We have a lot of important businesses to address before the end of this Congress. But our agenda must include helping to rebuild and restore the communities destroyed by Sandy. We are going to need a lot of money, a lot of money. We cannot turn our backs on them. We cannot turn our backs. I know the Presiding Officer had similar situations in his State of Delaware. The destruction was all over. We had no ability to stop what was going on. We face serious fiscal challenges in our country, but nothing is more important than keeping our communities, our families, and our economy safe. We in New Jersey have been there for our fellow Americans from other States who suffered disasters. I am reminded that New Jersey was the first State to sign the Bill of Rights. It started the road to freedom that exists in New Jersey. Now we ask all Americans to join us in rebuilding and recovering from this terrible storm. I am sure it will get even the most disbelieving people in our community to see that it might

have been a good idea to fund FEMA and the other agencies that do so much.

I went to Alaska when the Exxon Valdez was floundering and saw our people, brave people, on islands stretched around Alaska, our people who were on the shore wiping off the ducks and the seals and all that. It says: America is not an accounting firm. America is a democracy with a heart and a soul. That is what we have to keep in mind as we deliberate what we have in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, before the Senator from New Jersey leaves the floor, I just wish to say this Senator's heart goes out to the Senator and his people. We take hurricanes more as a part of our lifestyle in Florida. But when we combine a hurricane in the Northeast at this time of year, during the full Moon, at high tide, in one of the most densely populated coastal areas of the United States, then we definitely have a problem.

This Senator wants to help Senator LAUTENBERG with what is going to be necessary for the additional funding of FEMA and so forth. I want the Senator to think about an idea that we implemented in Florida, to create, in effect, a reinsurance fund against this kind of catastrophe. We call it the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund.

This was done when I was the elected insurance commissioner—prior to me, and then I had to implement it in the aftermath of the monster hurricane in the 1990s, Hurricane Andrew. I have talked to our colleagues in the Senate about a national catastrophic fund. People in other parts of the country do not think hurricanes are their problem. But what they do not realize is that their taxpayers are picking up the load. Whereas, if we reinsured against this kind of tragedy in a catastrophic fund that would be paid in over time, a little bit from each of the policyholders, then there would not be—there would be this fund that would become a cushion for such a disaster that the Northeastern United States is experiencing at this time and of which we have so often experienced on the gulf coast and the Atlantic coast in the Southeastern United States.

I just wanted to throw that idea out there for the Senator as he speaks so movingly and so eloquently about the suffering of his people. One can just imagine what are going to be the expenses of all the infrastructure that is going to have to be replaced.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. If I may respond, I wish to say the Senator from Florida presents a very good idea because we now know that to deal with catastrophes which are inevitable, we live in nature. We live in places where volcanoes can destroy an economy, earthquakes. We had the Katrina catastrophe in the Southern States. It is

about time, would the Senator agree with me, that we looked at what it is that is creating the frequency and the ferocity of those storms. They are accelerated almost in geometric terms.

This is a good reminder, hey, get off the stick and on the job. I commend the Senator from Florida for his splendid victory. We knew the Senator was coming home, we just wanted to make sure he had a nice reception.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Thanks to the Senator for his big heart, his big heart toward his people.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wish to make a few comments before the chairman of the Judiciary Committee addresses the Senate. I am very happy he is here because he knows about what I am going to talk about, which were the attempts at suppressing the vote in the State of Florida, done a year and a half ago by the State legislature and the Governor. They did a number of things to try to suppress the vote.

The first thing they did was to make it much more difficult to register people to vote. The League of Women Voters has been registering people for 72 years in Florida. They stopped because of the onerous provisions of up to a \$1,000 fine that would be upon their members if they did not turn it in within 48 hours. That was thrown out in court as unconstitutional. But it was a year and a half later, with all those registrations not having been done.

But then what they did, they constricted the number of early voting places, constricted the number of early voting days, constricted the number of early voting hours. What do you think was the result? It is what we have seen on TV—the long lines.

I wish to read a passage from the Miami Herald of November 6:

When the polls officially closed at 7 p.m., hundreds of people were still waiting to cast ballots in precincts around South Florida in an election that was marked by long lines and the occasional snafu. Even after the networks called the race for President Obama, people in South Florida remained in line. From Hialeah to Country Walk and to Brickell, people waited as long as 7 hours to vote. In Broward County, voting at some precincts came to a halt when the ballots ran out.

This is the result of the voter suppression by lessening the number of early voting days. When this Senator asked the Governor, because of the long lines during early voting, to extend early voting on the Sunday before the Tuesday election, since it shut off on Saturday, there were long lines then in early voting, the Governor would not do it. We see the result. The Miami Herald continues:

At the South Kendall Community Church, 1,000 people were in line at closing time, and at least 200 still remained three hours later.

That is a determination to vote, and the people do not want their right to cast their ballot taken away. Yet this was the result of voter suppression

laws not only in my State but in other States as well. I wish to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee because he and his subcommittee, headed by Senator DURBIN, came to Tampa to take testimony.

A professor from the University of Florida gave his study and pointed out who used—in the experience of Florida for a decade, who used the Sunday early voting? It was two demographic groups, African Americans and Hispanics. They cut out the Sunday of early voting before the Tuesday election.

Yet with the constricted times and with others being forced to shoehorn in between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on election day, we see the result. As the Miami Herald said, some people waited 7 hours to vote. They were determined that the Governor and the legislature of Florida were not going to take away their right to cast that ballot. And we see again, we had again a close Presidential election in Florida. The President won by 74,000 votes. What if a number of people—such as the lady who waited and waited and she had babysitter problems and after 3 hours she left—what if that had happened to a lot of people?

Well, maybe that was the design of some people in constricting the laws in an America of 2012. We went through this in the civil rights era. The right to vote—as the Senator, our chairman, can tell us, has been said over and over by the courts—it is absolutely essential in a democracy that we have the right to cast our ballot. That is what Dr. King said as well.

Mr. LEAHY. Does the distinguished Senator yield?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Of course I will.

Mr. LEAHY. I join my colleagues in welcoming him back to this body, in which he has served with distinction from his very first day here as he did in the other body.

It tears my heart apart to hear of this kind of suppression. In Vermont, we have pride in our ability to vote. We have Town Meeting Day. I think we had 65 or 70 percent turnout this time. We expect people to be able to vote.

The distinguished Senator has referred to the civil rights era. Do we, in this great country—a signal of democracy to so much of the world—want to go back there? I am sure the distinguished Senator has had, as I have had, the honor of being an observer of elections in other countries where, finally, a country that has overcome a dictatorship or overcome a civil war, they finally can vote, and the people are lining up and saying: Thank God we have a chance to vote and it is open for the first time. They would say: You Americans would never have to experience this. I don't want to go to these countries that we ask to come into the fold of democracy and ask them to have free and open voting and have them—those that do not want free and open voting—say: What about what you have done in your country?

This is not a Democratic or Republican issue. This is an American issue. We fought a revolution. We fought world wars. We worked to make this country of over 300 million people great because everybody's voice is supposed to be heard. I think it is shameful and I think it is illegal. Those who try to stop it, they should be exposed. They should be punished. I don't care if the person voting is a Republican or Democrat or Independent. They should have the right to vote. If we lose that right, we lose our soul as Americans. I thank the distinguished Senator for bringing this up.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Amen to those comments. I would conclude by saying we ought to be making it easier to vote, not harder to vote. Then, when we get down to conducting an election, we definitely need to do something about the Citizens United Supreme Court 5-to-4 decision, and we can, statutorily. We almost did, lacking one vote breaking the filibuster 3 years ago because it would require the disclosure of those corporations giving the money. If the public knew who was giving the money, then they would be very reluctant. Whereas under the guise, the mask of secrecy, they can give money and try to influence the outcome of an election—as they tried this year.

It has gone out of control, and I know the chairman is going to be at the point of the spear on trying to pass the DISCLOSE Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I think the distinguished senior Senator from Florida has done the Senate and the country a service in what he has said.

We each represent our own States. We have matters of interest in our States, but also so many times they are national interests. During this past recess, I was in just about every part of Vermont. I was stopped time and time again by Vermont farmers who asked me why Congress left town without passing a farm bill. They knew we had passed it in the Senate, but why hadn't we finished?

Similar to my fellow Vermonters, I have been frustrated by the refusal of the leadership of the House of Representatives to consider the legislation sent to them by the Senate to extend the farm bill. In fact, they blocked consideration of a bipartisan farm bill, one that mirrors the legislation passed in their own body by the House Agriculture Committee.

I have been here nearly 38 years. I have served on the Senate Agriculture Committee all that time. I have never seen a case where the House Agriculture Committee—whether it is led by Democrats or by Republicans—passed a bipartisan farm bill only to see it blocked from a final vote by its own leadership.

The Senate has done its work, but as a result of the House's inaction, for the

first time that anybody can remember in either body, the farm bill has expired. This is dangerous for dairy farmers in Vermont and for farmers across the country.

This delay threatens our rural communities. We all have rural communities in our States. The farmers not only need but also deserve the certainty that a 5-year farm bill provides. We pass farm bills in 5-year segments so that farmers, who have to plan way in the future, know how to plan. We can't say: Wait a minute, put your farming on hold while we try to get our act together. Don't milk those cows for a few months while we try to figure out what we are going to do. Don't plant or don't harvest that crop while we are trying to figure out what we are going to do.

It doesn't work that way. The farmers already confront enough uncertainty running their businesses. When we let farm programs expire without enacting a new farm bill, it needlessly compounds that uncertainty and it is irresponsible. Decisions must be made today to determine what is going to be planted next spring. But now they have to make that decision with uncertainty about what may be in the farm bill.

The essential nutrition programs in the farm bill provide healthy food for vulnerable populations, such as children and pregnant and nursing women. Vermonters, like tens of millions of people across the country, depend upon these programs where they are struggling to put enough food on their table during these very tough economic times.

Some of these program benefits will continue. But it is such a tenuous position. How does a State plan? How does a community plan? We need the House leadership to allow the farm bill to proceed so we can move this country forward, giving farmers the certainty and vulnerable citizens the security they deserve.

The Senate farm bill is a good, bipartisan bill. But more than that, it is a deficit reduction bill. It has \$23 billion in cost savings as well as crucial policy reforms for dairy farmers facing the challenges of the 21st century. It also maintains a safety net for millions of hungry Americans.

The wealthiest, most powerful Nation on Earth has people going hungry. In a nation that spends billions of dollars on fad diet programs or billions of dollars to dispose of waste food, we should not have hungry people. Not in this country.

I also point out the farm bill has always been bipartisan. I remember the hard work, mutual respect, and spirit of cooperation that Senator DICK LUGAR and I shared. We worked together as Agriculture Committee chairman and ranking member. We put American farmers and families first and politics last. My good friend from Indiana and I were able to accomplish amazing things together. Obviously, we had some differences of opinion as

Members of different regions and different parties do. But we knew we had to work together. We did, and America benefited from that. Certainly our farmers did too.

The need to work together is as true today as it was then. It is going to take real leadership in the House and Senate to pass a farm bill. We have seen that leadership and bipartisanship in the Senate. Having served as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee for 8 years, I can say without any doubt that Chairwoman DEBBIE STABENOW has been one of the finest chairs we have had of that committee. I have watched how hard she has worked and how hard Ranking Member PAT ROBERTS has worked. He brought his tremendous experience and knowledge through his time as chairman of the House agriculture Committee. In fact, in the debate over the Senate farm bill—and I commend Senator STABENOW on this—seated around that table we had several people who had previously been chairman or ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee or the House Agriculture Committee, both Republicans and Democrats. In fact, even one Senator who had been Secretary of Agriculture. We all said: We can play games, we can talk, we can posture, we can sloganeer or we can sit down like grownups and put together a real farm bill.

It took a nanosecond to decide we can be grownups and put together a real farm bill. Republicans and Democrats sat down. We wrote a deficit-reducing, meaningful farm bill, and it passed in a Senate which is often deadlocked. It passed 64-35. It passed overwhelmingly—from all parts of the country and across the political spectrum.

Senator JOHANNIS, former Secretary of Agriculture during the Bush administration, sat around that table and helped us write it. That shows how bipartisan the approach to reauthorizing the farm bill was in the Senate. We did not let political labels get in the way of what was best for the country.

The elections are over. We know who has won or lost. We hope our friends in the other body, in the House of Representatives, will set aside their obstructionism and pass this bill. I am pleased by the fact that our State's Congressman, PETER WELCH, is a member of that committee. He has been urging both Republicans and Democrats to pass the bill, and I agree with him because it is a bill that directly affects every farm family's budget. It helps farmers decide which crops to plant, where to sell, how much to borrow. It allows farmers to make their decisions—which are hard enough to make without this delay—with some kind of certainty.

The farm bill affects Vermonters and Americans across the country where there is food insecurity and uncertainty in these difficult times. One of the things people lose sight of is that the farm bill is also a disaster relief

bill. We need the new farm bill to help farmers in the Garden State and across the entire Nation to recover from the nonstop floods of 2012. We need it to help those across the Nation who are stuck on the other side of the weather spectrum, with drought.

That is all in this bill. Because we know, as much as we wish there would never be floods, as much as we wish there would never be droughts, they occur. We have written that into this bill. Why in heaven's name would anybody, from any part of the country—and we are all vulnerable at one time or another—want to hold it up?

The fact is things are going to get worse very quickly if we begin the new year without a farm bill. Outdated parity price systems will multiply the price of milk on store shelves. It will destroy household pocketbooks and the milk market nationally.

Let me reiterate that. Certainly in my State this is very important. If we don't pass the bill, we will have outdated parity price systems that will multiply the price of milk on the store shelves and will destroy household pocketbooks and the milk market nationally. Ask anybody who lives paycheck to paycheck what that would be like.

So I urge the leadership in the House of Representatives to allow open debate on the Senate-passed farm bill. They don't have to have a bill that is word for word what we passed here in the Senate, but I point out that the Senate bill saves billions of dollars, it does have a dairy program, and it does speak to disaster, drought, and flood relief. We need it now. Let us stand with our dairy farmers in Vermont, our eggplant growers in New Jersey, and our hungry families across the country. Let's set the political gamesmanship aside, help America's farmers, families, and rural communities that all rely on the farm bill. The people in these communities, the farmers in these communities, do not care whether there is a Democrat or Republican's name on the bill. All they know is they want a good farm bill that allows them to stay in farming.

Farming is hard enough as it is. None of us has to do the farming. We ought to stand up and help—that we can do.

Mr. LEAHY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE).

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to urge support on the motion to proceed to my bipartisan Sportsmen's Act. Outdoor traditions are a deep and important part of our heritage in Montana and across our Nation.

Two years ago, when I became chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Cau-

cus, I made it my goal to do something significant, something historic, something responsible that will help this country's hunters and anglers.

Mr. President, this week we have that opportunity. This Sportsmen's Act is the biggest package of sportsmen's bills in a generation. It combines nearly 20 different bills, all important to those who know we must never take our outdoors for granted.

These bills increase access for recreational hunting and fishing. They support land and species conservation, and they protect our hunting and fishing rights. Most importantly, they take ideas from both sides of the political aisle. This bill isn't about Democrats and it isn't about Republicans or Independents. This bill is about Americans and the great outdoors we all share as a nation. This bipartisan bill is supported by nearly 50 different conservation wildlife groups ranging from the Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, to the NRA. It earned their endorsement because it includes responsible provisions that are important to sportsmen and women across America.

In my role as the chairman of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, outdoorsmen and women constantly tell me about the importance of access to public lands. What good does it do to protect land for hunting, fishing, and hiking if folks are unable to get to it? Right now there are some 35 million acres of public land that sportsmen can't access. That is why this bill requires 1.5 percent of annual funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund that is set aside to increase public access to public lands, ensuring sportsmen access to some of the best places to hunt and fish in the country.

Right now, the Congress delegates all power to determine land and water conservation priorities to the executive branch. We can add or subtract money from the President's budget request, but Congress cannot determine how that money gets spent. This provision ensures that this administration and the next one must authorize, must prioritize access to public lands.

My bill also reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. This voluntary initiative provides matching grants to landowners who set aside critical habitat for migratory birds such as ducks. Over the past 20 years, volunteers across America have completed more than 2,000 conservation projects. They protected more than 26 million acres of habitat under this successful initiative. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act is a smart investment in both our lands and our wildlife, and it needs to be reauthorized.

This widely supported bill also reauthorizes the Secretary of the Interior to reevaluate the price of duck stamps to keep up with inflation. Revenue from duck stamps has been used to purchase and release more than 6 million acres of wetlands, preserving a viable

waterfowl population. It funds new shooting ranges while encouraging Federal land agencies to cooperate with State and local authorities to maintain existing ranges. This is a responsible bill. It takes into account the needs of the entire sportsmen's community.

Why is this important? It is important because hunting and fishing and hiking is a way of life in places such as Montana.

One in three Montanans hunt big game and more than half of us fish. An outdoor recreation economy across this country contributes some \$646 billion in direct spending to this U.S. economy. Fishing and hunting is not just recreation, it is a critical part of our economy. In Montana, hunting and fishing alone brings \$1 billion a year to our economy, nearly as much as the State's cattle industry. It drives and sustains jobs. With hunting season in full swing and thousands of Montanans headed out to hunt in Montana's back country over Thanksgiving weekend, this bill is as timely as ever.

The Sportsmen's Act of 2012 is balanced, it is bipartisan, and it is widely supported. It is also fiscally responsible. The bill has no cost. Before the Senate went out of session, we voted to move forward with this bill by a vote of 84 to 7—84 to 7. It was a resounding approval to conserve some of our most productive habitat to pass on our hunting and fishing tradition to future generations and to entrust them with the land and water we share.

Now it is time to get this bill across the finish line, to approve a bill with widespread support that preserves our outdoor economy and secures our outdoor heritage for our kids and our grandkids.

We need to take some good Democratic ideas and some good Republican ideas and pass them. We need to do something for the more than 90 million sportsmen and sportswomen in this country and for our economy.

The time is now. I urge all Members to support this bill.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Under the previous order, all time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed to S. 3525.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second. There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) would vote “nay.”

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 201 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Akaka	Graham	Mikulski
Alexander	Grassley	Moran
Ayotte	Hagan	Murkowski
Barrasso	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Hatch	Nelson (NE)
Bennet	Heller	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Hoeven	Portman
Blumenthal	Hutchison	Pryor
Blunt	Inhofe	Reid
Boozman	Inouye	Risch
Brown (MA)	Isakson	Roberts
Brown (OH)	Johanns	Rockefeller
Burr	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Cardin	Kerry	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Kohl	Shelby
Chambliss	Kyl	Snowe
Coats	Landrieu	Stabenow
Cochran	Lautenberg	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Conrad	Lee	Toomey
Coons	Levin	Udall (CO)
Corker	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Lugar	Vitter
Crapo	Manchin	Warner
Durbin	McCain	Webb
Enzi	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Feinstein	McConnell	Wicker
Franken	Menendez	Wyden
Gillibrand	Merkley	

NAYS—5

Boxer	DeMint	Sessions
Coburn	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Begich	Kirk	Reed
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The motion was agreed to.

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for this vote due to a flight delay caused by mechanical problems. Had I been present, I would have voted no.●

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SPORTSMEN'S ACT OF 2012

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator TESTER, I have a substitute amendment which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3525) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is a shame. We have a bill that is bipartisan. Cloture has already been invoked on it. We are on the bill. Why in the world can't we just finish this bill, have a couple amendments and go on?

I am going to go ahead. I am going to fill the tree. I am sure I will get some

outrageous response back, as if we are still in the Presidential election, saying we want this many amendments. We are not going to have that many amendments. This is a bipartisan bill. People are going to have an opportunity to vote for or against the bill. If they want to kill the bill, they can. It is one of the most popular bills we did all last Congress. We didn't do many, but this is one that was popular.

I cannot imagine why we are trying to refight an election that took place 1 week ago. The clerk is going to report the substitute amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 2875

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. REID. I have a perfecting amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Mr. TESTER, proposes an amendment numbered 2875.

The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments."

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2876 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2875

Mr. REID. I now have a first-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered No. 2876 to amendment No. 2875.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section:

SEC. _____.

This Act shall become effective 7 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2877 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2876

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2877 to amendment No. 2876.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "7 days" and insert "6 days".

AMENDMENT NO. 2878

Mr. REID. I have an amendment at the desk to the language that is proposed to be stricken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2878 to the

language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2875.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section: SEC. _____.

This title shall become effective 5 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2879 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2878

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered No. 2879 to amendment No. 2878.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "5 days" and insert "4 days".

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2880

Mr. REID. I have a motion to commit the bill with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to commit the bill (S. 3525) to the Committee on Energy, with instructions to report back with the following amendment numbered 2880.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, adding the following new section:

SEC. _____.

This Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2881

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to the instructions that is also at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2881 to the instructions to commit S. 3525.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "3 days" and insert "2 days".

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2882 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2881

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2882 to amendment No. 2881.

The amendment is as follows: