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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 3, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair would now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Guide our minds, thoughts, and desires this day. By Your spirit, breathe into us a new spirit. Shape this Congress and our world according to Your design that we may fulfill Your will.

Bless the Members of this people's House. Give them attentive hearts and open minds, that through the diversity of ideas, they might sort out what is best for this Nation.

May their speech be deliberately free of all prejudice, that others might listen wholeheartedly. Grant that all dialogue be mutually respectful, surprising even the most jaded with the emergence of unity and justice.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done here be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HOLDING led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

IRAN TARGETING AMERICA

(Mr. HOLDING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, as the Obama administration continues to cut deals with the regime in Iran, Iranian military leaders pulled no punches in letting us know that they are prepared to strike our homeland, our forces in the Middle East, and our ally Israel.

These military leaders are at the real center of power in Tehran, pulling the strings behind the scenes. They are also the people who this administration is trusting to end their nuclear weapons program even though they invested heavily in keeping that same program hidden from the world for years. Iranian commanders just this past weekend went as far as to talk about destroying America from within and how we will face devastating consequences if we exercise our military option.

Madam Speaker, their words are just another reminder of how this administration has misplaced their trust and how the current deal with Iran jeopardizes our national security.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 5 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas

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and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS ALLOWABLE USE ACT

Mrs. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1791) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1791

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act''.

SEC. 2. USE OF CERTAIN HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT FUNDS FOR ENHANCING MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS, MEDICAL SURGE CAPACITY, AND MASS PROPHYLAXIS CAPABILITIES.

Section 2008 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 609) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by redesignating paragraphs (10) through (13) as paragraphs (11) through (14), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

''(10) enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities, including the development and maintenance of an initial pharmaceutical stockpile, including medical kits, and diagnostics sufficient to protect first responders, their families, immediate victims, and vulnerable populations from a chemical or biological event;''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking ''(a)(10)'' and inserting ''(a)(11)''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1791, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act, introduced by my colleague and the former chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, the honorable Congressman BILIRAKIS from Florida.

This bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make it clear that grant funds under the State Homeland Security Grant Program and Urban Area Security Initiative may be used to enhance medical preparedness and purchase medical countermeasures.

The Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee held a series of hearings in the 112th Congress on medical preparedness. The subcommittee heard about the importance of medical countermeasures from representatives of the emergency response community, and this bill is in response to those concerns.

In August, I held a field hearing in my district looking at central Indiana's ability to handle a mass casualty event. Like the witnesses who testified at the hearings held in the 112th Congress, these witnesses at the field hearing stressed the importance of building medical preparedness.

As a result of this bill, grant funds could be used for items such as pre-deployed medical kits for first responders and their families, caches of equipment, training and exercises, and planning activities. The grant guidance for these programs currently allows funds to be used for medical preparedness equipment and activities.

This bill codifies those activities to ensure that they will continue to be allowable, and it will not cost any additional money to do so. We have seen the benefits that grant funds, including those used for medical preparedness activities, have provided when it comes to response capabilities. This was clearly demonstrated in response to the Boston Marathon bombings.

We know that the threat of chemical or biological attack is real. In fact, my subcommittee will be holding a hearing next week to get an update on the bioterrorism threat and preparedness here in this country.

We must ensure that our first responders have the tools and capabilities they need if such an event should occur. This bill has the support of several first responder groups, including the International Association of Emergency Managers, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Emergency Services Coalition for Medical Preparedness. I will insert their letters of support into the RECORD.

H.R. 1791 was approved by the Committee on Homeland Security last year by a bipartisan voice vote. I am pleased that, during the markup, the committee approved an amendment offered by the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), to ensure that in addition to protecting first responders funds can also be used to protect vulnerable populations such as children.

I urge fellow Members to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

EMERGENCY SERVICES COALITION
FOR MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS,
April 26, 2013.

Hon. GUS BILIRAKIS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BILIRAKIS: The Emergency Services Coalition for Medical Preparedness is pleased to support the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act. The events of the last two weeks again demonstrate the need for immediate, at hand protections for our emergency services personnel and their families and households. The Congressionally-chartered WMD Commission has issued warnings for years about the continuing threat from biological weapons.

Emergency services professionals are uniquely expected to continue operating in hazardous conditions when others are sheltering. Whether responding to industrial fires, bombs placed in cities, or other situations with unknown secondary risks, the protections described in the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act will enable emergency services to more confidently carry out their tasks.

Pre-event medical caches have been provided for federal workers and hundreds of postal employees. Your bill addresses the lack of protection of the millions of local and state protectors who daily provide law enforcement, public works, emergency management, fire, rescue and emergency medical services.

The Coalition looks forward to working with you and your staff in passage of the Bill. Thank you for your leadership and continuing support for ''protecting the protectors.''

Sincerely,

TIM STEPHENS,
Advisor.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FIRE CHIEFS,
Fairfax, VA, April 26, 2013.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 12,000 chief fire and emergency officers of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), I urge you to support the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act. This bill addresses an important aspect of America's homeland security and emergency preparedness through improving the resiliency of emergency first responders by helping provide pre-event Medkits to first responders and their families.

Individual physician-based prescription efforts and federal planning have already provided protections for countless employees of the U.S. Postal Service and the federal government—first responders however have not been included in these pre-event protections. The Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act addresses this gap by allowing jurisdictions to use the Urban Areas Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding to improve their medical preparedness through the procurement of Medkits and other medical countermeasures.

In 2008, the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism issued their report in which the Commission identified a biological attack as the most likely threat to the United States. In the event of a biological attack, our nation's first responders will

play crucial roles such as treating patients and mitigating the effects of such a biological attack. One of the most effective ways to ensure the resiliency of emergency first responders is the provision of pre-event Medkits for first responders and their families. These Medkits will allow first responders to focus on protecting and serving the public rather than worrying about the safety of themselves or their families. The Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act will help jurisdictions provide these crucial protections to their first responders.

Thank you for your support for America's first responders. We urge you to continue your support by ensuring first responders and their families are protected while they protect their communities.

Sincerely,

CHIEF HANK CLEMMENSEN,
President and Chairman of the Board.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS,
Falls Church, VA, May 1, 2013.

Hon. GUS BILIRAKIS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BILIRAKIS: The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM USA) is pleased to support the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act. We thank you for introducing a bill which addresses the lack of protection for the emergency services protectors by providing funding to enhance medical preparedness, medical surge capacity and mass prophylaxis capabilities. We were pleased to testify before you in support of a similar bill last session.

Helping local and state jurisdictions provide crucial protection to first responders, their families, and immediate victims from a chemical or biological event through Medkits and other medical countermeasures will ensure the resiliency of first responders. These Medkits will allow first responders to focus on protecting and serving the public rather than worrying about the safety of themselves or their families.

Thank you for your continued support to protect America's first responders and their families.

Sincerely,

JEFF WALKER,
CEM, IAEM USA President.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1791 the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1791 would formally authorize grant recipients under the State Homeland Security Grant or Urban Area Security Initiative programs to use the funding to enhance medical preparedness and medical surge capacity.

Although the Federal Emergency Management Agency already permits grantees to use these funds to enhance medical preparedness, this measure will give some predictability to grant recipients as they struggle to rebuild and maintain a robust medical response capability at the State and local level.

Additionally, I am proud to support this effort to provide resources that will equip our first responders with home medical kits. When disaster strikes, we have an obligation to protect our protectors. We also have an obligation to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

During the full committee markup of H.R. 1791, the committee unanimously approved an amendment I offered. This amendment would ensure that resources are available to develop plans to distribute countermeasures to schools and child care facilities, the elderly, individuals with special needs, and low-income communities in the event of a biological incident.

I would like to thank the full committee chair, Mr. MCCAUL, and the subcommittee chairwoman, Mrs. BROOKS, for supporting my amendment. I also look forward to continuing to work with both of you in the future on other initiatives such as H.R. 3158, the SAFE in our Schools Act, to ensure that the needs of our schoolchildren and other vulnerable populations are adequately addressed in emergency preparedness and response plans.

On behalf of the ranking member, Mr. THOMPSON, I would also like to thank Chairman MCCAUL for working with us to reauthorize the Metropolitan Medical Response System, the MMRS. This program provided targeted grants to 124 highly populated jurisdictions to support the integration of emergency management, health and medical systems into an organized response to mass casualty events.

The program has not been funded since fiscal year 2011 and its authorization has lapsed. I sincerely hope that the next time we meet here on the House floor to address medical preparedness, it will be to consider bipartisan reauthorization legislation for the MMRS. As State and local governments continue to stretch their budgets to make up the reduced Federal support across many programs, we must make sure that the public health community is prepared and equipped to keep our constituents safe.

I look forward to working with my ranking member and the majority to ensure that MMRS remains a priority for this committee.

In the meantime, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1791. With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I must say, Madam Chair, you are doing an outstanding job chairing this committee. Thank you for your help on this bill. I also want to thank Mr. PAYNE. Your father would be very proud of you today. He was a good friend of mine.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1791, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act, which amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make it clear that grant funds under the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative may be used to enhance medical preparedness and purchase medical countermeasures.

I originally introduced the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act in 2012 after a series of hearings on medical countermeasures in the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications.

At these hearings, we received testimony from representatives of the emergency response community on the importance of stockpiling medical countermeasures in the event of a WMD attack. This includes pre-deployed medical kits for first responders and their families similar to those provided to postal workers participating in the national U.S. Postal Medical Countermeasures Dispensing Pilot Program.

The grant guidance for the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative currently permits this funding to be used to procure medical countermeasures and for other medical preparedness and medical surge capacity equipment and activities. However, this guidance is developed on an annual basis, as our chair said, and there is no guarantee that these uses will be authorized in the future. That is why this bill is so very important.

To be clear, no new funding is authorized in this bill. However, these expenditures authorized and codified by the bill we are considering today can make a big difference in the protection of the public, including emergency responders, in the event of an attack, and there should be no doubt that grant funding may be used to support them now and in the future.

As the former chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I consistently find myself in awe of our first responders and the sacrifices that they make for the public. In the wake of events such as Hurricane Sandy, I am committed to ensuring Congress does all that it can to support those brave men and women.

I am pleased that this legislation is supported by the Emergency Services Coalition on Medical Preparedness, which works to ensure that we ''protect the protectors,'' and other agencies as well. I also thank the ranking member for adding that great amendment because we must protect our children as well.

I thank and commend, of course, Representative SUSAN BROOKS, our chair, for her assistance with this bill and for her willingness to join me as an original cosponsor.

I urge all Members to support this great, very important bill.

Mr. PAYNE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge passage of this measure as a small step to address gaping needs at the State and local level when it comes to medical preparedness.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1791, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Florida

noted in his statement, this bill passed the House the last Congress by a bipartisan vote of 397–1. I hope Members will once again express their support for the men and women who protect us every day by voting for this bill.

I want to thank my ranking member for his dedication and his commitment to protecting the protectors, as he so eloquently stated, and we certainly request that our fellow Members support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1791, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act for two reasons.

First, the bill will save lives. Second, the legislation is necessary to support the vital work of first responders in the event of a biological and chemical terrorists attack or incident.

The legislation provides for the development and maintenance of an initial pharmaceutical stockpile, including medical kits, and diagnostics sufficient to protect first responders, their families, and immediate victims from a chemical or biological event.

The Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act will amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities.

This legislation ensures that first responders have necessary medicines and treatments to protect themselves, their families and those within their vicinity immediately should a biological and chemical terrorist attack occurs.

In short, first responders will not be able to do the work of saving lives if they fall victim to an attack or are distracted by worry regarding how their family may be fairing during a biological or chemical attack should one occur.

First responders often include law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical personnel.

The city of Houston covers over a 1000 square mile region in Southeast Texas. It has an evening population of nearly two million people and over three million during the day when commuters are in the city.

There are 103 fire stations that serve the city of Houston with most offering ambulance or medic support, but there is only one station, Number 22, that specializes in hazardous material.

In the city of Houston one out of every ten citizens use Emergency Management Services (EMS) and within a year there are over 200,000 EMS incidents involving over 225,000 patients or potential patients.

EMS response services have 88 City of Houston EMS vehicles, with just under fifty percent staffed by two paramedics and can provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) to patients.

These consist of 15 ALS Squads, and 22 ALS transport units with eight functioning in a ''Dual'' capacity as both Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support (BLS).

The remaining fifty-one transport units are Basic Life Support (BLS), and staffed by two Emergency Medical Technicians.

Law enforcement agencies that serve the city of Houston include the Houston Police Department, Harris County Sheriff's Department, Harris County Constables, Port of Houston Authority Police and Corrections Officers.

Because of the nature of chemical or biological terrorist attacks mass casualties are the objective and the impressive resources of our nation's 4th largest city would likely be overwhelmed immediately should an attack occur it is important to provide them with the resources provided by this legislation.

The prepositioning of resources in the form of medicines that can support pulmonary respiratory function or arrest neurological damage as a result of poisoning lives can be saved that could otherwise be lost. This bill can reduce deaths and give victims the greatest chance for survival and recovery.

Emergency responders because of this bill would have treatments in the communities where they serve and live to help neighbors, coworkers, and people who are immediate need to live saving help.

As a senior member of the House Homeland Security Committee, I am mindful of the need for our first responders to be prepared and well trained to manage a wide range of potential threats both conventional and unconventional.

This bill offers one more resource that will be available to first responders to do the work they have dedicated their lives to doing—saving lives.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1791, the Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act for two reasons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1791, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1715

GI BILL TUITION FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 357) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 357

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.
Sec. 3. Scoring of budgetary effects.
Sec. 4. Approval of courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education for purposes of All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program and Post-9/11 Educational Assistance conditional on in-State tuition rate for veterans.
Sec. 5. Clarification of eligibility for services under the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.
Sec. 6. Extension of eligibility period for vocational rehabilitation programs.
Sec. 7. Work-study allowance.
Sec. 8. Responsibilities of the Directors of Veterans' Employment and Training.
Sec. 9. Contents of Transition Assistance Program.
Sec. 10. Rounding down of increase in rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation.
Sec. 11. Limitation on performance awards in the senior executive service.
Sec. 12. Semiannual reports to Congress on cost of certain travel.
Sec. 13. Report of infectious disease at medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 14. Prohibition of visual recording without informed consent.
Sec. 15. Two-month extension of Veterans Retraining Assistance Program.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or a repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SEC. 4. APPROVAL OF COURSES OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PURPOSES OF ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE CONDITIONAL ON IN-STATE TUITION RATE FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter and subject to paragraphs (3) through (6), the Secretary shall disapprove a course of education provided by a public institution of higher education to a covered individual pursuing a course of education with educational assistance under chapter 30 or 33 of this title while living in the State in which the public institution of higher education is located if the institution charges tuition and fees for that course for the covered individual at a rate that is higher than the rate the institution charges for tuition and fees for that course for residents of the State in which the institution is located, regardless of the covered individual's State of residence.

''(2) For purposes of this subsection, a covered individual is a veteran who was discharged or released from a period of not fewer than 90 days of service in the active military, naval, or air service less than three years before the date of enrollment in the course concerned

''(3) If after enrollment in a course of education that is subject to disapproval under paragraph (1) a covered individual pursues one or more courses of education at the same public institution of higher education while remaining continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses, semesters or terms) at that institution of higher education, any course so pursued by the covered individual at that institution of higher education while so continuously enrolled shall also be subject to disapproval under paragraph (1).

''(4) It shall not be grounds to disapprove a course of education under paragraph (1) if a public institution of higher education requires a covered individual pursuing a course of education at the institution to demonstrate an intent, by means other than satisfying a physical presence requirement, to establish residency in the State in which the institution is located, or to satisfy other requirements not relating to the establishment of residency, in order to be charged tuition and fees for that course at a rate that is equal to or less than the rate the institution charges for tuition and fees for that course for residents of the State.

''(5) The Secretary may waive such requirements of paragraph (1) as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(6) Disapproval under paragraph (1) shall apply only with respect to educational assistance under chapters 30 and 33 of this title.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (c) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), shall apply with respect to educational assistance provided for pursuit of programs of education during academic terms that begin after July 1, 2016, through courses of education that commence on or after that date.

SEC. 5. CLARIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES UNDER THE HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAM.

Subsection (a) of section 2021 is amended by striking ''reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force.'' and inserting the following: ''reintegration into the labor force of—''

''(1) homeless veterans;

''(2) veterans participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs supported housing program for which rental assistance provided pursuant to section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)); and

''(3) veterans who are transitioning from being incarcerated.''.

SEC. 6. EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY PERIOD FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 3103 is amended by striking ''twelve-year period'' and inserting ''17-year period'' each place it appears.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a veteran applying for assistance under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 7. WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE.

Section 3485(a)(4) is amended by striking ''June 30, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''June 30, 2018''.

SEC. 8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTORS OF VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

Section 4103 is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Each Director assigned to a State under subsection (a) shall carry out the following responsibilities:

''(1) Monitoring the performance of veterans' training and employment programs in the State, with special emphasis on services to disabled veterans.

''(2) Monitoring the performance of the State workforce agency in complying with section 4212 of this title.

''(3) Suggesting to the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training corrective actions that could be taken by the State workforce agency to address deficiencies in the performance of veterans' training and employment programs in the State.

''(4) Annually negotiating with the State workforce agency to establish performance goals for veterans' training and employment programs in the State.

''(5) Reviewing the State's requests for funding for veterans' training and employment programs and providing advice to the State workforce agency and the Assistant Secretary regarding such funding requests.

''(6) Forwarding complaints regarding possible violations of chapter 43 of this title to the appropriate Regional Administrator or to the to the Assistant Secretary, as required.

''(7) Carrying out grant officer technical representative responsibilities for grants issued under programs administered by the Department.

''(8) Providing advice to the State workforce agency on strategies to market veterans to employers.

''(9) Supervising and managing all support staff, including Assistant Directors, establishing workload priorities, managing all personnel actions, and evaluating all assigned personnel.

''(10) Submitting to the Assistant Secretary regular reports on the matters described in paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (8), and any other matters the Assistant Secretary determine appropriate.

''(11) Performing such other related duties as directed by the Assistant Secretary.''.

SEC. 9. CONTENTS OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1144 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) Provide information about disability-related employment and education protections.''.

(2) by redesignating subsections (c), (d), and (e), as subsections (d), (e), and (f), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

''(c) ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—The mandatory program carried out by this section shall include—

''(1) for any such member who plans to use the member's entitlement to educational assistance under title 38—

''(A) instruction providing an overview of the use of such entitlement; and

''(B) courses of post-secondary education appropriate for the member, courses of post-secondary education compatible with the member's education goals, and instruction on how to finance the member's post-secondary education; and

''(2) instruction in the benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and in other subjects determined by the Secretary concerned.''.

(b) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The program carried out under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code, shall comply with the requirements of subsections (b)(9) and (c) of such section, as added by subsection (a), by not later than April 1, 2015.

(c) FEASIBILITY STUDY.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives the results of a study carried out by the Secretary to determine the feasibility of providing the instruction described in subsection (b) of section 1142 of title 10, United States Code, at all overseas locations where such instruction is provided by entering into a contract jointly with the Secretary of Labor for the provision of such instruction.

SEC. 10. ROUNDING DOWN OF INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) ROUNDING.—Each dollar amount increased under section 2 of the Veterans' Compensation Cost- of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–52), if not a whole dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower whole dollar amount.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a payment made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 11. LIMITATION ON PERFORMANCE AWARDS IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE.

For each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not make any performance awards under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 12. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS ON COST OF CERTAIN TRAVEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 5 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 518. Semiannual reports to Congress on cost of certain travel

''(a) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than June 30, 2014, and not later than 60 days after each 180-day period thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate a semiannual report on covered travel made during the 180-day period covered by the report.

''(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) With respect to each instance of covered travel made during the period covered by the report—

''(A) the purpose of such travel;

''(B) the destination;

''(C) the name and title of each employee included on such travel;

''(D) the duration of such travel;

''(E) the total cost to the Department of such travel; and

''(F) with respect to covered travel described in subsection (d)(2), the identity of the person or entity that paid or reimbursed for such travel.

''(2) The final costs to the Department with respect to all covered travel made during the period covered by the report, including costs relating to—

''(A) transportation, including fares for travel by air, rail, bus, ferry, cruise ship, taxi, mass transit, or other mode of transportation;

''(B) expenses or reimbursements relating to operating and maintaining a car, including the costs of fuel and mileage;

''(C) passport and visa fees;

''(D) lodging;

''(E) per diem payments;

''(F) baggage charges;

''(G) computer rental fees;

''(H) rental of halls, auditoriums, or other spaces;

''(I) entertainment;

''(J) contractors;

''(K) registration fees; and

''(L) promotional items.

''(c) DUPLICATIVE INFORMATION.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include the information described in subsection (b) regardless of whether such information is also included in a report under section 517 of this title.

''(d) COVERED TRAVEL DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered travel' means travel made by an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including an employee who is stationed in a foreign country, on official business to any of the following locations:

''(1) If the Department or other element of the Federal Government pays for such travel, a location outside of—

''(A) the several States;

''(B) the District of Columbia;

''(C) a territory, commonwealth, or possession of the United States;

''(D) Indian lands (as defined in section 4(4) of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2703(4))); or

''(E) the territorial waters of the United States.

''(2) If any person or entity other than the Federal Government pays (or reimburses) for such travel, any location, regardless of whether the location is inside or outside of the United States.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 517 the following new item:

''518. Semiannual reports to Congress on cost of certain travel.''.

SEC. 13. REPORT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7311 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f)(1) The Secretary shall report to the appropriate entity each case of a notifiable infectious disease or condition that is diagnosed at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with the laws of the State in which the facility is located.

''(2) In addition to reporting each case of a notifiable infectious disease or condition at a medical facility of the Department pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary shall report each such case that is classified as a health-care-associated infection sentinel event to the accrediting organization of such facility.

''(3)(A) If the Secretary fails to report a case of a notifiable infectious disease or condition at a medical facility of the Department in accordance with State law pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

''(i) take any remedial action required under the laws of the State to correct such failure; and

''(ii) if the Secretary does not correct such failure pursuant to clause (i), pay to the State an amount equal to the amount that a medical facility not owned by the Federal Government that is located in the same State would pay as a penalty to such State for such failure.

''(B) The State may file a civil action against the Secretary in the United States district court for the district in which the medical facility is located to recover from the United States the amount described in subparagraph (A)(ii).

''(C) A civil action under subparagraph (B) may not be commenced later than two years after the cause of action accrues.

''(4)(A) In any case in which the Inspector General of the Department suspects that a director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network has failed to comply with an applicable provision of this subsection, the Inspector General shall conduct an investigation to determine whether such director failed to comply with an applicable provision of this section.

''(B) If the Inspector General determines under subparagraph (A) that a director has failed to comply with a provision of this subsection, the Secretary shall suspend such director for such period as the Secretary considers appropriate under subchapter I or subchapter II of chapter 75 of title 5, as the case may be. In addition to such suspension, the Secretary may impose such other administrative disciplinary action on the director as the Secretary considers appropriate and for which the Secretary is otherwise authorized.

''(5) The Secretary shall—

''(A) maintain records of each notifiable infectious disease or condition reported pursuant to paragraph (1); and

''(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a notification of each such notifiable infectious disease or condition.

''(6) In this subsection, the term 'notifiable infectious disease or condition' means any infectious disease or condition that is—

''(A) on the list of nationally notifiable diseases or conditions published by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; or

''(B) covered by a provision of law of a State that requires the reporting of infectious diseases or conditions.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The reporting requirement under section 7311(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to a case of a notifiable infectious disease or condition diagnosed at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs on or after the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 14. PROHIBITION OF VISUAL RECORDING WITHOUT INFORMED CONSENT.

Section 7331 is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Secretary, upon'' and inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, upon''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) VISUAL RECORDING.—(1) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations establishing procedures to ensure that, except as provided by paragraph (2), any visual recording made by the Secretary of a patient during the course of furnishing care under this title is carried out only with the full and informed consent of the patient or, in appropriate cases, a representative thereof.

''(2) The Secretary may waive the requirement for informed consent under paragraph (1) with respect to the visual recording of a patient if such recording is made—

''(A) pursuant to a determination by a physician or psychologist that such recording is medically necessary or necessary for the safety of the patient;

''(B) pursuant to a warrant or order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or

''(C) in a public setting where a person would not have a reasonable expectation to privacy, such as a waiting room or hallway, and such recording is for general security purposes not particularized to the patient.

''(3) In this subsection, the term 'visual recording' means the recording or transmission of images or video, but does not include—

''(A) medical imaging, including such imaging produced by radiographic procedures, nuclear medicine, endoscopy, ultrasound, or other similar procedures; or

''(B) images, video, and other clinical information transmitted for the purposes of providing treatment through telehealth and telemedicine technologies.''.

SEC. 15. TWO-MONTH EXTENSION OF VETERANS RETRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 211 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–56; 125 Stat. 713; 38 U.S.C. 4100 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(B), by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''May 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (k), by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''May 31, 2014''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 357, as amended, is a bipartisan package of legislation that relates to improving employment and training opportunities for America's veterans. While there are many worthwhile provisions in this bill, I want to focus on section 4 primarily, which deals with instate tuition for veterans, and section 14, which ensures privacy of veterans who are being treated at a VA medical facility.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's veterans have always been a source of strength for America's economy. The post-9/11 GI Bill has given thousands of our veterans the opportunity to attend college or receive other types of vocational training at little to no cost to the veteran themselves.

Every dollar that we provide in education and training benefits to veterans under the GI Bill goes right back into our economy when these veterans graduate and enter the workforce. I think we can all call that a great investment.

However, there are many veterans, through no fault of their own, who are forced to pay exorbitant tuition rates to schools simply because of the transit nature of their military service, and that precludes them from meeting some of the burdensome State residency requirements.

Mr. Speaker, as most American families know, the difference between instate versus out-of-state tuition at most public schools is immense. According to the College Board, the average instate tuition and fees at public institutions is now $8,655 a year. Out-of-state students pay an average of $21,706 per year.

Since the post-9/11 GI Bill will only pay for tuition and fees at the instate rates at public schools, out-of-state student veterans could incur significant debt to make up that difference. I believe that this practice has got to end.

The men and women who served this Nation did not just defend the citizens of their own home States, but the citizens of all 50 States. The educational

benefits they receive from the taxpayers should reflect the same reality.

Mr. Speaker, many States are out in front on this issue, including my home State of Florida, and I applaud the 22 States that currently offer some form of instate tuition to veterans, regardless of their residency.

Other State legislatures again, as I said, including my home State of Florida, are currently reviewing legislation to provide this benefit. It is my hope that the House passes this bill, and it will encourage those States to move forward.

To that end, section 4 of the bill would require that, in order for public colleges and universities to be eligible to receive payments from a veteran's GI Bill benefits, they must enroll these veterans at instate tuition and fee rates.

There are important limitations to this requirement. First, States would be permitted to require that student veterans show intent to become full-time residents of the State in which they are attending school.

Secondly, the instate requirement would only apply to veterans who are attending college within 3 years of their discharge from Active Duty. These limitations will ensure that this policy not only targets the population of veterans that are most adversely affected by residency requirements following their military separation, but also fairly recognizes States' legitimate interest in subsidizing public education for its taxpaying citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight section 14 of the bill, which incorporates the text of a bill that I introduced called the Veterans' Privacy Act.

In June of 2012, a covert camera disguised as a smoke detector was installed in the room of a brain-damaged veteran who was being treated at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa. Upon discovering the hidden camera, the veteran's family was understandably outraged. When the veteran's family asked about the camera, VA officials first stated that the camera did not exist. Then they changed their story and admitted that the ''smoke detector'' was actually a video camera.

When further asked if the camera was recording, the VA told the family that the camera was only monitoring the patient; it was not recording. Only after inquiries by local media and the Veterans' Affairs Committee did VA admit that the camera was, in fact, recording the patient. VA then removed the camera from the patient's room.

In the wake of this incident, I sent a letter to VA asking for its legal authority to place a camera in a patient's room without their consent. The VA replied that the hidden camera did not violate the law.

I am deeply disturbed at VA's actions and response to the privacy interests of this veteran and can't help but wonder whether similar incidents are occurring across the country. That is why I authored this section, which should direct VA to prescribe regulations ensuring that when veterans receive care from VA, their privacy will not be violated by unauthorized video surveillance.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are many other worthwhile provisions in this bill, and I defer to my colleagues on the floor this afternoon to highlight other remaining provisions.

I thank my good friends and the ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), and everybody who is here today who are cosponsors of this bill and helping us to move forward.

I am also grateful to Leader CANTOR and Speaker BOEHNER for their help in bringing this legislation to the floor.

With that, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 357, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As one of Riverside County's Representatives, a county that has the eighth-largest veterans' population in the Nation, I proudly rise today in support of H.R. 357, as amended. This bill is a far-ranging bill that seeks to improve the lives of our veterans.

H.R. 357 includes a number of measures that were considered by the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and was reported favorably out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee last June.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER of the full committee, and Chairman FLORES of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, for their leadership. I especially enjoyed holding several field hearings last year with Chairman FLORES in our respective districts.

The Veterans' Affairs Committee has traditionally been a bipartisan committee, and I am pleased to see that cooperation continue as both leaders helped bring this bill to the floor today.

In the area of education, H.R. 357 would require all public colleges and universities using the GI Bill to provide all veterans with instate tuition rates. Currently, veterans who have not established residency at the school of their choice must pay out-of-state tuition rates.

In order to fulfill their military obligations, servicemembers must uproot their families and periodically move around the country. This makes it difficult to establish residency for purposes of instate tuition rates when veterans seek to use their GI Bill benefits. By providing all veterans with instate tuition rates, H.R. 357 will make it easier for veterans to choose the educational institution that best serves their needs.

The new Transition Assistance Program includes a mandatory 5-day core program of instruction that all separating servicemembers are required to take. The education portion is an optional track available to all members but is not required. Some separating servicemembers may not have additional time to take an optional course.

H.R. 357 would move the education track to the mandatory portion for veterans seeking to use their GI Bill benefits, which will ensure that these veterans can make better choices regarding their education and assist them in making the most of their GI Bill benefits.

In addition, H.R. 357 also extends the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program for 2 months to better align the program with the traditional academic semester.

Now, in addition to these provisions, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight two sections which I have sponsored and which are included in H.R. 357. I believe these sections will also assist our veterans in terms of their education and in finding work after their separation from the military.

Section 6 is from the first bill I introduced, H.R. 844, the VetSuccess Enhancement Act. This provision would extend from 12 years to 17 years the eligibility period that veterans with service-connected disabilities have to enroll in VA vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

Veterans with traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury often require years to complete rehabilitation and adjust to the new realities of day-to-day living. Only then can these veterans consider returning to work. This provision will provide these veterans with the additional time they need to seek vocational rehabilitative services.

Section 7 is from another bill I introduced, H.R. 1453, the Work-Study for Student Veterans Act. This section provides for a 5-year extension of the Veterans Work-Study program at the VA.

As an educator, I know how important these programs are to students to enable them to fit some part-time work into their academic term. The VA program pays veterans to perform a variety of tasks, including assisting other transitioning veterans by helping them with outreach.

By providing support in the college Office of Veterans' Affairs, these students help other veterans to navigate the VA system. It is an important program to veteran students in my district and to thousands of others in schools across the country.

The last provision that tackles transition issues would codify the major duties of the directors and assistant directors from the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Services.

At present, there is no standardization of the requirements and duties of these positions. H.R. 357 will provide more consistency in the services provided veterans by standardizing the responsibilities of these officials. In addition, codifying their duties will enable us to better track their funding, review their performance and hold everyone accountable to the same standard.

These are important changes to the educational benefits and transition services for our veterans and will better assist veterans in serving our communities and our Nation after they leave service.

Finally, in terms of fighting veteran homelessness and improving VA medical care, H.R. 357 would clarify that veterans who are homeless and participating in the HUD-VASH voucher program, and those who are transitioning from incarceration, are eligible for services under the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program, or the HVRP. I am sure that all these veterans will find these services very beneficial as they look to begin the next chapter in their lives.

H.R. 357 would require the VA to more consistently report infectious diseases diagnosed at VA medical facilities to State authorities to increase the likelihood that infectious disease outbreaks that may occur are addressed sooner and more comprehensively.

Although we have expressed concerns over the enforcement mechanism included in this provision, we all can support the importance of comprehensive notification.

H.R. 357 also includes a provision that would protect a veteran's personal privacy by directing the VA to ensure that any visual recording made of a patient during treatment is carried out only with the full and informed consent of that patient.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, GUS BILIRAKIS, the vice chairman of the full committee and sponsor for veterans not only in his community but around this country.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida, Chairman MILLER, for all of his good work on behalf of our true American heroes, and I also want to thank the ranking member for his good work on behalf of this particular bill and all of its provisions.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013. This is an important package of veterans' legislation, of which I am a cosponsor, that works to increase access for our Nation's heroes and the benefits they have earned through their service to our country. In particular, I want to highlight three sections of this legislation that I am very proud to support.

H.R. 357 will make informed changes to the GI Bill program that will allow States to jump-start the process to provide instate tuition to veterans. The bill would require that in order for an educational institution to receive GI Bill funding, they must offer instate tuition to veterans, regardless of the veteran's residency. That is the least we can do. And I really appreciate the chair sponsoring this provision.

Mr. Speaker, our members of the armed services are not given options as to where they will reside. They move according to the needs of the military. It is only fitting that, when these veterans use their earned benefits, they are not penalized because of residency requirements that they have no control over.

H.R. 357 also provides an extension of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, also originally sponsored by our chair. This important program offers 12 months of training assistance to unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60. Again, it is the least we can do. During these difficult economic times, it is important that we do everything we can to assist our veterans in their job search and retraining efforts.

I also want to commend the chairman for another provision, and it is the VA's patients' privacy act. And, of course, we need to give our veterans the privacy that they so deserve, as patients.

I would like to urge all our Members to support this great bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS), who is also the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman for bringing this bill to the floor and my colleague and fellow educator, Mr. TAKANO, for yielding to me.

I rise today in support of H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013. As professor emeritus of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, I know firsthand the importance of a college education. And I am proud that my home State of Nevada already has laws in place that allow all veterans, regardless of residency status, to pay instate tuition while attending our public colleges and universities.

I was fortunate to teach a number of our Nation's heroes during my time at UNLV. Having these veterans in class was truly a win-win situation. Our veterans are able to pursue a college degree to help them with their transition to civilian life, and their fellow students are able to benefit from hearing about the veterans' experiences in the military, on the battlefield, and in foreign lands while they have served our country.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation that will improve our higher education system and help our Nation's heroes acquire the skills and knowledge to complement their experience so they can succeed once they leave the military.

I thank the chairman again for bringing this bill, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 357 and, in particular, section 13, which encompasses my legislation, the Infectious Disease Reporting Act.

Section 13 imposes necessary requirements on the Department of Veterans Affairs to report infectious disease outbreaks at their medical facilities. These requirements are a response to infectious disease problems at VA facilities that were uncovered by my subcommittee's investigations last year. The investigations highlighted a deadly outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Pittsburgh VA from February 2011 to November 2012 which tragically caused the deaths of at least five veterans and afflicted as many as 22 others.

According to medical experts, timely disease surveillance is critical to infectious disease control; and delayed, incomplete, or inconsistent disease reporting can compromise an effective public health response and result in further infectious disease outbreaks.

Although it has become clear that these deaths could have been prevented with proper procedures, the VA failed to act appropriately within widely accepted medical practices. Surprisingly, the VA is not required by current law to report the incidence of infectious diseases at their facilities to State and local public health officials.

As one of the Nation's largest health care providers, VA should set the standard for infectious disease reporting. However, they do not even participate in infectious disease reporting like all other medical facilities within a particular State, creating a public health risk to those localities with VA facilities.

In response, section 13 requires the VA to report each case of an infectious disease in accordance with the laws of the State in which the facility is located.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COFFMAN. And failure to report will subject the VA facility to State penalties. These penalties are vital to ensure the VA will comply with and improve their reporting requirements.

Given the VA's recent inadequate responses to infectious disease outbreaks, it is imperative that Congress and our veterans demand improvements. Therefore, I urge full support of section 13 of H.R. 357, as well as the passage of the entire bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE), a great champion of veterans and former member of this committee.

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 357, the GI Bill

Tuition Fairness Act. This legislation contains a number of important changes in VA programs that provide our veterans with education, training, rehabilitation, disability benefits, and housing; and it deserves our support.

I want to focus my remarks today on the disease reporting provisions in the bill because I have been deeply involved with that issue over the last year or so.

In November of 2012, the VA announced that there had been an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at a VA hospital in Pittsburgh, which I represent. Shortly thereafter, I joined other members of the regional congressional delegation in requesting investigations into the outbreak. In response, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the VA Inspector General's Office examined the outbreak and the events leading up to it at length. The Centers for Disease Control also looked into the outbreak and determined that it had resulted in several deaths and more than two dozen illnesses.

I want to personally express my gratitude to my good friend Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman JEFF MILLER, Oversight Subcommittee Chairman COFFMAN, and Ranking Member MICHAUD for being so responsive to our requests for investigations and investigating the outbreak and holding hearings on it last year.

In the end, the hearings and investigations identified a number of shortcomings in the way the outbreak was handled and the need to be addressed. One of the concerns raised, as we learned more about the outbreak, was that for some time after the local VA facility knew it had Legionella bacteria in its water supply and that VA patients had been sickened by it, it had not notified State or local health agencies about the outbreak. Under current law, VA is not required to make such reports, which are required of all other hospitals.

Chairman MILLER, Subcommittee Chairman COFFMAN, Senator CASEY, and Congressmen MURPHY, ROTHFUS, and I all agree that in the future the VA should be required to report outbreaks of potentially deadly diseases to public health authorities, just like other hospitals already do.

The language in this bill is the result of our discussions over a number of months. I believe that the need for this reporting requirement is obvious. I urge my colleagues to support this bill which will make this important change.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my good friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE) for being in the forefront on this particular issue.

At this time, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from the 12th District of Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of our Nation's veterans and the legislation currently under consideration. This legislation makes much-needed reforms that would bring accountability and transparency to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Over the past year, I have worked with Chairman MILLER and Chairman COFFMAN, my western Pennsylvania colleagues—Congressmen DOYLE, MURPHY, KELLY, and SHUSTER—and local veterans' families to investigate the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Pittsburgh VA.

The VA Office of the Inspector General determined systemic failures surrounding the outbreak led to tragic and preventable deaths of local veterans. We must do all we can to ensure that this does not happen again.

Chairman COFFMAN's Infectious Disease Reporting Act, which I strongly support, has been included in today's legislation. This commonsense reform will increase transparency and save lives by improving infectious disease reporting requirements and requiring the VA to follow the same rules as the rest of our world-class health care institutions in western Pennsylvania.

Today's legislation also builds on an amendment I offered last year that prohibits bonuses for senior VA executives. This money would be better spent resolving the VA disability claims backlog and ensuring that our veterans are receiving the first-rate care they have earned.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this legislation, and I look forward to continuing to working with my colleagues in Congress to serve our Nation's veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from the 18th District of Pennsylvania, Dr. MURPHY, a Navy Reservist himself.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, ''Sonny'' Calcagno, age 85; John Ciarolla, age 83; Clark Compston, age 74; John McChesney, age 63; William Nicklas, age 87; and ''Mitch'' Wanstreet, age 65 are the victims of the Legionnaires' disease outbreak at the Pittsburgh VA health care system in 2011 and 2012. We can never really heal the emotional scars that these families have suffered and the 21 additional families who had a family member with a case of Legionnaires', but we can work to make sure something like this doesn't happen again.

Today's legislation fixes one of the flaws uncovered during this investigation; and under this bill, VA hospitals will soon follow the same reporting requirements for infectious diseases as other medical facilities. This way, public health authorities will know when a disease outbreak occurs and can take immediate action.

Thanks to the dogged determination and diligence of Chairman MILLER, Congressman COFFMAN, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, the ranking member, and my colleagues, Messrs. DOYLE, ROTHFUS, and KELLY, we now know the Legionnaires' outbreak was entirely preventable except for the gross mismanagement and negligence of a few key officials at the Pittsburgh VA.

The inspector general's report revealed some troubling findings. The VA lacked proper documentation and maintenance of the water system, and was lax in properly informing and testing patients. Further, the VA did not communicate properly with the hospital system in the detection of Legionella. That is why this bill is necessary, because timely reporting and transparency requires adherence to the strongest standards, followed by quick action.

But with this, our work is not yet done. It has been more than 2 months since I last asked VA Secretary General Shinseki to tell Congress what has been done to hold accountable those who are responsible for this outbreak, and his agency has promised to do so. But Congress is still waiting for an answer.

□ 1745

Transparency and accountability are essential for the Secretary to rebuild the trust in the VA. We are grateful to our veterans for their service and grateful to the hard workers of the VA hospital system. The Pittsburgh VA has been a leader in infection control work and should be commended for that, but, in this case, the failures of some are simply unacceptable.

My hope is that through this bill requiring reporting of infection cases we will be able to restore the trust that the VA has with its veterans and their families. It is so critically needed in order to make these essential changes.

I ask for my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Does the gentleman from Florida have additional speakers?

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have one more speaker at this time.

Mr. TAKANO. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the Third District of the State of Pennsylvania, MIKE KELLY, who is a stalwart supporter of the veterans in the State of Pennsylvania and also the United States.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act of 2013, a bill introduced by my friend, Representative JEFF MILLER, chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

I wish to highlight section 13, which includes H.R. 1792, the Infectious Disease Reporting Act, a bill introduced by my friend, Representative MIKE COFFMAN, chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. The Infectious Disease Reporting Act is a bill that I am proud to cosponsor.

This commonsense provision is necessary to respond to infectious disease issues at VA facilities nationwide, including the deadly outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease at the Pittsburgh VA in

2011 and 2012 that killed at least five of our veterans and sickened as many as 22. This facility became ground zero for the Veterans' Affairs Committee's investigation, which found gross mismanagement by the Pittsburgh VA in response to the 2011 outbreak. This is particularly troubling to me as there are many veterans in my district who rely on the Pittsburgh VA for their health care.

Currently, the VA facilities are not required by law to report infectious disease at VA facilities to State and local health officials, even though the VA is one of the Nation's largest health providers; yet, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center—it is only a few hundred feet away—is required to do this.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. This inconsistency makes absolutely no sense and leaves the VA off the hook. In other words, this bill holds VA facilities accountable to the same standards as other medical facilities located in the same State. This just makes sense.

Now, our veterans, who have sacrificed so much, deserve far better. This bill is a step in the right direction to ensure that veterans receive safe, high quality health care at the VA. I urge strong support of H.R. 357.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 357 makes important changes to the benefits and services we provide veterans and to the manner in which we provide them. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 357, as amended.

I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members would have 5 legislative days with which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials that they may have on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Thank you to all the Members who have come to the floor today to support this bill. I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act. In addition to requiring all public institutions to give veterans in-state tuition rates as a condition of receiving GI Bill education benefits, this legislation also includes a five year limitation on executive bonuses at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Under current practice, the VA pays out about $400 million in bonuses each year. Recently, we have seen these bonuses too often go to people whose work does not merit a reward, and to the contrary, may even warrant reprimand.

This practice has been evident at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, where despite the fact that four unexpected deaths were attributed to mismanagement and lack of oversight, tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses were awarded to top level executives at the facility. At the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, three patients died after management failed to act in a timely manner to schedule appointments. Despite requests to the VA, we are still waiting to hear whether those responsible received bonuses instead of reprimands.

It is past time that we stop blindly handing out rewards pay—bonuses should be the exception, not the norm. Furthermore, at a time when so many of our soldiers are returning from war, and in light of the deaths in Atlanta, I believe the VA should prioritize veterans' health and well-being above all else.

Mr. Speaker, we should reward our veterans with quality care and services in exchange for their commitment to our country and our freedoms. I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing support for our nation's veterans by supporting H.R. 357.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 357, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DOYLE (during consideration of H.R. 357). Mr. Speaker, on January 29, I was not present when H.R. 2642, the conference report for the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act, better known as the farm bill, was voted on. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no.''

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1791, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 357, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS ALLOWABLE USE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1791) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 391, nays 2, not voting 38, as follows:

[Roll No. 32]

YEAS—391

Aderholt	Clay	Fleming
Bachmann	Cleaver	Flores
Bachus	Clyburn	Forbes
Barber	Coble	Fortenberry
Barletta	Coffman	Foster
Barr	Cohen	Foxx
Barrow (GA)	Cole	Frankel (FL)
Barton	Collins (GA)	Franks (AZ)
Bass	Collins (NY)	Frelinghuysen
Beatty	Conaway	Fudge
Becerra	Connolly	Gabbard
Benishek	Conyers	Gallego
Bentivolio	Cook	Garamendi
Bera (CA)	Cooper	Garcia
Bilirakis	Costa	Gardner
Bishop (GA)	Cotton	Garrett
Bishop (UT)	Courtney	Gibbs
Black	Cramer	Gingrey (GA)
Blackburn	Crawford	Gohmert
Blumenauer	Crowley	Goodlatte
Bonamici	Cuellar	Gowdy
Boustany	Culberson	Granger
Brady (PA)	Cummings	Graves (GA)
Brady (TX)	Daines	Graves (MO)
Braley (IA)	Davis (CA)	Grayson
Bridenstine	Davis, Rodney	Green, Al
Brooks (AL)	DeFazio	Green, Gene
Brooks (IN)	DeGette	Griffin (AR)
Broun (GA)	Delaney	Griffith (VA)
Brown (FL)	DeLauro	Grijalva
Brownley (CA)	DelBene	Grimm
Bucshon	Denham	Guthrie
Burgess	Dent	Hahn
Bustos	DesJarlais	Hall
Butterfield	Deutch	Hanabusa
Byrne	Diaz-Balart	Hanna
Calvert	Dingell	Harper
Camp	Doggett	Harris
Cantor	Doyle	Hartzler
Capito	Duckworth	Hastings (FL)
Capps	Duffy	Hastings (WA)
Capuano	Duncan (SC)	Heck (NV)
Cárdenas	Duncan (TN)	Heck (WA)
Carney	Edwards	Hensarling
Carson (IN)	Ellison	Herrera Beutler
Carter	Ellmers	Higgins
Cartwright	Engel	Himes
Castor (FL)	Enyart	Hinojosa
Castro (TX)	Eshoo	Holding
Chabot	Esty	Holt
Chaffetz	Farenthold	Honda
Chu	Farr	Horsford
Cicilline	Fattah	Hoyer
Clark (MA)	Fitzpatrick	Hudson
Clarke (NY)	Fleischmann	Huelskamp

Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—2

Amash
Massie

NOT VOTING—38

Amodei
Andrews
Bishop (NY)
Buchanan
Campbell
Cassidy
Crenshaw
Davis, Danny
DeSantis
Fincher
Gerlach
Gibson
Gosar
Gutiérrez
Kingston
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Marino
McCarthy (NY)
Meeks
Meng
Miller, Gary
Moran
Richmond
Rogers (AL)
Runyan
Rush
Sanford
Scalise
Schwartz
Sensenbrenner
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stockman
Tiberi
Tsongas
Wasserman Schultz
Yarmuth

□ 1856

Ms. CLARKE of New York and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

Mr. RANGEL changed his vote from ''present'' to ''aye.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOK). The Chair would ask all present to rise for the purpose of a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in remembrance of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families, and of all who serve in our Armed Forces and their families.

GI BILL TUITION FAIRNESS ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 357) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 390, nays 0, not voting 41, as follows:

[Roll No. 33]

YEAS—390

Aderholt
Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires

Slaughter	Titus	Weber (TX)
Smith (MO)	Tonko	Webster (FL)
Smith (NE)	Turner	Welch
Smith (NJ)	Upton	Wenstrup
Smith (TX)	Valadao	Westmoreland
Southerland	Van Hollen	Whitfield
Stewart	Vargas	Williams
Stivers	Veasey	Wilson (FL)
Stutzman	Vela	Wilson (SC)
Swalwell (CA)	Velázquez	Wittman
Takano	Visclosky	Wolf
Terry	Wagner	Womack
Thompson (CA)	Walberg	Woodall
Thompson (MS)	Walden	Yoder
Thompson (PA)	Walorski	Yoho
Thornberry	Walz	Young (AK)
Tierney	Waters	Young (IN)
Tipton	Waxman	

NOT VOTING—41

Amodei	Gutiérrez	Runyan
Andrews	Herrera Beutler	Rush
Bishop (NY)	Kingston	Sanford
Buchanan	Loebsack	Scalise
Campbell	Lynch	Schwartz
Cassidy	Maloney, Sean	Sensenbrenner
Crenshaw	Marino	Smith (WA)
Davis, Danny	McCarthy (NY)	Speier
DeSantis	Meeks	Stockman
Fincher	Meng	Tiberi
Garrett	Miller, Gary	Tsongas
Gerlach	Moran	Wasserman Schultz
Gibson	Richmond	
Gosar	Rogers (AL)	Yarmuth

□ 1906

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, to make other improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3590, SPORTSMEN'S HERITAGE AND RECREATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–339) on the resolution (H. Res. 470) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3590) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

JOE'S STONE CRAB

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, to the sound of cracking claws, Joe's Stone Crab, a famous, and especially delicious, South Beach institution has made its debut here in the Nation's Capital.

Over 100 years ago, in 1913, Joe and Jennie Weiss started a lunch stand on Miami Beach that has become a south Florida icon, as recognizable as South Beach, Little Havana, or the Everglades.

Many families view the opportunity to dig into a plate of Joe's stone crabs as a special treat, especially because they have to save up their money for a while in order to get to Joe's.

South Floridians are proud to support Joe's because even after 100 years, it is still a family-owned business, one that treats their nearly 400 employees like they are part of that family.

So, to all of my congressional colleagues, if you cannot make it down to my sunny and warm Miami congressional district to try these delicious stone crabs, at least you have the opportunity to get a taste of what you are missing in our tropical paradise through a brand new Joe's in downtown D.C. Come and enjoy what south Florida has to offer.

THE SEATTLE SEAHAWKS WIN SUPER BOWL XLVIII

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, in the Seattle tradition I would like to rise and recognize the football game that was played last night in New Jersey. Our team played very well, and no one in Seattle was the least bit surprised at the result.

MILITARY SUICIDES

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to welcome encouraging news from the Army on a problem our military has faced for over a decade, the increase of suicides.

It was announced today that, for the first time since 2004, suicides in the Army have decreased. In 2013, there were 150 suicides in the Active Duty Army, down 19 percent from the 185 in 2012. This is great news, but it is just a first step and a lot more must be done.

Mr. Speaker, even one soldier taking his or her own life is a tragedy, but 150 is still an epidemic, especially where one in five were never deployed. That number increases further if you include the Guard, Reserves, and other services. Not only must Congress do more to address this issue, this country needs to focus more on the overarching issue of mental health.

As this Congress moves forward, I will continue to work on this issue and intend to introduce legislation again dealing with mental health assessments during initial enlistments.

We must keep faith in the promise to take care of these individuals who stepped forward to serve our Nation.

FEDERAL PRISON POPULATIONS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United States Attorney General, Eric Holder, and President Obama for joining with voices, particularly those of the House Judiciary Committee, Republicans and Democrats, and acknowledging that the United States is comprised of only 5 percent of the world's population, but we incarcerate almost a quarter of the world's prisoners.

While the entire U.S. population has increased about one-third over the last 30 years, the Federal prison population has increased at a staggering rate of 800 percent, currently totaling nearly 216,000 inmates and currently operates at a 33 percent overcapacity.

One-half of those Federal prison populations are drug offenses. While some of them are truly dangerous persons, as Deputy Attorney General Cole said, many of them are first-timers, and by possession only, wound up under Federal laws, the crack cocaine laws, in the Federal system.

Today, I stand to support the clemency offering that is being offered by the Department of Justice, as well as to reduce barriers in housing and access to health care.

I ask my colleagues to join me in working to ensure that we get word out to these individuals and their families to make sure that this clemency works and works in the right way, Mr. Speaker.

□ 1915

PRESIDENT WRONG ON MARIJUANA

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently, President Obama said that marijuana is no more dangerous than alcohol; however, the White House's own Web site gives numerous examples to the contrary:

First, marijuana use, particularly chronic use that begins at a young age, can lead to negative health consequences, such as dependence, addiction, respiratory illnesses, and cognitive impairment;

Second, marijuana is not a benign drug, and it is the second-leading substance for which people receive drug treatment;

Third, in the past 20 years, marijuana potency has tripled, leading to serious public health concerns;

Fourth, long-term use, particularly in adolescents, may be linked with lower IQ later in life.

Mr. Speaker, comparing marijuana to alcohol, as the President did, will only encourage its use and endanger the health of many Americans.

CASTROVILLE

(Mr. GALLEGO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to highlight parts of the 23rd District, I rise today to talk about one of the jewels of the 23rd, Castroville, where Texas meets France. One of several settlements founded by Henri Castro in 1844, the Alsatian culture there is still evident. And most people don't know that it was the first county seat of Medina County, serving until 1893.

The population in the 2010 census was only 2,680 people. It is a small town very near a big city, 25 miles west of San Antonio. There are 97 historical buildings in the town. It is a great place for a walking tour.

And if you are looking for recreational relaxation, there are few places better than Castroville, where the Medina River meanders through town. The Medina River was once the border between Texas and Mexico. There are 126 acres of pecan trees and flowers along the Medina River in the Castroville Regional Park and lots and lots of shopping. Castroville Pottery is one of the coolest pottery shops around, where they will show you how to make your own.

Mr. Speaker, around the 23rd District in 1 minute.

OBAMACARE CONTINUES TO HURT SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, I hosted a town hall by telephone with constituents to hear their expectations for the President's State of the Union address. The overwhelming message was clear: we must repeal and replace the government health care takeover bill, which destroys jobs.

During the call, I spoke with Annette, a small business owner from Columbia who would like to expand her company and hire more employees. Unfortunately, because of the tax increases imposed by ObamaCare, Annette feels as though the government is single-handedly prohibiting her from creating new jobs.

Annette is not alone. Today, Federal employees received their February pay statements, and one dedicated employee showed me her premium had doubled, putting her family in crisis.

House Republicans have an alternative that repeals the unworkable health care law and replaces it with commonsense solutions that will not deter Annette and millions of other small business owners from creating jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP

(Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, recently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that it is expanding the boundary lines of Wyoming's Wind River Indian Reservation so that it now includes three towns: Kinnear, Riverton, and Pavillion. This decision by the EPA, claiming it had authority under the Clean Air Act, overturned earlier congressional actions that reduced the size of Wind River Indian Reservation and made clear that the neighboring towns were not a part of this reservation.

In a January 6 press release, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead is quoted as having said:

> My deep concern is about an administrative agency of the Federal Government altering a State's boundary and going against over 100 years of history and law. This should be a concern to all citizens because, if the EPA can unilaterally take land away from a State, where will it stop?

Where will it stop, indeed. I believe the EPA thinks that it controls anything that touches air or water. They even think they control the boundaries of the Indian nations. You can't make this stuff up.

ISSUES FACING THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Speaker for allowing me this 1 hour to talk on some very important subjects that are facing the Nation. We deal with economic issues. We deal with the health care crisis in our country. And Americans right now, as they are watching us on this floor this evening, wonder if they will have a job tomorrow. So many Americans right now are looking at part-time jobs rather than full-time jobs. This is changing their lives, and it is changing what they thought the future would hold for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the American people that it is not over. Hold on. We know that better days could be ahead. Why? Because economics can change; economic policies can change. And unfortunately, what we have seen coming out of the Obama White House, the economic policies have led to Americans not having the number of hours that they need to be able to provide for their families. They haven't led to the wage increases that they had hoped that they would be able to see.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, very disturbing information has come forward that nearly $4,000 in a reduction of income has occurred, on average, to American households. From the time President Obama first came into office in 2008, the average median household income was something like almost $4,000 more in 2007 than it is today in 2014.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how anyone could see that that is good news or that that is a good deal because with inflation and inflationary values—we all know, Mr. Speaker, that people pay more for gasoline today in 2014 than they did back in 2007. We know that people pay far more today for groceries, Mr. Speaker, in 2014 than they did in 2007. So what the American people need is relief, relief from these inflation-pushed high prices on the American people.

That is why the report that came out on Friday regarding the Keystone pipeline was so important. It confirmed what numerous other studies had already told us before, and it is this:

The Keystone pipeline will not increase carbon emissions here in the United States. It is completely safe. And for the good of the United States of America, for the good of our environment, for the good of job creation, for the good of wage increases in the United States, we should have built Keystone and the pipeline and increased American energy production years ago.

We have the chance now. And so, Mr. Speaker, I call on the Obama administration to implement what the recent State Department report issued on Friday, and it is this: that we can safely go ahead and build the Keystone pipeline.

But I think we need to go much further than that, Mr. Speaker. I think that it would behoove not only this House of Representatives but also the United States Senate and the President of the United States to unify and agree on something that would be so good for all Americans—young and old, rich and poor, Black and White, Latinos—all elements of the United States. We should unite on growing our economy and growing prosperity for the average American. And we can do this, Mr. Speaker, by engaging in an all-of-the-above energy policy whereby we legalize all forms of energy and, in fact, encourage exploration and growth, because we have reports that are issued every single year that come to the same conclusion year after year after year: of all the countries in the world—there are well over 100 countries in the world, and of all the countries in the world, our own government tells us every year in a report that it is the United States of America that has been singularly blessed.

Blessed how, Mr. Speaker? Blessed with an abundance of natural energy resources. Whether it is oil—the United States is blessed with more oil than Saudi Arabia—or whether it is natural gas—the United States of America is blessed with trillions of cubic square feet of natural gas—every day, Mr. Speaker, our scientists and our explorers find more and more of these wonderful natural resources: oil, natural

gas, and coal. And because of the genius of the scientists in the United States, we have cleaner options than ever before to use this fundamental source of energy which is the number one source of energy in the United States, and that is coal.

In my home State of Minnesota, we see that there is a propane crisis. The people in my district are severely curtailed from using this energy resource. And there is also a scarcity of the product as well. I spoke with one individual today on the plane when I was coming in who told me that he was so happy. His mother locked in at about $1.30 a gallon on propane, and he said there are reports propane could go up to over $6 a gallon, perhaps even $7, before the harshest winter in decades in Minnesota and other parts of America, as well, is over.

Let's help the American people's lives, Mr. Speaker. Let's not make life more difficult for the average American. Let's make life better. And we can do that very simply by engaging in an all-of-the-above American energy strategy, whereby, literally millions of high-paying jobs would come online.

Since President Obama came into office, we have seen the average median household income go down, not freeze or stay the same, but actually go down, go down by nearly $4,000. And, in fact, the average median income of the average American, they now see that their income is 8 percent less today than it was 7 years ago. Rather than that being our story, let's change the narrative, Mr. Speaker. Let's change it for a positive, happy ending for the American people so that when they go to their local gas stations, rather than gas being in excess of $3 a gallon or in some parts of this country over $4 a gallon, let's bring that price down, Mr. Speaker, so that it could be $2 a gallon again. I know that is entirely possible and within our grasp.

But what would be even better is to see the average American's income, including senior citizens on fixed income, to see their incomes go up—their rate of return on their savings, the rate of return on their dividends, their investments that they have tied up, after a lifetime of labor, after a lifetime of doing the right thing, taking their hard-earned money, putting it into savings, putting it into investments, putting it into, for many Americans what is their number one investment, which is their home, seeing Americans' home values rise. Why? Because of having a go-go economy, a growth-based economy, an economy that is growing because, rather than being a consumer of energy from foreign nations, we are, instead, the world's leading supplier of energy resources across the rest of the world.

I know this is possible, Mr. Speaker, and I know that we can unify on this issue—not only fossil fuels but also nuclear reactors.

□ 1930

Just this last week, I spoke with an individual who is an expert in the field of nuclear reactors. Before, in the United States, we relied on large nuclear reactors. In my home State of Minnesota, Mr. Speaker, we have two nuclear reactors in my State that supply somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of all the electricity needs in Minnesota. We are grateful that we have these two reactors that provide emission-free power in our State, but we have a new generation of nuclear reactors that could come online and be available for people all across the United States. Think, in a rural area, where perhaps it is just a few thousand people who perhaps wouldn't have access to nuclear-generated energy, they could have access to new, small, nuclear modules that are effectively able to be put in very unique locations, completely safe, almost—almost—waste-free.

This new generation of nuclear reactors, in my opinion, should be studied and put online in the near future so that we could have yet one more tool in America's energy toolkit. As a matter of fact, the United States could be, again, the leading supplier of this newest generation of modular nuclear reactors to be used and deployed across the world where they are safe, where they can't be compromised, and where very, very little nuclear waste comes forward.

You see, it is exciting, Mr. Speaker, to look at the future when so many of my constituents that I speak to today are worried and nervous about the future. They literally tell me, Congresswoman, I have no idea if my children will be as well off in their future as I am today. Every generation of Americans has been hopeful and optimistic, Mr. Speaker, because they have assumed and taken for granted that their children would be better off economically than they are today. That is all of our hope. I know I feel that for my biological children, and that is my hope and my prayer for our foster children. We want every generation to not only have what we had but to exceed it and shoot for the stars with their ambition, their goals, their dreams and their plans. Isn't that America? Isn't that what defines us, to build the next generation of the next mousetrap, to benefit not only us, not only our children, but to benefit and lift up those among us in the United States who seek to move up the next economic ladder?

You see, that is what can happen with innovation. Pull out a smartphone, if you have a smartphone, and you think of what was available to only the wealthiest among us, you now see in the hands of people at the bottom level of the economic ladder. Yet how much improved are our lives because we have smartphones today that are available to us? Think of the applications, the apps, if you will, that are on smartphones, and how those apps can be used to increase productivity in the United States, can be used, for instance, on health care to connect us more quickly with a doctor or a nurse or a pharmacy so we can realize the requirements that we need to become healthier individuals.

There are so many great innovations that are just waiting around the corner if we only legalize them, if we only open them up, and if we reject this very heavy hand of government that wants to bureaucratize nearly every element of our lives and cause different aspects of our lives to be far more expensive and have less of an ability to access the newest innovations. Instead, we in the United States need to be what we were for the first several hundred years of our existence, and it is this: nimble—nimble and able to capitalize on the intellect, the raw ideas and the talents that are in the United States. Legal immigration has benefited this country immeasurably, and we embrace with both arms legal immigration and all that has meant for our country. These are just a few of the things that we have to be hopeful about and optimistic about as we go forward in our country.

There are other issues, as well, besides economics, that we grapple with here in the United States. One of those deals with foreign policy, another deals with national security, and another deals with how the United States is viewed across the world. I have spent time with my colleagues, many of whom this last week were across the world trying to meet with world leaders and find out what the concerns are and how we in the United States can advance our mutual interests.

I was privileged to be able to go on a fact-finding trip recently with one of my Democrat colleagues, a wonderful man from Rhode Island, Representative JIM LANGEVIN. JIM is a quadriplegic, and he and I had the privilege of traveling both to Australia and to New Zealand, where we met with our counterparts and also where we could talk about mutual areas where we could work together.

We see the rise in Asia of a new and aggressive China, a China who, for all practical purposes, has been engaging in what some would call cyber espionage and cyber warfare against nations all across the world—not just the United States but against many nations. How can we cooperate, then, with our allies to counter very aggressive steps that could be taken by, for instance, the Chinese or perhaps the Russians or perhaps the Iranians or other nations, North Korea, for instance, who may not have the United States' best interest at heart, who may, in fact, through the use of the Internet, through cyber espionage or through hacking in government computers, be, in essence, stealing some of the United States' most sensitive secrets, secrets that we would not want our adversaries to have? This is a very real issue, Mr. Speaker, and one that needs to be addressed.

That isn't the only form of warfare. There is also economic warfare, where our private businesses, through their own expenditure of funds on research and development, have come up with innovative new products and have, in effect, had the plans, the designs and the processes for those products literally stolen by adversaries—again not with our best interest at heart here in the United States. That information has been taken, and in some cases, we are told, a country like China has built a factory in China or in some other location where all they had to do was steal the raw data from an American company and they could go to work once they had that intellectual property and put to work perhaps a new line of paint, perhaps a new product that was being made in the United States and now is being made more cheaply in China and is undercutting the patents, the protections and the intellectual property that we have in the United States.

Do you see, Mr. Speaker, it is a brave new world that we live in. That is why national security matters, and it is why foreign policy matters. It is why this last weekend at the Munich conference it was very important that we in the United States listened to and paid attention to what it was we were hearing from our foreign partners in the world. We have to recognize the reality of our world. Not everyone has America's best interest at heart. Not all foreign powers want to make sure that it is America's children who will grow up to be the economic and military powerhouse leaders of the world.

You see, many foreign nations would like to see the United States cut down, reduced down, so that we are no longer an economic leader or a military leader. I believe that the United States has been a strong partner in keeping peace across the world for decades. We are not a perfect country. We haven't done everything right. We get that. We recognize that. But I believe that our world has been better off when the United States has been that economic leader and that military leader.

If the United States isn't the leader in the world, who should be? What would peace be like in the world if Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government were the leader holding together world powers? Just imagine for a moment what that would be like. Or imagine, Mr. Speaker, what would it be like if China was the leader holding together world powers? We know what they have done before. By stealing secrets from our government and stealing secrets from private industry, we know what that has done. What would that be like if China was the leading military or economic superpower?

We can't think that this is some far-off future scenario that could never happen. We need to open our eyes, and I think one place that we can open our eyes is listening to what foreign leaders are telling us. What some of my colleagues have told me even as recently as today from some of their travels, foreign travels across the world, is that they have never heard before foreign leaders say to them what they are saying now. Foreign leaders are saying, look, we don't get the United States anymore. We don't understand your foreign policy. We don't understand your national security, because we don't understand who the friends of the United States are anymore. We don't understand who your adversaries are anymore. In fact, we can receive communications from the State Department or the Defense Department or an intelligence department, and we can get three different pictures of the same scenario. Which one should we believe?

There is a problem—and we didn't hear this just once. We have heard this from multiple regions in the world and from multiple world leaders who were scratching their heads, even including former Polish President Lech Walesa, who had said the United States is no longer the political and moral power in the world.

You see, Mr. Speaker, other nations across the world want the United States, a responsible holder of power, to maintain that sense of decency and rule of law and adherence to a common goal of mankind, to prefer peace over war. Sometimes the United States has had to go to war. We have had to go to war in order to stand face to face and toe to toe with some of the most maniacal dictators that have ever been known in human history. That would include a Stalin of Russia, that would include a Mao Tse-tung of China, and that would include an Adolf Hitler of Germany. These maniacal rulers have served to hurt the chances for peace in the world, and yet it is the United States that has chosen to put on the line treasure and blood time after time after time. Once war has ensued—no one wants war, no one prefers war—but once that has ensued, it is the United States through the Marshall Plan that did, in fact, rebuild Europe and feed millions who were starving. It was the United States after World War II, after dropping the bombs in Japan, that went in and helped to rebuild that war-torn country and the difficulty that had ensued.

These aren't easy issues. There is no clean line here of right and wrong. There are difficulties that we grapple with. We get that. But, Mr. Speaker, one thing that we should agree on is that the policies of the United States shouldn't hurt the American people, and they shouldn't hurt people in other countries. Our policies should be ones that help the American people and help to bring about peace with other nations of the world. That should be easy.

That is why this last weekend at the Munich conference I was particularly concerned with our Secretary of State's comments. There was an article that had come out just this weekend regarding our Secretary of State, and I wanted to quote from it. I wanted to be able to speak a little bit, also, about some other issues that have been in the news. The American people continue to ask me about Benghazi: When are we ever going to get the truth about Benghazi? Just over a week ago, there was an article by the second-in-command in Benghazi who wanted to straighten up the facts and put his view on paper.

That is all very interesting. We want to be able to have time to talk about that, but I think it is also very important that we talk about and listen to America's greatest ally in the world. There is an ally that felt very disrespected and even used the word ''offended'' after comments that were made at the Munich conference this week by our Secretary of State. Now, in deference to our Secretary of State, followup responses have been that he didn't mean to say what was reported in the media, but I think it is very important that we look at our ally—and this is Israel—and what Israel's response is. Again, I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to look at the context of the remarks that were made by our Secretary of State. Because, you see, if you speak with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, as I have done numerous times in the last few months, and if you speak to the Foreign Minister of Israel, as I have been privileged to do, to the defense secretary in Israel, as I have been privileged to do, and to the intelligence secretary in Israel, as I have been privileged to do, they have been very strong and united in their view of the greatest existential threat that Israel faces today.

□ 1945

That threat isn't new; it is one that Israel has faced for the last recent years. And it is this: it is Iran with a nuclear weapon, because Iran has stated unequivocally, once they gain access to a nuclear weapon, and potentially the missile means to deliver that weapon, they have announced they will use that weapon against Israel. They will use that weapon against Israel, Israel being about the size of New Jersey. The largest city, Tel Aviv, and the surrounding area provides employment to approximately 80 percent of the Israeli population. So it doesn't take a lot of imagination, Mr. Speaker, to see that it may be the game plan of a nuclear weaponized Iran to drop a nuclear weapon on Tel Aviv and effectively wipe out the Jewish State of Israel in one fell swoop.

If that would happen, we should not kid ourselves, that capability and capacity, I believe, could just as easily be used against our Western partners and allies in the European region. It could be used against Australia, our great ally and friend, and also against New Zealand, our great ally and friend. And it could even be used here in the United States of America.

The rhetoric that has come out of Iran is nothing less than outrageous,

but intentional. The regime has stated, they haven't deviated one iota from their nuclear goals and ambitions—not one iota.

What would that mean for the world if Iran obtained a nuclear weapon? You see, this is a very dangerous, dangerous game that we are playing with Iran.

I absolutely disagree fundamentally with the President's decision under the P5+1 agreement to allow Iran to continue to spin centrifuges and continue to enrich uranium which could be used as a fuel for a nuclear weapon. Iran has not complied with the U.N. resolutions, not at all. They have not.

What is different today under the P5+1? Not much, I would submit. So the worst nightmare for Israel has been realized in that exactly when Iran was being squeezed with economic sanctions, when they were in a position where they were starting to yell ''ouch,'' that is exactly when the United States and the P5+1 pulled back the pressure and allowed Iran to have some breathing space, breathing space to the tune of billions of dollars of access to grow and prop up Iran's failing economy. This was not the time to give balance to Iran. This was the time to demand cooperation from Iran.

And so what is happening now is that we see people from all over the world—China, Russia, various nations—are all buying plane tickets to run to Iran to conduct economic deals because, you see, under the previous sanction's regime, nations were prevented from constructing economic deals because it would help build up Iran. Now, it is an open-court press to engage in economic commerce with Iran. That is building up Iran, and it is causing Iran to have less incentive to come to the table and stop their program of enriching uranium, of spinning centrifuges, and they are not in any way dismantling their current nuclear program.

As Prime Minister Netanyahu said, it is his worst day in 10 years. He said this is the deal of the century for Iran.

Why is it we would fail to listen to our number one ally in the world, Israel, on this topic of a nuclear weaponized Iran? Why wouldn't we listen to their concerns? Why—Israel, which is far more vulnerable to Iran with a nuclear weapon—wouldn't we take those concerns into account?

Well, I think it is revealing what happened this last weekend at the Munich conference because you see, Mr. Speaker, one government minister in Israel called Secretary of State Kerry's statements ''offensive.'' At the conference the Secretary said, and I quote from the article that was published this weekend:

> You see, for Israel, there is an increasing delegitimization campaign that has been building up.

In other words, there is an effort to delegitimize Israel. People are very sensitive to it. There are talks of boycotts and other kinds of things. Are we all going to be better off with all of that? The Intelligence Minister, Steinitz, in Israel yesterday morning said:

> Israel cannot be pressured to negotiate with a gun against its head.

In other words, economic boycotts from the European Union, from sanctions, and also from divestment campaigns.

Now, let's just think about this for a moment. Boycotts, boycotting Israel's products. Approximately 30 percent, I am told, of economic trade that Israel engages in comes from Europe. If there is a boycott that comes from the EU, this will severely handicap Israel's economy, and yet it seems Secretary of State Kerry was threatening Israel with an economic boycott.

What about sanctions? Sanctions. Isn't it the mother of all ironies that sanctions, by agreement of the United States, have been lifted from what arguably is the United States' greatest adversary, a nuclear weaponized Iran, and also Israel's greatest adversary, a nuclear weaponized Iran? We would lift sanctions, ironically, against a rogue regime with announced intentions to annihilate people across the world, the Jewish State of Israel, the United States of America; the Jewish State of Israel being the little Satan and the United States of America being denominated the great Satan. So we would lift sanctions on this maniacal nation, a nuclear Iran, and yet we would threaten sanctions or the possibility of sanctions from the EU against America's greatest ally, Israel? Isn't that one of the most severe ironies of all time? This being the greatest existential threat to the world, Iran with a nuclear weapon. How could it be that our Secretary of State could bring this up to the world at the Munich conference this last weekend, the specter of a boycott against Israel, sanctions against Israel, and the potential of a divestment campaign analogous to South Africa which actually engaged in apartheid.

And yet in Israel, what is the so-called apartheid when the Palestinians can work in the State of Israel? Palestinians are allowed to live in the Jewish State of Israel. There is an effort of coexistence from the Jewish State of Israel. And yet what has the Palestinian Authority done? They have thumbed their nose at the Oslo Accord. They have thumbed their nose. Have they fulfilled the requirements on the Palestinians? No, they have not.

What did Israel do? Israel took land in the Gaza area, which is on the Mediterranean Sea. They withdrew Israeli settlers from Gaza and gave the land over to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for peace. What sort of peace did Israel realize by actually giving up that land to the Palestinian Authority? They were met with rockets fired in the region near Beersheba and Sderot. Those areas continue to have thousands of rockets pointed at them.

Who, I ask, Mr. Speaker, is the aggressor in this situation? Who, I ask, Mr. Speaker, should be the one to receive economic boycotts or sanctions or divestment? Would it be Israel, which is not being the aggressor with rockets against Gaza, or should it be Gaza?

You see, these rockets are hidden in neighborhoods. They are hidden in nursing homes by the Palestinians. They are hidden in areas where civilians are kept. And these rockets are not fired at military targets, Mr. Speaker, by the Palestinians. They are specifically targeted at elementary schools, at nursing homes in Israel, and at innocent human life. Think of this.

And our Secretary of State this weekend, in effect, threatened Israel with boycotts, economic sanctions, and divestment. No wonder the Israelis were so extremely upset with our Secretary of State. Even the economic minister, Naftali Bennett, whom I had the privilege of meeting on one of my recent trips, had a message for all of the advice givers:

> Never has a nation abandoned their land because of economic threats. We are no different.

In other words, be warned, Israel will not give up further land no matter what the threats are. And the United States, which purports to be Israel's best friend, should not be the one rattling the saber with economic threats.

Naftali Bennett went on to say:

> Only security will ensure economic stability, not a terrorist state next to Ben Gurion Airport. We expect our friends around the world to stand beside us and against anti-Semitic efforts targeting Israel, and not for them to be their amplifier.

That is how those words were received in this very volatile part of the world. Even Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu weighed in on our Secretary of State's boycott threats, primarily coming from Europe, during his Cabinet meeting. According to a transcript of the Prime Minister's remarks on the Prime Minister's Web site, he called any attempts to boycott Israel ''immoral and unjust.''

''They will not achieve their goal,'' the Prime Minister said. ''First, they cause the Palestinians to adhere to their intransigent positions, and thus push peace further away.''

You see, these are not big asks for reasonable people to consider. You see, the Palestinian Authority is being asked to recognize the right to exist for the Jewish State of Israel—the right to exist. They don't even want to accept that the Jewish State of Israel has the right to exist. That is number one. Number two, does the Jewish State of Israel have the right to defend herself from aggression? They won't even admit that she has the right to defend herself from aggression.

Maybe it would help if Hamas, which is the ruling authority over Gaza, maybe it would help if they remove article 7 from their charter, which calls for the annihilation of the Jewish people, the extermination of the Jewish people. There isn't much difference between the call in the Hamas charter,

which is the final solution, the riddance of the Jewish people in the Jewish State of Israel, there isn't much difference between that and what a maniacal leader tried to accomplish during World War II. And yet these same terrorists are being given deference in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

It is bizarre to think that the United States and the policy of the United States since 2008 has included calling on Israel to retreat and give up even more land to the Palestinians, which have repeatedly called for the annihilation of the Jewish state. It is amazing that the United States and our President has called on Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 borders, which would be a suicide mission.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I have been to Israel. I have literally stood in an apartment building where I can look out the front window of the apartment and see the Mediterranean Sea and the border of Israel on the west, and look out the window in the rear of the apartment and see Israel's border on the east with the Golan Heights, about a 9-mile width.

□ 2000

What country could defend itself, especially when the call is that the Palestinian Authority seeks to unite both the area of Judea and Samaria with Gaza, and they want a highway to do that? In other words, Israel is being called upon to cut herself in two. If she cuts herself in two, just like any human body, she couldn't go on, she couldn't survive, she couldn't live.

So these requests that are coming—in fact, those demands that are coming from the Palestinian Authority—should be shut down by the United States of America. That is where the delegitimization should come, Mr. Speaker, not delegitimizing Israel because she has a goal of the existence of the Jewish state. Shouldn't Israel have that right to continue and preserve itself as the Jewish State of Israel? Isn't that a worthy goal? Should we agree with that?

Why should we be undercutting that goal when the so-called partner in peace, the Palestinian Authority, is unwilling to even work with step one? I understand the response from leaders in Israel this weekend—I understand it—because, in effect, what they are saying is they no longer recognize the United States of America as its friend.

Isn't it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that parallels what many Members of Congress have been hearing from various leaders across the world: We no longer recognize the United States of America; we no longer recognize your foreign policy. Behind closed doors they are telling us they want us to succeed. They want us to remain the world's superpower because we provide literally defense across the world to keep world order. If we are not here as a force for good, then what, then who, then what is the next step? So you see these are not comments made by our ally Israel and those leaders without cause and without reason.

The Prime Minister said: ''They will not achieve their goal''—meaning the boycott and the sanctions and the divestment. ''First, they cause the Palestinians to adhere to their intransigent positions and thus push peace further away.'' True. ''Second, no pressure will cause me to concede the vital interests of the State of Israel, especially the security of Israel citizens.''

Make no mistake about it: Israel won't give up, Israel is going to stand, Israel is going to be there. So the last nation to put roadblocks in Israel's way should be the United States of America.

Secretary Kerry has a proud record of over three decades of steadfast support for Israel's security.

That is the statement that was released. But the Secretary's words don't add up.

At the conference, Kerry said of the Israel-Palestinian conflict:

Today's status quo absolutely, to a certainty, I promise you 100 percent, cannot be maintained. It's not sustainable. It's illusory. There's a momentary prosperity, there's a momentary peace.

In other words, Secretary Kerry is putting pressure on Israel to make a change, and to make a change whereby putting her sovereignty on the line.

The question is: Will the United States continue to press Israel to withdraw from Judea and Samaria, the Biblical homeland of the Jewish State of Israel?

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, why in the world would the United States ask Israel to withdraw from the very location where, according to Biblical and Torah documents, the Jewish State of Israel was begun; where Abraham, the originator of the Jewish State of Israel, where the Jewish people had their origin. Why would Judea and Samaria be that area that is the area that we would expect would be given back to the Palestinian Authority when there has been virtually continuous presence of the Jewish people in that region, albeit to varying degrees?

I had the privilege of standing at Shiloh—or what some people pronounce Shiloh—where the tent of meeting was moved in the interim period between the First Temple period and the Second Temple period on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The temple was in a tent at Shiloh.

There are artifacts yet today being found, shards of pottery that prove that this location in Judea and Samaria was where the Jewish people had their most holy site, where the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant, was kept with the tents built around, where worship was conducted for over 350 years by the Jewish people. Yet the Jewish people are told they have to leave that land, the land of their origins, the land of worship for over 3,500 years—they have to leave? It is incredible, it is impossible, it will never be.

One thing that needs to be understood, Mr. Speaker, is the tenacity and determination and decision of the Jewish people. You see, Mr. Speaker, they have given up before. They have given land for peace. They have given one concession after another. But what they have told me in my visits to Judea and Samaria, no more the people who live there are temporary settlers. They are residents, this is their home, and they have no intention of leaving, and they will fight to the death for their land and for their people and for their ancestors and forebears and, yes, for their children and for the future of the Jewish State of Israel.

You see the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood in this Chamber right behind me and stood, Mr. Speaker, at the lectern, and he told a joint session of Congress very clearly that Israel isn't what's wrong with the Middle East; Israel is what is right with the Middle East.

I know from experience. The very first time I was privileged to travel to the Jewish State of Israel was the day after I graduated from high school. It was in 1974. I spent my summer in Israel. It was a very different place back then. It was a Third World country. The modern State of Israel was established in 1948 under extremely severe adverse conditions, and they continued to fight for the maintenance of their sovereignty. Why? Because they were continually attacked by their Arab neighbors and continue to remain so to this day.

There is only one Jewish state in the world. There are multiple Arab nations, multiple Muslim nations across the world, as it should be. We recognize the right to exist of Muslim nations. We recognize Iran's right to exist.

Why is it that only the Jewish State of Israel has to struggle for the world to recognize its right to exist? Why is it the only nation in the world that has to struggle to have recognition of its designated capital—Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the eternal undivided city and the undivided capital of the Jewish State of Israel. Yet that appears, once again, to be the bone of contention for the world, Jerusalem. Even so much so that the United States, which is supposed to be Israel's ally and we are supposed to have Israel's back, our Embassy remains in Tel Aviv rather than in Jerusalem.

There are efforts to have our Embassy moved, and I call upon our government, Mr. Speaker, I call upon our President, to demonstrate to Israel that we do have your back, we are your greatest ally, and have the United States move our Embassy into Jerusalem and do it in a fortnight and make it happen and show the world that we literally do have their back.

If we can't do that, Mr. Speaker, I will call upon our administration to at minimum change the State Department's Web site, which, if you look at the map of Israel and if you look at the capital Jerusalem, Jerusalem is not designated Israel; it is considered an international up-for-grabs area. Really?

Jerusalem is contiguously surrounded by the Jewish State of Israel. How could this not be the very navel of the Jewish State of Israel? You see if the United States makes a decision to abandon Israel, as many nations of the world have done, as many nations are crying out for an economic boycott of Israel, economic sanctions against Israel, economic divestment against Israel, as though Israel were a criminal—if the United States, Mr. Speaker, chooses to join that extremely misguided, wrongheaded void of all facts, then I make a prediction, Mr. Speaker: that the United States will be adversely affected economically, and I believe that we could see adversity militarily against the United States as well.

There has always been one great defender of the Jewish state and of the Jewish people. That defender has been listed throughout antiquity, and Israel has had her back held by a force stronger than the United States. That strong right arm will remain for Israel. That defender will remain. The question is what will be the destiny of the United States? Will our destiny be one of blessing or will our destiny be one of adversity?

I think we need to be very clear and very careful in how we deal with the Jewish State of Israel. Israel must never be betrayed, and the United States must not put pressure on the Jewish State of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go over just a brief timeline that I put together of Jewish and Israeli concessions and foreign demands that have been put on the Jewish State of Israel.

You can go back to 1917 with the Balfour Declaration.

Go back to 1920. There were Arab attacks on peaceful Jewish settlements in the northern part of the British-controlled Palestine, where seven Jews were killed. The British military administration urged the disbanding of the Zionist commission, created to assist the British authorities in giving effect to the Balfour Declaration, promising the upbuilding of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The British military administration was replaced by a League of Nations mandate. It was Israel that was betrayed.

In 1921, anti-Jewish riots occurred in Jaffa on the Mediterranean, orchestrated by the British-installed Mufti of Jerusalem by the head of the Muslim community. They took the lives of 43 Jews in that effort in 1921. The British temporarily suspended Jewish immigration into Israel.

In 1922, Britain removed all of Palestine east of the Jordan. Seventy-eight percent of Palestine was removed from the territory of the League of Nations mandate for Palestine and power transferred to Emir Abdullah, who established the Emirate, later called Transjordan.

In 1929, a campaign of false rumor and propaganda, orchestrated by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj-Amin el-Husseini, alleged that Jews demonstrated at the Western Wall to curse Mohammed. Never happened. That mosques had been attacked by Jews. Never happened. That others would soon be attacked. A massive anti-Jewish pogrom convulsed Palestine in which 133 Jews were murdered by Arab mobs. The British suppressed the assaults, they killed 110 Palestinian Arabs. The British Shaw Commission ignored evidence of the Mufti's orchestration of the violence and recommended reducing Jewish immigration, and blamed the Jews for the murderous violence against them.

In 1939, a commission that investigated the Arab Revolt recommend creating a Jewish state in 20 percent of the British Mandate, with 80 percent of the mandate to be placed under Arab control and incorporated into the Transjordan. The Arab world rejected that—in other words, the Palestinian homeland rejected it—and the Arab Revolt continued.

In 1939, the St. James Conference was attended by the Zionist and Palestinian Arab leadership. Again, the Arab parties refused to sit in the same room with the Zionist representatives. No solution was reached. A paper was written. Further Jewish immigration would have to be dependent upon Arab approval.

□ 2015

In 1947, the United Nations proposed partitioning the British mandate. The plan was accepted by the Zionist movement. It was rejected by all Arab parties. Again, 6,000 Jews—1 percent of the Israeli population—were killed in a war in May of 1948 when Israel declared herself the Jewish state. That was her entrée into statehood and sovereignty. Israel has fought for her sovereignty ever since and has been under attack by our Arab neighbors ever since.

In 1949, Arab belligerents other than Iraq signed an armistice agreement with Israel. All refused to recognize Israel. All refused to negotiate a solution to the Palestinian-Arab refugee problem created by the first Arab-Israeli war that was launched by the Arab States. The Arab war on Israel created 700,000 Palestinian-Arab refugees. Most were confined to Palestinian refugee camps in neighboring Arab States, and 50,000 remain alive today—only 50,000. The oft-heard figure of 4 or 5 million Palestinian refugees includes, contrary to any other refugee case in the world, not only the actual refugees but generations of their offspring. Today, we have refugees from the Syrian conflict. Only the current refugees are included, not multiple generations. This is not true with the Palestinians. The U.N. called on Resolution 194, calling for returning refugees between the context of an Israeli-Arab peace, and all Arabs opposed that resolution.

On and on we go, Mr. Speaker, to the present time, including the most recent demand by Secretary of State Kerry against the Israelis that the Israelis had to release over 100 terrorists, many of whom were murderers, who had killed innocent Israelis, including an American citizen. The United States Government put pressure on the Israeli Government to release known murderous terrorists and thugs in exchange for—what?—other Israeli prisoners to be returned to Israel? No, Mr. Speaker. It was in return for the Palestinians to sit down at the negotiating table, and they did.

Once again, Israel disadvantaged herself and released murderous terrorists in order to get the Palestinian Authority to just come to the table. What has been the goal of the Palestinian Authority? Delay, wait, change the terms, move the goalpost, never getting to a point of actually coming to an agreement.

We have the instance in '47-'50 of Jews in Arab lands being told that they had to flee violence and persecution.

In 1956, Israel captured the Sinai and then later returned it to Egypt. In 1957, Israel withdrew from all of the Sinai. In '67, Egyptian demands were met, and that is when Israel returned that land to Egypt. 1973 was the Yom Kippur war. Egypt attacked Israel. Syria attacked Israel. Israel turned the tide with a miracle, and a ceasefire came about. In '79, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty with Egypt, and Israel dismantled 5,000 communities.

In 1993 were the Oslo Accords. To this day, they have not been met by the Palestinian partners. In 1994, Israel and the PLO signed the Gaza-Jericho Agreement. Again, the Palestinian Authority repudiated that agreement. In 1995, the Oslo II agreement was, again, repudiated. In 1997, Israel and the PA signed the Hebron agreement. Again, there was no peace, and it was undercut. In 1998, the Wye River Memorandum—undercut. In 1999, the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement—again, undercut.

In 2000–2001, with the Camp David negotiations, again, Israel came in good faith—again, undercut. In 2003, the Roadmap for peace did not call for terrorism-free Palestinian leadership, and terrorists remain in that leadership today. In 2005, as I said earlier, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza and northern Samaria, and 8,000 rockets have attacked Israel in that time. In 2008, Israel made another peace offer to the PA that covered 94 percent of the West Bank. Again, it wasn't enough. The PA wouldn't accept the offer, and it made no counteroffer. You see, the PA is unwilling to say ''yes.''

That is why this last weekend was so important, Mr. Speaker, and why Secretary of State Kerry's words fell on incredulous ears. In spite of the nuclear agreement with Iran and now with the words that were said this last weekend, we need to make it unmistakable that I as a Member of Congress stand with Israel, as do my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS: WHEN WOMEN SUCCEED, AMERICA SUCCEEDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to lead the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour on: ''When Women Succeed, America Succeeds.''

I am honored to serve as the co-guest anchor this evening with my colleague and classmate, the gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY. We realize the importance ''when women succeed, America succeeds'' has on our economic agenda. I would also like to thank my colleagues Congressman HORSFORD and Congressman JEFFRIES for their assistance in organizing this evening's Special Order hour.

Too many women across America are being left behind in today's economy. As the President so passionately stated in his House floor speech of the state of the Union on Tuesday, today, women make up about half of our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. This is wrong—and in 2014, it is an embarrassment. It is important for me to note: for Black women, the pay gap is even larger. Black women on the average earn only 64 cents to every dollar a man earns.

The President implored Congress, the White House, the businesses from Wall Street to Main Street to come together and give every woman the opportunity she deserves, because, ''when women succeed, America succeeds.''

Mr. President, I couldn't agree more, and I thank you for adding this statement, this call to action, to your State of the Union.

Many Democrats invited women from across America to attend the State of the Union address or to watch it—women who are among long-term unemployed women who are making a difference in their community, like in my community, a lady by the name of Amelia Caldwell, from the west side, working as a home health aide, or to my guest Karen Morrison, working as an executive in health care. Both must balance the work life, and both understand that we must continue to mentor and provide resources to support women, resources such as health care, child care, equal pay, affordable college tuition, early childhood education, economic development opportunities, and more advocates. Why? Because, when women succeed, America succeeds.

We know that women have made and continue to make great strides, but there is more work to be done. We must provide women with economic security and opportunities that they deserve, that their families need.

I want to thank the Congressional Black Caucus chairwoman, MARCIA FUDGE, for her leadership in making this a front-burner issue for the Congressional Black Caucus tonight.

Just think about it. Jeannette Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress in 1917, who stood before this body and said, I may be the first woman to be here, but I won't be the last. She was right. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman to serve in this body, and was the first in our Nation as a female to run for President of the United States. Leader PELOSI was the highest ranking female elected to serve in American history and was the first female to serve as House Speaker.

America is a much better place because of their service, but there are still far too many women who are left behind. We can help rectify that by making sure that we advocate for women's rights—to have the right to vote, to have pay equity, pay leave, and access to quality child care. This evening, we will have the opportunity to hear many firsthand stories about women and the challenges that they face and how we can help overcome them.

Let me start by introducing my coguest anchor, ROBIN KELLY, from the Second District of Illinois. Robin is no stranger to the challenges that women face in the workforce. As a former State legislator and administrator and scholar and now a congressional advocate for women, I proudly present the gentlelady from Illinois, and I yield to her.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman BEATTY.

I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus who have joined us here tonight and who continue to fight and serve as the conscience of our Congress.

Mr. Speaker, ''When Women Succeed, America Succeeds.'' It is a simple enough concept, yet it hasn't received the attention it deserves in the policy arena. As we reflect on moments like the fifth anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act—a bill that most of us would agree was long overdue—it is important that we keep in our minds and hearts the critical lesson of that important legislation, which is that it is unacceptable for pay discrimination to exist in our workforce, that workers who face discrimination have a right to claim compensation for the injustices they face, that regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexual identity, we all have a right to be justly compensated for our work, and most importantly, that it is beneficial to our economy, our families, and our children to pay fair wages to all of America's workers.

In that spirit, we must lift up the cause of an economic agenda for women and their families. As we look to grow our economy, let us keep in mind how women drive that growth.

Women are the breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of America's families. Women now outnumber men at every level of the higher education ladder. In 1964, only about 40 percent of women were enrolled in any type of college. Today, that figure is 57 percent. There are, roughly, 3 million more women currently enrolled in college than men. Women-owned businesses, like those owned by Vicky Linko, Letty Velez, and Christie Hefner in Illinois, account for nearly $3 trillion of the gross domestic product in the United States.

Women are vital to our economic future. Still, the facts on how far we need to go for women to truly achieve the American Dream are staggering.

One in three adult women is living in poverty or on the brink of it. One-quarter of single mothers spend more than half of their incomes on housing compared to one-tenth of single fathers. Of all single mothers, nearly two-thirds are working in low-wage retail, service or administrative jobs that offer little economic support to adequately provide for the needs of their families. Women make only 77 cents for every dollar a man makes—a pay gap that exists even the first year out of college and continues through a woman's life. If you are a woman of color, no matter what your education is, there is that gap, and the gap grows as your education increases. Wage disparities cost American women an estimated $400,000 to $2 million in lost wages over a lifetime.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman KELLY, for providing us with those necessary statistics so we have a better understanding of, when we move forward, how we need to deal with making a difference in the lives of those women.

Now I have the great honor to yield to the gentlelady from Ohio's 11th Congressional District. She is the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus. She is a leader, a lawyer, and an advocate for the people. She leads the largest delegation of the Congressional Black Caucus in its history. We stand 43 strong following her leadership. Please join me as I yield to the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE.

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Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much, and thank you for yielding.

I want to especially say this evening that as we talk about women, we are anchored tonight by two women, Congresswoman BEATTY, of course, from the great State of Ohio, and Congresswoman KELLY from Illinois. I have had a wonderful opportunity to meet these outstanding women, and I am so pleased that they are here this evening. I thank them again for leading this Special Order hour for the Congressional Black Caucus.

Today, members of the CBC raise our collective voices to advocate for a stronger economy by supporting and investing in working women across America.

My colleagues and I know improving the economic condition of families and communities across the country begins with strengthening the economic position of women, because when women succeed, America succeeds.

Last week, we marked the fifth anniversary of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the first piece of legislation signed by President Obama. As a result of this important legislation, women can more effectively take legal action against employers for gender-based pay discrepancies. While the Lilly Ledbetter Act helped provide a pathway for women to litigate pay discrimination, it does not address how we will invest in the economic future of working women in the United States.

Today, women comprise almost half of the American workforce. The country has come a long way in promoting equal rights and equal pay for women, but it is unacceptable that in 2014, women still make 77 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts.

In my home State of Ohio, women make approximately $10,000 less than men each year, and in my district, the median wage for women is 86 percent of the median wage for men. According to the 2010 Census, in 40 percent of American households with children, women are the sole or primary providers, and over 30 percent of households headed by women are living in poverty.

African American and Latino women tend to feel wage discrepancy more acutely, receiving approximately 64 cents and 55 cents on the dollar, respectively, when compared to White, non-Hispanic males.

This inequality must not continue. The economic security of our Nation's children depends on women's access to fair pay. This Nation cannot afford to continue treating women unfairly or leave women behind if they expect to strengthen and grow our economy.

We can start to address this inequity by increasing the minimum wage. Almost two-thirds of workers earning the minimum wage are women. The minimum wage has not been sufficiently adjusted to reflect inflation. Increasing the minimum wage will help lift millions of women and children across the country out of poverty.

It is also necessary to establish policies that enable working mothers to earn a living wage and to take care of their families. This requires workplace protections for pregnant workers, paid family sick leave for emergencies, and affordable child care.

We cannot sit idle as half the population of our Nation lags behind. I look forward to voting in support of measures that break down economic barriers preventing women from reaching their full potential, because when women succeed, we all succeed.

Thank you.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE. Clearly, we can see that she is no stranger to advocating for women and for lifting women out of poverty and standing for them.

Earlier today, Congresswoman FUDGE had the opportunity to speak to thousands of women who are gathered here this week to advocate for the same agenda, women of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority, where she served as the 21st president. She spoke to them because they, too, join us in understanding that when women succeed, America succeeds.

Now I would like to yield to the gentlelady from California's Third Congressional District, a woman who has a long history of standing up for people; a woman who understands when you talk about the statistics that we have heard tonight, and we will continue to hear tonight, about women living in poverty; a woman who only a few weeks ago, as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of President Johnson's war on poverty, led us in a press conference with his daughter. Standing with her were members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I call her a champion of the people. I call her our warrior of the people.

Join me as I yield to the gentlelady from California, the Honorable BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Let me first thank you, Congresswoman BEATTY, for those very humbling remarks, for your tremendous leadership, and for the work that you do each and every day not only for the people of your district but for the people and the women and the children and families in the entire country.

I just have to say that you have certainly hit the ground running here in Washington, D.C. I think you have because of your life's work in Ohio, and what you have done in Ohio as an elected official and how you have just charted the course for so many issues for so many women. Thank you for leading us tonight.

Also, Congresswoman KELLY, I want to thank you for organizing this Special Order and also for being such a champion for women and children and your district in Illinois.

Again, I have been here now for probably eight terms. You all have just arrived. I just want to thank you. It is really an honor to work with you.

Congresswoman BEATTY, you earlier mentioned the President's quote. I want to mention once again what he said during the State of the Union because I think it is important to make sure that the country continues to hear that the President understands when women succeed, America succeeds, and he is leading the charge in the White House for that, in terms of his leadership.

Today, women make up about half of our workforce, but they still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. That is wrong, and in 2014, it is embarrassment.

So thank you again, Congresswoman BEATTY, for reiterating the President's quote, because we can't forget that he truly is supportive of our overall agenda.

It is simply unacceptable that women are still being paid 77 cents for every dollar that a man makes. African American and Latina women are being paid even less, at 64 cents and 50 cents, while doing the same work as men.

That is why our Democratic women of the House, under the leadership of Congresswomen NANCY PELOSI, DONNA EDWARDS, and DORIS MATSUI, along with all of us, have launched the ''When Women Succeed, America Succeeds campaign.

In drawing attention to the need for a true economic agenda for women and families in D.C., we all have been hosting a series of events in our districts across the country, and we are hearing the same thing. Congresswomen KELLY and BEATTY, myself, Congresswoman FUDGE from Ohio, are all hearing the same thing.

Saturday, I was really thrilled and honored to have been joined by Leader PELOSI at my event in Oakland. I was also joined by former Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, who so courageously told her story as a former public assistance recipient needing affordable child care and a good-paying job as a bridge over her troubled waters.

Also at this event I was joined by two of my constituents, Clarissa and Irma, who shared their struggle of trying to take care of their family.

Clarissa told us about her struggle as a single parent. When budget cuts caused her to lose the subsidy that she received to pay for child care, she was forced to pull her son, Xavier, out of preschool and resign from her job to care for him during the day. Xavier started kindergarten unprepared and is now in his second year, catching up with his peers. It is very difficult.

Clarissa is an unbelievable mother. So Xavier is going to make it, and he is going to be a true leader because of Clarissa, who is working each and every day to make sure he catches up. This didn't need to happen if she had affordable child care.

Also, it reminded me of when I was in college with my two sons. I always say they were the two best educated children under 3 years of age. They were college-educated under 3 years because I had to take them to class with me while a student at Mills College because I could not afford child care.

Child care is so critical to the success of women. When women succeed, America succeeds.

Let me tell you about Irma. She is a single mother and a restaurant worker, a low-wage worker. She shared her experience with pregnancy discrimination. There was not a dry eye in the room.

Irma, like so many women, became pregnant, and her manager reduced her work hours from 40 hours a week to less than 30 hours a week. He assigned her difficult tasks. You know why he did? To try to get her to resign. They had her doing work that she would never be allowed to do if her doctor had known that they were requiring her to do that.

After assigning her a particularly difficult task when she was 8 months pregnant, Congresswomen BEATTY and KELLY, do you know what her manager told her? He said, Well, if it's so hard, then why go to work? Why go to work?

So Irma's story is the story of so many of our constituents.

It also reminded me, as my colleagues have mentioned, of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first African American women elected to Congress. She was fighting when she was here in Congress for pay equity for domestic women. She was fighting for affordable child care and for education.

Congresswoman CHISHOLM was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. She was someone that many of us looked up to. Her passion for the plight of working poor and women was undeniable.

Leader PELOSI and myself unveiled the Shirley Chisholm Black History stamp on Saturday during our panel discussion. It was just an amazing moment because of all the people in that room. There were 500 of my constituents; young people, middle age, old people. My 89-year-old mother and my two sisters were there. People really understood when women succeed, America succeeds, and the fight that Shirley Chisholm mounted for that.

In Brooklyn, Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE serves in the spirit of Shirley Chisholm. She and Congressmen JEFFRIES, RANGEL, MEEKS, and KELLY had the privilege to unveil Shirley Chisholm's stamp in Brooklyn.

Once again, the message of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm that when women succeed, America succeeds, is so relevant and so current today. So the principles of our women's economic agenda which we are discussing tonight resonates throughout our country, like raising the minimum wage. I just have to reference low-wage workers. The majority are women and women of color.

Also, affordable, quality child care and paid family medical leave. Again, I mentioned my mother, a phenomenal woman who raised three young girls. Paid family medical care for not only our children but our elders, our senior citizens. It is so important that people know that they can care for their family members during their golden years, as well as their children.

Pay equity and closing the gap in terms of the statistics we cited earlier. All of these efforts that we are mounting here in Congress, hopefully we will have bipartisan support for raising the minimum wage in this overall agenda.

All of this means that when women succeed, America succeeds. The success of women is truly central and integral to the success of our country as a great democracy which stands for liberty and justice for all.

So thank you again, Congresswomen BEATTY and KELLY, for organizing this tonight.

I have to close by just saying Congressman Shirley Chisholm was a true Delta woman. She was the epitome of a Delta woman, and so this week, once again, saluting Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and our overall women's agenda is so timely and so profound. Thank you again for this moment.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congresswoman LEE, and so timely are your words.

Talking about Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm reminds me of a quote of hers that I read. It said:

Tremendous amounts of talent are lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt.

Certainly, like you, she was a phenomenal woman. So let me thank you again for your personal story and for telling us the story of Irma, because as I think of my congressional district and I think of a phenomenal family, I think of the Troy family, a family where I call her Mother Troy and Pastor Troy. They have four sons, but they have three daughter-in-laws who go out every day into the community, whether it is feeding a child, providing child care, or working with the homeless or in housing.

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So in each of our communities we have stories because we understand in our communities that when women succeed, America succeeds. Thank you.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield to Congressman JEFFRIES from the great State of New York, and it is, indeed, an honor, as he is coming to share with you that he represents the Eighth Congressional District.

He is no stranger to this platform. You see, as our colleague and classmate, we are standing in tonight as coanchors because Congressman JEFFRIES is the real anchor. He and Congressman HORSFORD have been stellar in their leadership, in their scholarship, to come here for every Special Order hour under the Congressional Black Caucus and lead us in an agenda that makes a difference in the lives of so many people.

To have him here today, standing with us not only as a Congressman but as a spouse, as a father, sends a strong message that not only do women understand when women succeed, America succeeds, but men also understand it.

I yield to the gentleman from the great State of New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding, as well as for the tremendous job that you have done anchoring this CBC Special Order along with our good friend, the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois.

It reminds me, back at home, sometimes the pastor in my church would have a guest preacher come and deliver the sermon for the occasion, and the guest preacher will do so well that he will remark afterward, it is a dangerous thing when you bring that type of preacher to the pulpit because the congregation may not want the main preacher to come back again.

You and Congresswoman KELLY have done such a tremendous job, certainly, STEVEN HORSFORD and I are at risk of losing our anchor positions. Nonetheless, we thank you for all that you have done.

It was a particular honor on Friday, along with Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE and Congresswoman KELLY and Congressmen GREG MEEKS and CHARLIE RANGEL, to be at the official unveiling held by the United States Postal Service of the Shirley Chisholm stamp to commemorate the life and times of this tremendous woman, this Member of Congress, this trailblazer, all that she had done.

I recall that she once made an observation to a young person who was considering a career in public service and asked Congresswoman Chisholm whether he should pursue this or not. Congresswoman Chisholm responded by saying to this young man interested in public service, Well, if you decide to run for office, don't be a career politician. She said, Be a statesperson. Representative Chisholm explained that the difference is, a career politician is only concerned with the next election, but a statesperson is concerned with the next generation.

As we stand here today, we would all do well to take that piece of advice that Congresswoman Chisholm uttered decades ago as it relates to the policy agenda connected to the theme ''when women succeed, America succeeds'' because, in order for that to be possible, we also have to be sensitive to what we are doing for the next generation of young people in the context of child care availability, universal pre-K, strengthening the Head Start program that has served so many over decades.

What are we doing for the next generation to make sure that women, in particular, who are raising up the future leaders of America, are equipped with the resources and the ability to provide them with the best possible upbringing?

Now, 50 years ago, in this Chamber, President Lyndon Baines Johnson spoke before a joint session of Congress and he declared a war on poverty. And we know that, as a result of that initiative, there were several legislative programs that were enacted into law between 1964 and 1966—Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, school breakfast program, Food Stamp Act, college work study, minimum wage enhancement. All of these programs, taken together, contributed in a meaningful way to lifting millions of people out of poverty.

Now, we know, as we stand here today we have still got a lot of work to be done. But instead of there being a war on poverty, what we have seen far too often during this Congressional session and the previous one is a war on women. That is unfortunate that we have gone from trying to lift people up and give them an opportunity to pursue the American Dream to failing to deal with the issues that women in America face today and, in some instances, aggressively trying to roll back rights that were hard-fought and acquired over the years.

Now, as the President mentioned in this State of the Union that we all witnessed over the last week, that women in America make 77 cents for every dollar that a man earns. President Obama called it an embarrassment. I agree with that statement. It is also a national outrage.

How can it be the case that in America, in 2014, we are still allowing for such significant pay disparity that, as Congresswoman LEE pointed out, is even worse for women of color? So we have got to move forward under the principle—to bring to life the notion that one should be provided equal pay for equal work.

The second thing that we can do is to deal with this minimum wage issue that we have in America. As was pointed out earlier today, two-thirds of minimum wage earners in America are women. And so the failure to raise the minimum wage, to have indexed it appropriately for inflation to account for cost-of-living increases in America, disproportionately adversely affects women in this country. The reality is, with a minimum wage of $7.25 per hour, a woman in America can work full-time, 35 hours per week, across an entire year and, in attempting to raise a family, fall well below the Federal poverty line. It is the classic definition of working poor.

So the failure to raise the minimum wage has consequences for women, for the family, and for the overall well-being of communities all across America, particularly when considering the fact that, in 40 percent of American households, women are either the primary or the sole breadwinner.

So that means, particularly as it relates to some of our good friends on the other side of the aisle who often express concern for family values—and I share that concern—the best family value is a good paycheck; because if you ensure that when people are working hard they are paid well for it, then we are ensuring that they have the capacity to take care of their families, of which women, increasingly, are the sole or primary breadwinners.

So I just commend my distinguished colleagues, Representative KELLY and Representative BEATTY, the dynamic duo of the CBC freshman class, for all that they have done and will continue to do on behalf of women, communities of color, and America in the context of their tremendous advocacy.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congressman JEFFRIES. And thank you for reminding us, if we could eliminate the wage gap, if we take, just in part of my district, in Columbus, in the metropolitan area, if we were able to eliminate the wage gap, it would allow women to have 77 more weeks of food; it would allow them to have six additional months more to pay their mortgage or rent; it would allow them to also have 2,555 gallons of gas to be able to take that child to child care or to go to work.

So it is so important that we understand the agenda and why we stand here today as members of the Congressional Black Caucus advocating for women in this agenda, because we understand, when women succeed, America succeeds.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor now, to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey. And we share a common bond: his father from New Jersey, my father from New Jersey. He is someone who understands all too well the value of when women succeed, America succeeds. He is a spouse; he is a father of triplets. And so it is so important, when we talk about early childhood education and when we talk about childhood, child care, that we understand that he understands, when women succeed, America succeeds.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman DONALD PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me just acknowledge my colleagues from the freshman class, the gentlewoman from Ohio and the gentlewoman from Illinois, for anchoring this hour, When Women Succeed, America Succeeds.

I now am one of two members of the freshman class that has not had the opportunity to anchor this hour. Mr. HORSFORD and Mr. JEFFRIES have done such an exceptional job in that. As Mr. JEFFRIES pointed out, Mrs. BEATTY is always ready for the challenge and has demonstrated and, as was mentioned earlier, has stepped up to the plate and hit the ground running in the Halls of Congress and has demonstrated her leadership on numerous occasions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that we know we have made great progress in this country closing the gender wage gap; but women still, as it has been stated, and we need to continue to let it resonate, earn just 77 cents on every dollar a man earns for the same work. And for women of color, unfortunately, naturally, I am not surprised, the gap is even wider, with women of color earning just 64 cents for every dollar that a man makes.

In New Jersey, the gap has even grown worse. In just 1 year, women in New Jersey earn, on an average, $13,000 less than their male counterparts. Now, that is shocking. That is absolutely incredible that the gap, the margin is that wide, because over the course of that woman's lifetime, that adds up to more than $434,000.

Now, what could a family over their lifetime do with another $435,000? Probably could own a nicer home, send all their children to college, live in a manner in which all Americans deserve to live in.

□ 2100

What we have is working poor. $434,000—that is a significant amount of money over the course of someone's life. That is not the America that I was raised to believe in. The home of the free, the land of the brave. Equality is always discussed, but there are always underlying factors in why those words are not lived up to for some people—particularly in this case, women.

Mr. Speaker, we live in the 21st century. Women now make up more than half of our workforce. As President Obama said last week in his State of the Union Address, paying women less is just plain wrong. In 2014, it is an embarrassment, and we all agree with him in that respect.

This gross gender pay inequality doesn't hurt just women. It hurts families, and it hurts our local economy as well. I don't know in my case of a husband who is happy that his wife is working that hard and making 77 percent of what she deserves to make. Any way you look at it, it is lost revenue coming into the home, and it could make such a difference on small things—vacations, education, groceries, food, sustenance to make it through the week, the month, the year.

On top of that, a woman shouldn't have to feel like she may lose her job if she takes time off to care for her sick children. Now this is something that I know all too well, Mr. Speaker. I know that my wife and I were very fortunate to have the FMLA while we were raising our triplets, you see, because one would get sick, then the next one would get sick, then the next one would get sick, then I would get sick, then my wife would get sick, and it would start all over again. There is no way either one of us could care for them while worrying about whether she is going to have a job to return to, but still today, too many women have to choose between being employed and caring for their families. It is just not right, and it is just not fair.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in the greatest nation on Earth, no one who puts in a 40-hour workweek should be living in poverty, ever. They are playing by the rules. They are getting up every day, working hard, two and three jobs sometimes, and still not making ends meet. No one in this Nation that plays by the rules should find themselves in that condition. In this country, it is just not about having a job, but it is about having a good job.

More than two-thirds of minimum wage earners are women. We owe it to them to pay them a wage that they could actually live on and provide for their families because we know, Mr. Speaker, in many cases, that woman is the wage earner in the home, the only wage earner in the home, and to have them find themselves in that condition is unfathomable in the 21st century.

I was very encouraged by the President's actions to raise the wage for new government workers. It makes sense. It makes sense in this day and age to have a living wage, something you can take care of your family on. Congress needs to follow that example.

There are many things that this Congress could do to ensure that women succeed. Pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, pass the Family Act, and raise the minimum wage for all. All of these

measures have been blocked by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but the success of women in America cannot and should not be bipartisan as an issue.

We must put our political differences aside and show this country that we care and we understand. We owe it to our mothers, we owe it to our wives, and we owe it to our daughters to provide them with the quality of life that they deserve.

So I implore my fellow Americans that are watching this tonight, whether your Member is a Democrat or a Republican, to see where they stand on this issue, to check how they are voting in your interests, and if they are not voting in your interests, then you should remove them. Because when women succeed, America succeeds.

I yield back.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much, Congressman PAYNE. ''Land of the free, home of the brave''—it reminds me of the words that Leader PELOSI talked about during the 165th anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention that addressed women in social, economic, and political life. It said that women should be granted all the rights and privileges that men possess. So thank you for that message.

As we continue in this hour, I would like to yield to my coanchor, the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I, too, feel compelled to tell my Shirley Chisholm story. As you have heard, I was privileged enough to be at the unveiling of her stamp, and I was very, very proud to be there, but also, I met Shirley Chisholm 22 years ago. I was a director of minority student services for Bradley University, and we invited Congresswoman Chisholm out to be a speaker. I picked her up from the airport and drove her back when her time was done.

We had the opportunity to have coffee together, and I felt her passion for the everyday person, to improve their quality of life. Little did I know that she was planting a little seed in me, as she was the first black woman elected, and I am the 30th and hopefully counting black woman elected to Congress. So I am very proud of that moment, and it gave me that opportunity to reflect when I heard all of her stories last Friday.

You have heard from our many colleagues that nearly half of the workforce is female, yet two-thirds of all minimum wage workers are women. You have heard 40 percent of working women are their family's primary breadwinner. If these women were paid the same wages as their male counterparts, their family income would increase by $6,776 a year. This is a $245 billion increase in wealth nationwide. If women receive equal pay, our economy would generate $447.6 billion in additional income. Again, we all would benefit from this, not just women.

41.5 million adult women and 16.8 million adult working women live in households below 200 percent of the poverty line. Women workers, single mothers, and low-income workers are the least likely to have access to paid leave and workplace flexibility offered through their employer, only exacerbating gender inequality and women's poverty.

The United States, as we said, the wealthiest country in the world, is the only developed nation that does not require employers to provide paid maternity leave, and the family and medical leave protections that do exist fail to cover nearly half of all full-time employees.

Revenue of women-owned businesses is 27 percent of that of men-owned businesses. I remember when I was a State representative, thanks to SEIU, being a child care worker for a day, and I went into the home of a woman who took care of other children for other women so that they could go to work. Both the child care worker and the mom going to work were very low-wage earners, but if it wasn't for that low-wage earner or child care worker, the mom couldn't afford to pay her so she could then go to work. It would be easy for the moms to stay home, but they didn't want to stay home. They wanted to work. They wanted to build their resume, and they also wanted to give their children the opportunity to be around other children and to learn from those low-wage child care workers. So both groups of women are affected by the minimum wage in this country.

With that, I yield back, Congresswoman.

Mrs. BEATTY. Thank you so much for sharing your stories, as my coanchor.

All evening, we have heard the stories of women who have advocated and fought in these Chambers, women like Shirley Chisholm. We know the stories all too well of the Rosa Parks, of the Barbara Jordans. Then as we look to education, we know the stories of women who serve as presidents of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, women like Dr. Johnnetta Cole, women like Cynthia Jackson-Hammond at my alma mater, Central State University. We know women who have worked and earned their place in history because they understand that when women succeed, America succeeds.

We know the stories of our parents. But one thing tonight I want to make sure that we add to these resources when we talk about economic development and we talk about child care and we talk about all the other services, pay equity and health care, and that is the right to vote. That is one of the most critical things that I want us to remember, because when we get people registered to vote and then we allow them to be able to vote, that is one of the most powerful tools.

The story we don't hear when we talk about ''when women succeed, America succeeds'' is the story of a little lady from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a lady by the name of Oseola McCarty. The name probably won't mean a lot to a lot of people. She was someone who was a washer woman. She washed clothes for women who didn't look like her or think like her and many who probably didn't even know her name, but this woman in her own little wisdom truly understood the value of when women succeed, America succeeds.

You know why? She took her pay every week, and she put it in a jar, and she saved, and you see, she didn't have children. She didn't have a spouse or brothers and sisters, and she wrote a little note saying that she wanted these dollars to go to a child that was underserved, a child who would be able to take these few dollars and get a college education because that would make a difference in that child's life. Well, at the time of her death, someone opened up that container. And in that container, there was an estimated amount of $150,000.

So when I think about ''when women succeed, America succeeds,'' I will add the name of Oseola McCarty to that list, because that is what we are talking about tonight. When we talk about members of the Congressional Black Caucus being the conscience of the Congress, it means that when we stand on this House floor advocating for folks who are voiceless, that is our role.

So when we seem so passionate and so concerned when some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle stand in the way of providing health care for women, for providing early childhood education or wanting to make a difference in how we feed our poor, then it reminds me of all the stories that we have heard today.

□ 2115

It reminds me of all the women who are fighting because they understand that there are faces on all of the statistics that we have heard tonight. And all of these faces, whether well-known or not, when you go back to your districts, understand when you stand with us as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, as you stand with us, with women in our caucus, you are standing with all the women across America. And the message you are sending is, when women succeed, America succeeds.

It is my great honor to ask my co-anchor tonight to close us out and ask everyone to remember that we are here, and, yes, I will say it again, when women succeed, America succeeds.

I yield to the gentlelady from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman. You make me think about my grandmother, because it was my grandmother in the late 1940s who purchased a grocery store and told my grandfather, We are in the grocery business now. It was because of her parents instilling in her and helping

her to succeed and be a role model that she planted a seed for our family and her sons and then my father and my uncle. And it just fed the line for success and all of us going to college because of my grandmother. She was the very strong one in the family.

America cannot afford to maintain the status quo. Nearly 70 percent of Americans on or above the brink of poverty are women and the children who depend on them. That is almost 42 million American women and more than 28 million American children living on or at the brink of poverty. Tonight's conversation is about sparking an agenda that will enable women to achieve greater security. This includes raising wages for women and their families and allowing working parents to support and care for their families.

I want to thank the entire Congressional Black Caucus, especially my fellow co-anchor, the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman BEATTY, who did a fantastic job.

As we recognize Black History Month, we are reminded the Congressional Black Caucus exists to improve communities through policy action that meets the needs of millions of our most vulnerable citizens. It is that spirit that guides us here tonight. When we see millions of women and children on the brink of poverty, we must act. When we see total household incomes being short-changed because of gender biases in wage, we won't stand for it. When women succeed, America succeeds. I will say it again. When women succeed, America succeeds.

I thank my colleagues for caring enough to get involved in this debate.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. I ask unanimous consent that my colleagues have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MESSER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. With that, I yield to my co-anchor, Representative BEATTY, for any last words.

Mrs. BEATTY. Let me just say as we close out that it is so important that you understand that our message tonight is certainly about making a difference in the lives of those who live in this wonderful country. So let me end as we started with, when women succeed, America succeeds.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived audience.

A NATION DIVIDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and to take up some of the issues that I know are important to you and are important to Americans. I come here tonight to try to put some perspective on this intense debate that we have had.

I would start with this, Mr. Speaker, that over Christmas vacation, I don't know of a time that this Congress hasn't taken a break over Christmas and gone back to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That is the foundation of the core of the faith of our Founding Fathers that established this country, built this Capitol, and worshipped in the building.

I do remember a Christmas Eve present that we got from the United States Senate Christmas Eve morning when they passed a version of ObamaCare on a Christmas Eve vote, but I don't remember a President ever criticizing Congress for leaving town to go visit our families over Christmas vacation until this year when our President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, made his trip to his home State of Hawaii and took his Christmas break out there. He took his family with him, and certainly most thinking Americans don't object to such a thing, but I remember a speech that he gave from Hawaii where he criticized Congress for leaving town over Christmas. He said that we should have stayed here in Washington and solved this myriad of problems we have in our Nation, that going home apparently was inappropriate.

Well, I think when they were here, when the Senate was in voting on Christmas Eve morning that morning when they delivered to us ObamaCare, that was the time they should have gone home for Christmas vacation instead and listened to the American people, because the aftermath of that was that there was a huge wave election in 2010, and Republicans in the House of Representatives ended up with 87 freshman Republicans as a result of the American people's rejecting ObamaCare.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I bring up the point of the President's criticism of Congress for taking Christmas off and point out three other topics that he brought up in that speech. He said he has an agenda for 2014—and this was a preview of his State of the Union address, I might add—and this agenda that the President has for 2014 includes three things: the extension of unemployment benefits, adding weeks on what his number really is—but I know that they have supported 99 weeks, almost 2 years of unemployment—and then the other piece of it was to increase the minimum wage. He is seeking to do that by an executive edict with regard to the Federal employees. And the third piece was he called upon Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Now, when you are home with your family over Christmas and you hear a speech like that from the President of the United States, the first thing you think is why in the world would he go before the American people with any kind of a message, let alone one like that? Don't take a Christmas break, and I am going to tell Congress what they ought to do. They ought to pass a minimum wage increase; they should extend unemployment benefits; and they should pass—the President said this to us before—the Senate version of the Gang of 8's comprehensive immigration reform bill.

I point out, also, Mr. Speaker, that America now understands that comprehensive immigration reform—CIR, for short—really is three words that encompass one word, and that is ''amnesty.''

One would wonder why the President chose those three topics and gave that speech at that time. I would give this answer, Mr. Speaker: no one should really wonder. A President of one party that has the same party that rules in the United States Senate and controls the agenda over there, who is opposed by Republicans in the House of Representatives, is going to do this predictably, because tactically it is what you do in this business if you are not a uniter but a divider, and that is pick the topics that unify your party and divide the opposing party.

So he picked three topics that just essentially and almost universally—I will say, virtually—unify the Democrat Party and are designed to split and divide the Republican Party—minimum wage, for example. Now, I can go back quite a ways on how far back the minimum wage goes. But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that every time that Congress has raised the minimum wage, somebody has lost a job. It has cost jobs every time. We lose more and more of those entry-level job opportunities when the minimum wage goes up because the employers can't afford to train unskilled workers and put them in the workforce and take on all of the risk, the regulation, the recordkeeping, the liability, and sometimes the benefits package that is required. They can't afford to pay all of that and bring somebody into the workforce that has maybe no skills.

The reason that there are entry-level wages is so that people can get started in a job and you can afford as an employer to hire them and keep them there and upgrade their job skills, and hopefully in the same company you can move them right on up through the chain and bring them up through the system, and their wages and their benefit package, or at least their wages, go up with that consistently.

I happen to know how that works. We have never—I founded and have operated a construction company for 28 years. In those 28 years, we have never paid minimum wage. We have always paid over that. But when we brought somebody in at a skill level, we identified their skills, paid them what we thought we could afford to pay them,

trained them, watched to see how they developed, and gave them raises in proportion to the skill level and the production that they gave because, after all, when they come to work, they would say, What is my job? And I said, Well, your job is to help me make money. If you do that, then I want you to stay here, and we are going to do our best to take care of you.

Mr. Speaker, I recall walking into my construction office in one of those years, perhaps in the early nineties, and my secretary had decorated the Christmas tree in the entryway of our office. I looked at the tree. It looked nice, and it had decorations on it. I don't usually pay much attention to those things, and I walked on.

She said to me, Well, did you notice the tree? And I said, Yes, I did.

And isn't it pretty? was her question. Sure, the tree was pretty. She said, Go back and look at it a little more closely.

I went back and looked at that tree more closely, and it was symmetrical, symmetrically decorated. It didn't have any lights on it, and it didn't have any tinsel on it. All it had on it for decorations were gold Christmas emblems that were a thin piece of something thicker than foil but that kind of a texture, gold. And it would be, oh, a snowflake, a star, a baby Jesus and different pieces from the nativity scene all over that tree. Then I looked at that, and I said, Yeah, those are nice. She said, Look a little closer. She turned one of the decorations around on the back side, and on the back side there was engraved the name of one of our employees. And you look at another, and it would be their spouse. And you look at another, it would be one of our employees' children.

By the time I had looked at those decorations on that tree, it occurred to me that the decisions that I was making that were designed to help the company make money also impacted the lives of not just the people that we were writing the paycheck to, but their spouse, their children, and their family members, and that the responsibility of those decisions impacted all of the names on that tree directly.

It is quite a thing to walk in and understand that, Mr. Speaker, and see how that is. But all of those people on that tree benefited from the decisions I made, hopefully; and we benefited, all of us together, from the work we did together.

That is the way companies are supposed to be—good companies especially. Small companies operate like families. Good companies today, large companies, talk about the culture of the workplace. They want that culture to be a culture that brings people back again, people that look forward to going to work every day. They want people to look forward to working with their colleagues and their coworkers, and they compete for good labor.

So we don't need a Federal Government that gets in between an employer and an employee. This system of entry-level wages that gets people started in a job where they can learn a skill, learn customer relations, learn responsibility, learn to look people in the eye, learn to provide service, learn to smile and hustle and act like you like it, if you can do that, you are not going to be working for minimum wage very long.

But the President and the Democrats want to divide that and put that minimum wage out of reach of a lot of employers, which means a lot of especially young people with no skills aren't going to get the opportunity. Divide, unify—virtually unify the Democrats—and divide the Republicans with minimum wage.

The next thing, extending unemployment benefits to 99 weeks, Mr. Speaker? How can we possibly afford paying people not to work for 99 weeks? The long tradition in this country has been 26 weeks, a half a year.

Now, a lot of times it is not people's fault when they get laid off. It might be seasonal; it might be the company folds; it might be the company downsizes. But that unemployment that is there is to give them a bridge to find another job, whatever they need to do to find that other job. And if this government decides, this Congress decides that we are going to borrow money, borrow money from the American people to run this government, borrow money from the Saudis, borrow money from the Chinese—$1.3 trillion borrowed from the Chinese—so that we can extend unemployment benefits and sometimes provide early retirement for people that decide, ''Well, I can qualify for 99 weeks of unemployment. I will be 65 by then. I can qualify then for Medicare, Social Security, and my pension plan. There is no reason for me to find a job at age 63 because this Federal Government has managed to add on to 99 weeks of unemployment,'' it is not a wise thing to do. It is a bad policy for our economy, and it causes our workforce skills to atrophy, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2130

So, having dispatched minimum wage and having dispatched extending unemployment benefits, now we are down to the third thing. In each case, unemployment benefits and extending unemployment benefits also, it is borrowed money to fund those projects that unify Democrats and divide Republicans. Part of the Republicans are going to say I am going to go along with that because I don't want to take the political heat, and inside they are going to think it is not a good thing for this country. They do the same thing on the minimum wage, increasing the minimum wage. So the President is dividing Republicans and he is unifying Democrats against Republicans.

The third thing is this: the proposal that this Congress pass comprehensive immigration reform, CIR/amnesty, that is the big one of the three divisive agenda items that the President rolled out after he criticized Congress for taking Christmas off to visit our families.

Some of the result has been the pressure felt by some of the leadership in this Congress to produce a document that is called ''Standards for Immigration Reform.'' So I received this document Thursday afternoon about 4:15 and I looked through this. These are principles on immigration, Mr. Speaker. I looked through this, and it has a preamble that starts out: ''Our Nation's immigration system is broken.'' Well, that is the first half of the first sentence, and already I disagree.

Mr. Speaker, our immigration system is not broken. We have a system of laws and a system set up for enforcement. It is not the system that is broken; it is the President of the United States who has prohibited his law enforcement officers from actually following the law. When the law expressly dictates that when encountered, they need to place people who are unlawfully in the United States in removal proceedings, and the President has prohibited ICE, for example, and the Border Patrol, from carrying out the law, it is not the system that is broken; it is the President who has taken an oath of office that includes that he take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and I would close quote there, and that includes that the President is instead taking care that the law is not being faithfully executed, and there are at least five different violations of his constitutional limitations with regard to immigration. There are multiple others, Mr. Speaker.

The Constitution is at great risk because of the—I wanted to say ''cavalier,'' but instead I would say because of the willful—disregard and disrespect for the Constitution that we have seen as the President has gone down the line and violated this Constitution multiple times.

For example, the President has suspended Welfare to Work. When that legislation was written back in the middle 1990s, and I know the author of that legislation, it was carefully and specifically written so that the President couldn't waive the work component of TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Even though the language is specific and the language is as tight as they could think to write it at the time, the President has decided we are going to provide TANF benefits, but there is not going to be a work component.

Of the 80 different means-tested welfare programs we have in the United States, at least 80 of them, only one required work. All of the hubbub on the floor of the House of Representatives in the 1990s about Welfare to Work, there was going to be welfare reform and people were going to be transitioning from welfare to work, all of that hubbub resulted in one policy, one program that required work: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. The President suspended the work component.

The President suspended No Child Left Behind. The President supported

and his minions carried out the Morton memos, which reversed immigration law, made up new immigration law, and ordered that they not enforce immigration law against people that apparently didn't make the President feel politically vulnerable.

So that is just part of this. That takes us also, Mr. Speaker, down to ObamaCare. In ObamaCare there have been multiple times that the President has violated the law that carries his name and his signature. The first and the most egregious—excuse me, not the first, the most egregious, was when the President announced some time last year that he was going to delay the implementation of the employer mandate.

Now, the law, Mr. Speaker, the ObamaCare law says that the employer mandate shall commence in each month after December of 2013. That means it starts in January, a month ago. We are into February now. The President has announced he is going to delay it for a year. He has no authority, he has no constitutional authority to delay the implementation of ObamaCare. None. Yet, he extended the individual mandate, delayed the employer mandate.

When the conscience protection was being violated in the rules that were written by the Department of Human Services, he decided every large employer, large employers had to provide contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilizations as part of their health insurance policies, and religious organizations and individuals objected. They said I am not going to be violating my conscience. The law cannot compel me, because of my religious beliefs, to violate my religious beliefs. That is a First Amendment right, the protection of the freedom of religion. But the President insisted even the Catholic Church would have to comply.

For 2 weeks of national hubbub, the President held his ground. Until noon on a Friday, and a lot of these things happen, Mr. Speaker, around noon on a Friday, the President stepped out to the podium and said, I have heard this discussion that religious organizations don't want to provide contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilizations—and abortifacients, Mr. Speaker, are abortion-causing pills. The religious organizations don't want to do this, and so now I am going to make an accommodation to the religious organizations. An accommodation, and the accommodation he made is, he said, I am now going to require the insurance companies to provide these things for free, and he repeated himself, provide these things for free.

So I thought okay, if there is going to be a change in policy, I bet I will see it come back before the floor of the House of Representatives, and I will have an opportunity to debate, perhaps offer an amendment, and vote on this change. Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't really think that, I just knew that is what the Constitution would require before there could be a change in the law, but there actually was a rule. So I checked the rule. Did they propose a rule change? Did they publish it? Did they go through the administrative procedures requirements in order to get a rule change?

The first thing you do is you go back and read the rule. Did anything change in the rule that compelled the churches to provide contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilizations, as compared to the insurance companies, as the President said in his press conference. No, Mr. Speaker, there was no change in the regulations. The only thing that changed was the President gave a speech, and in that speech, he said religious organizations, you don't have to do this any more. Insurance companies, you have to do this now.

What a reach. What a constitutional overreach for a President to believe that because he spoke, millions would line up and swoon at the very words of a President of the United States who again is going beyond the bounds of the authority vested in him, limited by the Constitution of the United States. That just gives a sample of some of some of the things that are going on, Mr. Speaker.

I bring this up because the President said to Congress: Pass comprehensive immigration reform. He also said if he is not satisfied with the results, if Congress doesn't move fast enough, he has an ink pen and he has a cell phone, and he will just run the government by signing executive orders. That was part of the promise that he made behind me, Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union address last week.

Well, so some in this Congress think if we try to catch up with the President, we can get along with him, and that's why you see this language here in the preamble of the Standards for Immigration Reform that says our immigration system is broken. Well, it is not broken. What is broken is the trust between the American people and the bond that is required when the President gives his oath of office to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, not take it apart by executive action that we can't catch up with through litigation.

If the President doesn't respect his oath to the Constitution, and if the President doesn't respect the legitimate congressional authority under article 1 that the Congress has, why would he then respect a decision made by a court, especially a lower court, a circuit court. Maybe, just maybe, public opinion would force him to respect a Supreme Court, but, Mr. Speaker, it is unlikely that we will see a case get to the Supreme Court before this President is finally signing off in his last year of office.

I look at the points on this Standards for Immigration Reform, and there are four different provisions. One is border security and interior enforcement. It says that must come first. Of course we know that they would legalize everybody first, and then they are going to try to secure our borders. It says secure our borders and verify they are secure. The difficulty with that is, who is going to decide when they are secure? I would hand it over to the Texas border sheriffs, along with New Mexico, Arizona, and California. I would hand it over to the local government people and let them decide. If the States would certify the borders are secure, if the sheriffs would certify that the borders are secure, and if the county supervisors would certify that they are secure, we would have a pretty good answer as to whether they are secure, but we have heard those promises before. Janet Napolitano made it clear that she thought the borders were secure. Of course, I don't believe that.

When I mentioned earlier in a media program that just the children, the unaccompanied children that are being picked up along our southern border are running up to the numbers where for this year it is going to tally 50,000; 50,000 children, some of them little kids, tiny little kids who are being handed over to coyotes to be brought into the United States so they can qualify for the promise of the DREAM Act—50,000 kids. That is not out of me; that is from the president of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement union, Chris Crane, who is a plaintiff in a lawsuit, by the way, that is stalled and sidetracked over to Eric Holder and other places.

Next point is Implement an Exit/Entry Visa Tracking System. Supposedly these are the broken parts of the immigration system. They are going to enforce the border because something is broken and they need to pass a new law. We have the resources to enforce the law. We are spending over $12 billion on the southern border, and for about $8 billion, we could build a four-lane interstate all of the way from the Pacific Ocean clear down to Brownsville. But then the Entry-Exit Visa System was passed into law. That is the law. It was passed into law in 1996. We have an entry system but not an exit system, so there is no balance of who is here. By the way, if you get that working, who is going to keep track who is here, at least theoretically, and how are you possibly going to enforce that given that you have sanctuary cities and you have the equivalent of sanctuary States and you have an administration that refuses to allow their own people who are hired to do so to enforce the law? I don't know why this is a new piece; it has been the law since 1996. If we can't get that law enforced, why would a new one be enforced if this one is not?

Item number three, Employer Verification and Workplace Enforcement. That is actually pretty good. That is the E-Verify program, and the language defines it. It says they need a workable electronic employment verification system. Now, if you make that

mandatory, you wonder about the freedom of the American people that now have to prove that they are an American before they can go to work. That is a new burden of proof that we haven't had before. I don't want to speak too strongly against that, Mr. Speaker. I would just say instead that my new IDEA Act is a better idea. What it does is it clarifies that wages and benefits paid to illegals are not deductible for Federal income tax purposes. It allows the IRS to come in and do an audit. In that audit, they can run the names of the employees through E-Verify, and if the employer uses E-Verify, they get safe harbor on any violations of hiring people who can't lawfully work in the United States. The IRS can look at that and say you had a chance for safe harbor, you didn't use E-Verify. These employees can't lawfully work in the United States, and you can't lawfully deduct the wages and benefits you paid to them. It is not a business expense to break the law. So the IRS would deny those business expenses for salary and benefits, and they can attach interest and penalty. So your $10-an-hour illegal becomes about a $16-an-hour illegal, and you have voluntary compliance with E-Verify. It is a much better situation. Point number three isn't so bad.

Reforms to the legal immigration system. That is, they want to accelerate legal immigration, Mr. Speaker, and the needs of employers and the desire for those exceptional individuals to help our economy. Well, there is some truth in that, but we are bringing in 1.2 million legal immigrants a year and giving them an opportunity, a path to citizenship; 1.2 million. Now, those folks who want to change all this policy and grant amnesty for everybody that is here, and then open the doors up for an accelerated legal immigration to go on after that, to the tens of millions, and we are not talking about 11 million; we are talking about 11 million times some multiplying factor that is probably closer to three times or more than that say over the next 20 years.

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We need to come to a conclusion as to what is an appropriate number of legal immigrants to come into America. I think 1.2 million is plenty generous. I think then we should start to upgrade those applicants so that they are young, they have education, they have language skills, they have learning capacity, they have an ability to simulate into the American culture and the American civilization and contribute and pay taxes so that they carry their share of the load because the day is going to come that they are not.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I take us down to the lower end of this. First, the DREAM Act gets addressed, and it pretty much embraces DICK DURBIN's DREAM Act. Of course, I reject that for the sake of this, that, again, it rewards lawbreakers.

But in the final paragraph, the concluding paragraph, it says: ''individuals living outside the rule of law.'' It says, Mr. Speaker: ''There will be no special path to citizenship for individuals who broke our Nation's immigration laws.'' There would be no special path to citizenship.

Well, let me just say that if you put people on a path to citizenship who are in this country illegally while you have 5 million people waiting outside the United States who do respect our laws, then you have given a special path to citizenship. The nonspecial path is for those folks to go back into their home country and line up behind the 5 million who are lined up in their home country today waiting, respecting our laws to come into the United States; otherwise, it is a special path to citizenship.

But they go on and they say: ''that would be unfair to those immigrants who have played by the rules and harmful to promoting the rule of law.'' That is breathtaking in its concept. We are going to provide a special path to citizenship because it would be harmful to promoting the rule of law, except we are going to legalize all of those people that have broken the law. And we are not going to ask them to go back to their home country and get in the back of the line; we are going to let them stay here and it won't matter whether they are in a line or not. They were satisfied to live in the shadows of America—that is what they came here to do—or else they came here on the promise of amnesty like those kids that are coming across our southern border now to line up for the DREAM Act, 50,000 strong in a year.

''Harmful to promoting the rule of law.'' No. What they are proposing here is destructive to the rule of law.

It goes on further and it says: ''from here on, our immigration laws will indeed be enforced.'' There is another breathtaking statement, Mr. Speaker. Immigration laws from here on would indeed be enforced.

I am very confident, and I have not looked, but I am very confident that I can go into this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in the House and in the Senate and go back to 1986 and pull the debate out of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and point to you where time after time a Member of Congress, House and Senate, said, We are going to pass this amnesty act, and from here on, indeed, our laws will be enforced; we will restore the rule of law from this point forward, but first we must grant amnesty.

Those are the words from 1986. Those are the words from this document that was released just last Thursday. And those have always been the myopic words of people who believe in open borders more so than they believe and have reverence for our rule of law, which we still have the opportunity to restore, even from the 86th Amnesty Act, the rule of law.

If we fail to do so here and now, if this amnesty is granted, the rule of law will not be restored within the lifetime of this Republic, Mr. Speaker.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities with regard to the President.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CRENSHAW (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of flight delays.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2860. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management may use amounts in the revolving fund of the Office to fund audits, investigations, and oversight activities, and for other purposes.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1901—An act to authorize the President to extend the term of the nuclear energy agreement with the Republic of Korea until March 19, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4629. A letter from the Director, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the annual report from the Office of Financial Research for 2013; to the Committee on Financial Services.

4630. A letter from the Director, Office of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the 2013 Annual Report on Human Capital Planning; to the Committee on Financial Services.

4631. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 10-13 informing of an intent to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Kingdom of Belgium, Australia, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, Portugal, the Kingdom of Spain, and

Turkiye; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4632. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training FY 2013 Annual Report; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4633. A letter from the Acting Inspector General, Agency for International Development, transmitting two reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4634. A letter from the Executive Analyst, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting four reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4635. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting thirty reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4636. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4637. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled, ''Certified Business Enterprise Expenditures of Public-Private Development Construction Projects for Fiscal Year 2013''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4638. A letter from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting the Office's final rule — Post-Employment Conflict of Interest Regulations; Exempted Senior Employee Positions (RIN: 3209-AA14) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4639. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0706; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-067-AD; Amendment 39-17708; AD 2013-25-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4640. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0421; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-003-AD; Amendment 39-17701; AD 2013-25-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4641. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0340; Directorate Identifier 2010-SW-081-AD; Amendment 39-17630; AD 2013-21-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4642. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0603; Directorate Identifier 2009-SW-079-AD; Amendment 39-17706; AD 2013-25-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4643. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Model [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0370; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-034-AD; Amendment 39-17711; AD 2013-26-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4644. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-1030; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-193-AD; Amendment 39-17712; AD 2013-26-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4645. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0304; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-005-AD; Amendment 39-17713; AD 2013-26-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4646. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; CFM International S.A. Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0407; Directorate Identifier 2012-NE-22-AD; Amendment 39-17710; AD 2013-26-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4647. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Various Aircraft Equipped with Wing Lift Struts [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0023; Directorate Identifier 96-CE-072-AD; Amendment 39-17688; AD 99-01-052 R1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received January 23, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4648. A letter from the Chair, NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, transmitting the Panel's Annual Report for 2013; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 470. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3590) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes (Rept. 113–339).

Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. WAXMAN (for himself, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 3982. A bill to provide that the rules of the Federal Communications Commission relating to preserving the open Internet and broadband industry practices shall be restored to effect until the date when the Commission takes final action in the proceedings on such rules that were remanded to the Commission by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HIMES (for himself, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 3983. A bill to establish a competitive grant program assisting the development of innovative early learning curricula for low-income children; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HIMES (for himself, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. CONNOLLY):

H.R. 3984. A bill to establish an Early Learning Challenge Fund to support States in building and strengthening systems of high-quality early learning and development programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. WESTMORELAND:

H.R. 3985. A bill to sunset funding under sections 1341 and 1342, and to repeal section 1343, of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California (for herself, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. MOORE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. HOLT, Ms. CHU, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. HONDA, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina):

H. Res. 471. A resolution expressing support for designation of the week of February 3, 2014, through February 7, 2014, as ''National School Counseling Week''; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. WAXMAN:

H.R. 3982.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under the Commerce Clause of Article I of the United States Constitution, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. HIMES:

H.R. 3983.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. HIMES:

H.R. 3984.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. WESTMORELAND:

H.R. 3985.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 32: Mr. FINCHER and Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 164: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 318: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 322: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 333: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 352: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 455: Ms. CHU, Ms. TITUS, Mr. FARR, Ms. MENG, Mr. DOGGETT, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. POCAN, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. NEAL, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. BASS, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. PETERS of California.
H.R. 508: Mr. REED.
H.R. 721: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 946: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1009: Mr. RAHALL.
H.R. 1010: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 1281: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 1286: Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 1354: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 1648: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1701: Mr. FLEMING.
H.R. 1717: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 1726: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 1869: Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 2035: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 2123: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 2328: Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 2415: Mr. WHITFIELD.
H.R. 2484: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 2502: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 2553: Mr. FATTAH, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 2560: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2575: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 2638: Mr. BARTON, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 2651: Mr. HARPER and Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 2694: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 2767: Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 2780: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 2847: Mrs. BEATTY and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2904: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 2905: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 2907: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 2921: Mr. BENISHEK.
H.R. 2994: Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. PETRI, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, and Mr. JONES.
H.R. 2997: Mr. CULBERSON.
H.R. 2998: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3040: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 3116: Ms. MOORE and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3301: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 3382: Ms. BASS, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 3384: Mr. PETERS of California and Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 3392: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 3395: Mr. ENYART, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Ms. BROWN of Florida.
H.R. 3408: Mr. LATTA and Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.
H.R. 3450: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 3471: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 3482: Mr. PALAZZO and Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 3485: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 3486: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H.R. 3493: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 3494: Mr. KEATING, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. FARR.
H.R. 3513: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 3529: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3530: Mr. DOGGETT and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 3538: Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. KIND, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD.
H.R. 3539: Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3541: Mr. PRICE of Georgia.
H.R. 3556: Mr. FARR and Mr. CAMPBELL.
H.R. 3578: Mrs. CAPITO and Ms. JENKINS.
H.R. 3590: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. TURNER, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. CARTER, and Mr. STOCKMAN.
H.R. 3620: Ms. WATERS.
H.R. 3635: Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 3658: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 3671: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 3689: Mr. FARENTHOLD and Mr. POMPEO.
H.R. 3697: Mr. POLLS.
H.R. 3711: Mr. GRAYSON.
H.R. 3712: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 3717: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas and Mr. LONG.
H.R. 3727: Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 3732: Ms. FOXX.
H.R. 3738: Ms. CHU.
H.R. 3740: Mr. ENYART and Mrs. CAPPS.
H.R. 3747: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 3753: Mr. PETERS of California.
H.R. 3757: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 3789: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 3790: Mr. BACHUS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. HOLT.
H.R. 3794: Mr. BACHUS.
H.R. 3824: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 3855: Mr. COHEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 3863: Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. YODER, and Mr. GARDNER.
H.R. 3864: Mr. REICHERT and Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.
H.R. 3865: Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. BARTON, Mr. FORBES, Mr. MULVANEY, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mr. HURT.
H.R. 3870: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3877: Mr. CLAY and Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 3892: Ms. CHU and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 3930: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. LATHAM, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 3954: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 3964: Mr. BARR and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3971: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 3972: Ms. BASS, Ms. CHU, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MORAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 3979: Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CARTER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LATTA, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr.WILLIAMS.
H.J. Res. 25: Mr. MICHAUD and Mr. RANGEL.
H. Con. Res. 78: Ms. BROWN of Florida and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H. Con. Res. 80: Mr. CICILLINE.
H. Res. 35: Mr. LANKFORD.
H. Res. 109: Mr. MEEHAN.
H. Res. 153: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H. Res. 302: Ms. GRANGER.
H. Res. 356: Ms. KUSTER and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H. Res. 387: Mr. MCINTYRE and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H. Res. 447: Mr. JEFFRIES.
H. Res. 457: Ms. CHU, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H. Res. 463: Mr. ENYART.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF WASHINGTON

The amendment filed to the Committee Print for H.R. 3590 by me does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of House rule XXI.

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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our salvation, whose ear is always open to hear the cries of contrite hearts, consecrate our lawmakers today for Your service. Give them tallness of stature to see above the wall of prideful opinions the greatest good for the most people. Lord, provide them with the courage, vision, and wisdom to face these crucial days confident in the ultimate triumph of Your providence. Make their lives as lighted windows of faith, hope, and love amid the encircling gloom. Be the unseen guests at every meeting and guide each of their decisions.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 3, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. KING thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS HEALTH AND BENEFITS AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to Calendar No. 297, the veterans omnibus bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 297, S. 1950, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, we will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany the farm bill, H.R. 2642. The time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. At 5:30 p.m. there will be a cloture vote on the farm bill conference report.

As we have already announced, final passage will be tomorrow after our weekly caucuses.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1977

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told that S. 1977 is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1977) to repeal Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 relating to an annual adjustment of retired pay for members of the Armed Forces under the age of 62, and to provide an offset.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with this legislation at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tonight the Senate will vote to end debate on the farm bill conference report. I expect the Senate to conclude work on this measure, which will reduce the deficit and protect hungry families. This will happen, as I indicated, tomorrow afternoon.

Passing this legislation will support our Nation's farmers and ranchers and more than 16 million jobs in the farm industry. Ensuring that our farms remain the most productive in the world and protecting American agricultural jobs is vital for our economic recovery. I have been in the Senate and the House for a while, as has the chairman of the agriculture committee, the junior Senator from Michigan, so I have seen people handle legislation. The work done by Senator STABENOW has been remarkably good. It is exemplary for her to work to the point where we are now going to pass this important legislation. I look forward, as she does, to a strong bipartisan vote on cloture tonight and on the passage of the bill tomorrow.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

As we continue to work toward final passage of the farm bill, a bipartisan group of Senators has been working behind the scenes to reach an agreement to restore emergency unemployment benefits to 1.6 million people. In the 3 weeks since the Republicans filibustered a bill to extend this important program, 220,000 more Americans lost their benefits. State economies across the country have suffered as unemployed people, who are already getting by on so little, had to find ways to survive on even less.

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When unemployment benefits dry up, customers disappear from local stores and businesses suffer. More than $2.2 billion has been drained from State economies since the emergency unemployment insurance expired.

Nevada alone lost $29 million in economic activity just last month, and $28 million has drained from the economy in the Republican leader's home State of Kentucky since the emergency benefits expired on December 31. It is no wonder two-thirds of Americans—including 65 percent of Independents—believe we should extend unemployment assistance. Helping neighbors who have been hit hard is not only the compassionate thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do for our economy.

Economists say there is no way to stimulate the economy more than to give these people who don't have jobs some money because they are going to spend it.

Since Republicans filibustered a bill to restore benefits without adding a penny to the deficit—that legislation would not have added a penny to the deficit—the toll on local and national economies has been devastating, but the toll on unemployed Americans has been immeasurable.

For people who worked all of their lives and lost their job through no fault of their own, being unemployed is difficult enough, but worrying about how to pay the rent, put gas in the car, and buy groceries while they look for a new job can be demoralizing. For the long-term unemployed, some of those who have been struggling to find work for more than a year, $300 a week in unemployment benefits can be the difference between keeping a roof over their heads or becoming homeless, and this is no hyperbole.

A 57-year-old Nevada woman wrote to me last week to say that the loss of her unemployment check was the last straw. Now she is homeless and couch surfing. She is sleeping on the couches of friends kind enough to take her in.

This is what she wrote:

Can you imagine sleeping on friends' couches at my age? Can you imagine having to sell everything you worked hard for just to keep gas in the car in the event someone calls for an interview?

She went on to say:

I have worked my whole life, since I was 16 years old, and contributed to a system that is now failing me on a major scale.

Millions of people—such as this unfortunate Nevada woman—who have worked hard all of their lives and contributed to their communities and played by the rules are on the verge of losing everything, just like her. It doesn't have to be this way.

I remain cautiously optimistic that Republicans will heed their constituents back home and help Democrats restore emergency benefits to Americans in need.

Congress can't solve every problem, but we can solve this problem. All we have to do is work together—Democrats and Republicans—to do what is right for our constituents, our country, and our economy.

I urge Republicans to join us to restore these crucial benefits.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Will the chair announce the business of the day.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 2014—CONFERENCE REPORT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2642), to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its amendment to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of all conferees on the part of both Houses.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, as we begin the final debate and vote on the farm bill conference report, I thank our majority leader for supporting this effort every step of the way. Every time I have gone to him and said, Mr. Leader, we need to have time for some particular procedural vote or to move it along, he has been there. So I thank him very much for moving this conference report so quickly.

I also thank Senator COCHRAN and our entire committee. When Senator COCHRAN is here later today, I will speak more about the wonderful partnership we have had. The senior Senator from North Dakota will be speaking after me. I thank, Senator HOEVEN for being an invaluable partner through this entire process. It has been a tremendous pleasure working with the senior Senator, and he has made a real impact. I am very appreciative.

As my colleagues know, the last farm bill expired 490 days ago. It is time to get it done. It is time to pass this tomorrow and to give it to the President for his signature.

This is not your father's farm bill. This farm bill is focused on the future, not the past. We worked long and hard to make sure that policies worked for every region of the country, for all of the different kinds of agricultural production we do in our country—from traditional row crops, to specialty crops like fruits and vegetables, to livestock, to organics, to local food systems.

For the past 2½ years, we have been working in a bipartisan way with colleagues in the Senate and in the House, and I appreciate our partnership with the chairman and ranking member in the House to craft a farm bill that reflects the future in American agriculture and the healthy food choices that consumers are asking for in the marketplace.

As we begin this final debate, I want to focus for a few minutes on some of what people might not be focused on in this bill. Later today I am going to speak about the bill and each of its parts.

There are just five things I wanted to highlight as we begin this debate.

First, conservation. The farm bill is actually our country's largest investment in land and water conservation on private lands, which are the majority of our American lands. That means we are restoring and preserving wildlife habitat and open spaces. We help farmers reduce runoff to help keep rivers and streams clean and teeming with fish. This bill includes a historic new agreement that ties conservation compliance to crop insurance.

This bill helps prevent plowing of native grasses through a provision called Sod Saver that will save taxpayers money and preserve sensitive habitat for years to come.

Second, energy jobs. This farm bill has major investments in American energy independence. I am very proud to say this conference report contains the full $880 million investment we passed in the Senate for renewable and clean energy. It includes my Grow it Here, Make it Here initiative to support innovative biobase manufacturing that takes crops grown on our farms, uses it to replace petroleum and other chemicals, and transforms them into consumer products.

It contains the Rural Energy for America Program, known as REAP, to help farmers install on-farm renewable energy and energy efficiency systems to lower their energy usage. This bill supports the development of the next generation of biofuels, including new technologies using food and agricultural waste.

Third, healthy foods. One of the incentivized programs in this bill, among others, is a successful program in Michigan called Double Up Food Bucks, which essentially doubles food assistance when a family is shopping for produce at a farmers' market. Speaking of which, we have quadrupled support for farmers' markets—four times more help than the previous farm bill. That means farmers have more choices to find fresh, locally grown foods, and it means farmers have more opportunities to sell those products and grow our rural economies.

Fourth, research. Crops and livestock are affected by pests and diseases, and

if we are going to continue to be the world's leader in food production, we need to invest in order to fight back.

Unfortunately, for years we have had to cut funding for critical research, and that has been a great concern of mine and of all of our committee. This farm bill includes an innovative solution to that problem. It creates a new agricultural research foundation modeled after health research foundations to bring private and public dollars together to support our scientists all across the country who are working to fight pests, find cures for crop diseases, and focus on food safety and innovation.

Finally, reform. This farm bill contains the greatest reforms to agricultural programs in decades. We have finally ended direct payment subsidies, which are given to farmers in good times and bad. Instead, we shift to a responsible, risk management approach that only gives farmers assistance when they experience a loss.

The bill also ends farm payments to millionaires, addresses a loophole that allows people who aren't farming to get payments, and tightens payment limits with a cap on payments that, for the first time, includes all commodity title programs, including limits on marketing loans. We looked at every part of the farm bill for reform and savings. It is safe to say we are the only area of the Federal Government that has voluntarily cut spending in our own area of jurisdiction. Counting sequestration cuts, we made a commitment to achieve $23 billion in deficit reduction, and we have.

I have spoken about five reasons to support the farm bill. There are many more. This farm bill reflects a major step forward in creating a new paradigm for the future and a real victory for farmers, families, and all Americans who care about protecting our soil and water resources, increasing American energy independence, and the quality of life of rural communities across our country.

With that, at this time, so that other colleagues may speak, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is currently considering the conference report to H.R. 2642.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent to proceed on my leader time.

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

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in his State of the Union speech last week, President Obama promised America a year of action. He said he wants to use his pen and his phone to make it happen. Here is what I say: The President should use that pen and that phone of his today for the Keystone XL Pipeline and the jobs that will be created almost immediately.

Here is something both parties can agree on. I see my colleague from North Dakota here, and nobody has been more aggressively advocating the Keystone Pipeline than he has. This is an important shovel-ready project for America. Here is the President's chance to work with Republicans on a bipartisan plan to create thousands—literally thousands—of private sector jobs almost immediately. Here is his chance to show he is not captive to the ideological extremists on the left. Here is his chance for action on a policy the American people actually want. Here is his chance.

On Friday, the State Department released yet another report concluding what the President and everyone else already knew. The Keystone XL would meet the President's stated requirements on the environment, and there was basically no good reason not to build it.

So here is a project that essentially wouldn't cost the taxpayers a dime to build, that would have almost no net environmental effect, and that would put thousands of Americans to work right away. It is an initiative that is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans. It is supported by unions, by businesses, by Republicans, by Independents, and even by prominent Democrats—close to 20 right here in the Senate alone. Yet the President has delayed and delayed for more than 5 years now, not because the project really needs to be studied further but because of pressure from the most doctrinaire fringe of the doctrinaire left.

These are the kinds of folks who care a lot more about ideology than what makes sense for the middle class. Yet these are the same folks who have a lot of influence in today's Democratic Party. Just look at the war on coal—a war that is being waged with scant concern for the lives of people who live in States such as Kentucky where people are really hurting, and it doesn't seem to matter much to these folks.

So here is the thing. The President has run out of excuses on Keystone. It is way past time to make a decision. Let's be honest: This decision shouldn't be a hard one at all because the science, the economics, and common sense all basically point in one direction. As far as I can tell, ideology is really the only thing that could lead to a different decision.

So is President Obama on the side of the middle class or is he on the side of leftwing special interests? He needs to use that pen to show us where he stands, and he really ought to do it today.

While he is at it, he should pick up the phone too because in his State of the Union Address the President called on Congress to help break down trade barriers that stand in the way of more American jobs. He called for legislation that would help prevent foreign countries from taking the trade jobs that should be going to America's middle class.

''China and Europe aren't standing on the sidelines,'' he said, and ''neither should we,'' he said. Republicans applauded him for that. He is absolutely right. But now the President's own party is standing in the way of getting anything done. So if there ever was a moment for the President to use his phone, this is it because trade should be a bipartisan issue. It sure used to be. Just ask President Clinton.

America's middle class is hurting. The very least Washington can do for them is to approve job-creating initiatives such as Keystone and enhancing American exports. So we will see soon enough if the President meant what he said about his pen and his phone—if his year of action will really be just that instead of another tired slogan.

The answer is pretty simple. The President needs to step up and lead. Middle class Americans have taken a back seat to the hard left extremists in this town for entirely too long. It is time for the President to stand up to these folks and to do the right thing. Pick up that phone and that pen and get this done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, it is interesting that I follow our minority leader who spoke about the Keystone XL Pipeline issue, as well as the chairman of the agriculture committee in the Senate, the esteemed Senator from Michigan Ms. STABENOW, who has done such a marvelous job of leading the farm bill.

The role of Congress is to govern. The people of this great country—more than 300 million people, and the country that leads the world—send us here to govern. To govern, we have to join together on a bipartisan basis to get something done. Solutions, by their nature—particularly solutions to complex problems—are never perfect. There are no perfect solutions. But we are elected to join together, Republicans and Democrats, and solve problems; to put together solutions, although not perfect, that will meet the challenges this great Nation faces.

Regarding energy, I echo the sentiments of the minority leader. I have worked on the Keystone project for more than 5 years now, first as a Governor and now as a Senator, and we have tremendous bipartisan support on that project and we need to move forward. The minority leader is right on point.

I come today to talk about what I believe we are on the cusp of moving forward on, something we have worked on very hard, particularly these last 2 years, and that is the farm bill. I wish to begin by thanking and commending the Senator from Michigan who is the chairman of the Senate agriculture committee, who has worked with unbelievable dedication and who has truly shown the spirit of bipartisanship I am speaking about.

So I begin by thanking our chairman Senator STABENOW, who has worked with Democrats and Republicans. She has continually reached across the aisle not only to her ranking member, the good and senior Senator from Mississippi Mr. COCHRAN, but also to our counterparts in the House, including Representative FRANK LUCAS, who is the chairman of the Agriculture Committee in the House, and Representative COLLIN PETERSON, who is the minority member in the House. One is from Oklahoma and one is from Minnesota. So north and south, east and west, across this great country, Republicans, Democrats, Senators and House Members, and our chairman have worked to fashion a product that truly is a compromise but which is a vital solution we need to put in place and we need to put it in place now for our farmers and ranchers.

I will begin with this chart, and I have to say it is the only one I brought. It is the same chart I am going to end up with. I am going to talk about the farm bill for a few minutes, but here is why a farm bill is so important. It is not just that it is so important to our farmers and ranchers; it is important to every single American and beyond, for these simple reasons: The farmers and ranchers we have in this country produce the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world—the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world.

That is what we are talking about. When we talk about good farm policy, we are talking about something that benefits every single American every single day.

Somebody can say, Oh, well, gee, we don't need a farm bill. Don't worry about the farm bill; just let the farmers and ranchers do it the way they do and we will see what happens. Really? That is what we should do? We should take a chance on not having the kind of sound farm program we have now, when we have the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world, in the history of the world, that benefits every single American every single day? We should say, Oh, let's not worry about that; let's just let it go and see what happens? I don't think that is a very good argument.

So let's talk about this farm bill that is so important to every single American. Sixteen million jobs in this country, either directly or indirectly, rely on agriculture. We have a favorable balance of trade in agriculture, and we have a net worth of farmers and ranchers across this country who do an amazing job every single day.

I am going to start out by talking about the fact that we actually saved money. We saved more than $23 billion. So think about it. Here is a mandatory spending program where we strengthen the farm program, we improve it, we make it more cost-effective, and we save $23 billion to reduce the deficit and the debt. How about we go through every other program in government and see how we make it better and reduce spending. Because when we do that, then we will have done what we are talking about here with the farm bill. It seems like a good idea.

I see the good Senator from Montana on the floor and the Senator from South Dakota as well as the esteemed Senator from Michigan, and they will tell us the same. Here we are reforming a mandatory spending program and we are reducing the cost while strengthening the program. It seems like what we ought to be doing.

I know some folks will come here today and say, Gee, it could be better because of this or that, or we should have done this or that, and go right back into the same old gridlock and, I guess, argue for having yet another extension on a farm bill that expired over a year ago and should have been done a long time ago. We provide a better program with savings of more than $23 billion to help reduce the deficit and the debt.

What did we focus on in this bill to make it more cost-effective and to make it better? As our chairman on the agriculture committee said, we eliminate direct payments. People want to talk about reforms. We eliminate direct payments for the first time in a long time—more than $50 billion in direct payments—and we replace it with something that is much more cost-effective. We replace it with strengthened crop insurance so that farmers and ranchers can insure like other small businesses across this country to manage risk, even though they operate in an environment where they certainly can't control the risks. When we talk about weather, whenever we are putting in a crop and then waiting to see what the weather will be, that is a very difficult proposition. So we worked with them on crop insurance so they can try to insure the same way other types of businesses insure. That is much more cost-effective than the old direct payments. As our chairman said a minute ago, those direct payments were going out good years and bad, whether farmers and ranchers needed them or not. Now it is insurance, the way other businesses work.

We give them an option. We give them a countercyclical program called the price loss coverage that works on a countercyclical basis. So if times are tough, if prices are low, if they need help, they get help. And if times are good and prices are high and they have a good crop, they do not get help. That is cost effective.

We have tried to design it so we generate real savings—more than $23 billion—but if it works as we hope, it will generate more savings so we will continue to have the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world, continue to support a growing job base—16 million and growing—continue to help us in our balance of trade by creating a favorable balance of trade for this country in agriculture, and we hope with the reforms made we will continue to help reduce the deficit and the debt.

We also provide strong support for livestock. I think perhaps the Senator from South Dakota will tell you about a terrible storm that occurred earlier this winter. This has been a tough winter across the country. But for livestock producers out in the Midwest—in South Dakota, in my home State of North Dakota, and other areas—thousands and thousands of cattle were killed in an early blizzard. We provide help and support for those cattlemen.

We continue to provide other programs that will help them market not only here in our country but overseas, to continue to build that favorable balance of trade for our country.

In the dairy program—and it was very important to get agreement in the House; this is yet another example of how the conferees had to work to strike the right balance between what everybody wanted, Republican and Democrat, to come up with a program we could get support on—there is no supply management in the dairy program. It helps our smaller dairy producers with an insurance type product, and the cost of the premium increases with higher levels of production by the dairy producers. So it is designed the way that I think everybody should feel is a fair basis, where, again, when our smaller dairy producers need help, it is there, but it is cost effective and it is done without supply management.

The conservation title—again, the Senator from Michigan talked about the importance of conservation—is an example where we had disagreement. Right. This goes to the heart of what is in this farm bill. Here is an example—as I have said, our chairman did a marvelous job on the ag committee, working with our ranking member and everyone else—on conservation, I have to say, I had some different ideas than what is in the final compromise bill. I felt that crop insurance and conservation should have remained decoupled. But they are not. They are coupled in the final product. But, to make things work, again we sought and found compromise. We made changes in the bill that truly make the conservation provisions much more farmer friendly.

What do I mean by that? I mean it is not retroactive. It is forward looking. The conservation rules in the bill apply going forward. They do not go back retroactively to the start of the last farm bill. That is very important. You cannot put people in a situation where they are being forced to go out and change their farm or ranch on a retroactive basis. That is also very important.

Another provision we were able to include in the report language is mitigation. Farmers and ranchers do a tremendous job on conservation. I love to hunt and I love to fish. My wife likes to fish even more. But when I am out there hunting, I see what is going on, I see who is taking care of the land and making sure the water is there, the

cover is there, the food is there for wildlife—deer, birds.

For any conservation program to be truly effective, you have to enlist the farmers' and ranchers' support so the conservation community and farmers and ranchers are working together in a way that works for those individuals, those business people, those families, those farmers and ranchers who are out there making their living. Every day they are out there. They are not just out there once in a while. They are not just out there sometimes, as I am when I go out hunting. They are out there all the time making it work. So these provisions have to work for them.

That is why when we talk mitigation, the mitigation rules have to work for the people who own the land—the farmers and ranchers. That is why we have worked to include language that makes sure USDA is focused on an acre-for-acre approach, as long as there is reasonable and commensurate value, and we set up a fund to help them do that.

I think we achieved a good result. All of the wildlife groups, the conservation groups, and the hunting groups are on board. They are endorsing this bill. Even the NRA is endorsing this bill. There is strong support from conservation groups, from hunting groups, fishing groups, wildlife groups.

But at the same time, I think we have provisions that truly make it farmer friendly so that it works for our farmers and our ranchers. I know that was something we had to work on very hard to get to but is vitally important.

The bill has a strong energy title. We included and, in fact, strengthened the beginning farmer and the beginning rancher provisions.

I want to end on reform. Clearly, with our debt and deficit, it is vitally important we find ways to achieve savings. So as we go through all the discretionary spending programs—which is one-third of the Federal budget—we have to find savings. We are working to do that.

Since I have been here, we have reduced discretionary spending from $1.35 trillion to roughly $1 trillion. Since the beginning of 2011—discretionary spending at that time was $1.35 trillion—this year and next year, it will be about $1 trillion. So you can see we have reduced discretionary spending about 35 percent—and over this 5-year stretch—and that is without counting inflation.

But two-thirds of the government is mandatory spending. Two-thirds is mandatory spending programs. So we have to find ways to make revisions so we protect and preserve the programs that are vital to us, such as Medicare and Social Security, but we also have to find ways to take these mandatory programs and find savings and reforms as we do here in this farm bill.

So when we talk about eliminating direct payments, when we talk about payment limitations that for the first time apply to everything, whether you are getting the ARC program—the ag risk coverage—or the price loss coverage program, as in your farming operation, whether it is the marketing loan program, your total payments cannot exceed $125,000.

That is the first time we have had a cap that applies to everything. Right. We have had caps before, but they did not apply to everything. That is a real reform. You are going to hear others come down and say: Well, gee, it should have been better. It should have been like this. But I am telling you, we have not had one that applied to everything before where you truly had a cap.

So when we talk about eliminating direct payments, when we talk about a cap that applies to everything, that is a real reform. Furthermore, we have an AGI limit—adjusted gross income limit—that also applies to everything for the first time, just like the payment limit. Right now, if you make $900,000 or more, you do not get any program assistance. Before, again, it did not apply across the board. That is real reform.

I think in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—where we knew it would be tough to come up with a compromise—clearly, there were differences of opinion on each side of the aisle and between the Senate and the House. Here again, I commend the leaders of our conference committee—Senator STABENOW, Senator COCHRAN, Representative LUCAS, and Representative PETERSON—and the members of the conference committee. There was a lot of work to do in this conference committee.

To get an agreement on food stamps, on SNAP, supplemental nutrition assistance payments, was no small effort or accomplishment. Again, like all compromises, if you look at it, it really is fair to both sides. The compromise itself—based on the reforms we made in LIHEAP and getting the States to truly make sure we do not have waste, fraud, and abuse, but that people who need help get help—we have truly strengthened those provisions. The scoring by CBO is about an $8 billion reduction. But again, we get our economy going. These kinds of reforms will generate more savings while still ensuring people who need help get help.

If you look at that number, then it is very close to what the Senate said they had to have. So for those who are in that camp, they should feel this is a bill they can support. That is a fair compromise. On the House side, where clearly there was a desire to have a significantly larger number, if you look at this as a two-step process, where you take the savings that come out of expiration of the stimulus program—where there was about $11 billion in savings—and combine it with the reforms we made here—the $11 billion and the $8 billion; $19 billion—that was $20 billion. That was close to the House's original number.

Like all good compromises, it is fair and it does seek to get the kind of reforms that I think the American public wants to make sure there is not waste, fraud, or abuse in the Food Stamp Program, but for those who need help, they get that help.

Again, I commend not only the leadership in the ag committee but also the leadership in the House and the Senate for recognizing that it is time to put a solution in place for the American people. Again, no solution is perfect. But we cannot continue to operate with an expired policy that not only does not give our farmers and ranchers the certainty they need to continue to produce the highest quality, lowest cost food supply, which benefits every single American, but where we do not achieve the very savings and reforms that we have been sent here by the American people to achieve.

So it is time to vote. We will vote on this farm bill. There was a very strong vote in the House—250 to 160—a strong bipartisan support on both sides of the aisle. The Senate needs to step up now and put this solution in place for the American people.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the farm bill conference report. It has taken a long time to get to this point, with several unnecessary roadblocks along the way, but we are finally near the finish line, and it is time we conclude this process. I commend Chairwoman STABENOW, Ranking Member COCHRAN, Chairman LUCAS, and Ranking Member PETERSON for their leadership in developing this reasonable conference report.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 will reduce the deficit, restructure our ag support programs, continue to feed the hungry, aid livestock producers hit by the Atlas blizzard, and enable consumers to know from where their food comes.

This conference report certainly is not perfect. As with any legislation that is this important and far-reaching, it is impossible to fully satisfy everybody. But this is a reasonable compromise.

Our ranchers will benefit significantly from this bill. Not only does this compromise enable country-of-origin labeling to continue as well as maintain USDA's ability to ensure a fair and transparent marketplace, but it also contains critical livestock disaster assistance programs to help ranchers in my State who are still recovering from the 2012 drought and last year's terrible blizzard. My ranchers lost tens of thousands of livestock, and they have been left hanging because of congressional inaction. With passage, they will finally be able to get the aid they need.

Beyond the important assistance for livestock producers, this bill also reforms our farm programs by eliminating direct payments and by strengthening the crop insurance program. It also offers key support for

young and beginning farmers and ranchers, and it contains reasonable conservation compliance requirements for farm program and crop insurance eligibility.

This legislation represents more than just assistance to our farmers and ranchers. It is also a jobs bill. It contains mandatory funding for several energy and rural development programs, and it will help USDA deal with the huge backlog of pending rural water and wastewater infrastructure applications.

Hundreds of rural communities across the country, including Aberdeen, Watertown, and Brookings in South Dakota will also continue to be eligible for rural housing programs as a result of a provision I included in the Senate-passed farm bill that is maintained in this conference report.

I would also like to highlight the provisions to address some key forestry issues important to the fight against the pine beetle in the Black Hills. This bill provides the Forest Service and private forest landowners with critically needed tools and flexibility. This includes permanently authorizing stewardship contracting to combine timber harvests with needed conservation work, building on the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project in the Black Hills by streamlining activities to combat insect and disease epidemics, and clarifying the forestry exemption to Clean Water Act permitting. These changes provide needed certainty for both private and public forest managers.

While I am overall very pleased with this conference report, there are some disappointments. The senior Senator from Iowa and I have worked for years for meaningful payment limitations. In fact, we were able to include in the Senate bill a hard cap on payments as well as new language to define farm program eligibility requirements. The House bill includes nearly identical language. However, this conference report actually loosens payment caps and it punts the decision of defining ''actually engaged'' to the Secretary of Agriculture. This is frustrating. However, moving forward, I will urge USDA to follow the intent of the Senate and House bills with respect to farm program eligibility when it undertakes rulemaking.

Even though I am not fully pleased with everything in this conference report, I think it does represent a compromise. As such, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing the bill. If we do not, food prices will rise, ranchers in my State will be forced out of business, and we will not get the deficit reduction or reforms to our farm programs.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the importance of passing this farm bill that is in front of us, but I not only speak as a Senator, I also speak as a farmer, someone who is involved in production agriculture. When I am not wearing a suit and casting votes or traveling around the State finding out what is on the minds of Montanans, I am farming. From planting to harvesting, to accessing seed, to hauling food to the market, I know firsthand the life in production agriculture.

I know that whether you are a farmer or rancher or forester, it can be very tough because there is a lot of uncertainty—uncertainty I witnessed firsthand last summer when I visited the fields of Montana's Gallatin Valley, a valley that was devastated by a hailstorm literally hours before harvest was to begin, or the uncertainty caused by the blizzard that cost South Dakota thousands of cattle this last fall.

Farmers and ranchers understand and accept that uncertainty is a fact of life because we deal with weather; they know it is part of what comes with being in production agriculture, but what they cannot accept and what they should not accept is a Federal Government that takes 6 years in drafting a 5-year farm bill. We do not need that kind of uncertainty. That is why we need to pass the farm bill we have today.

When I talk to my fellow producers in Montana and around the country, they tell me the lack of a long-term farm bill is preventing them from making critical business decisions. Without a long-term farm bill, farmers do not know what crop insurance is going to look like. They do not know what to expect from future farm loans. It is hard to plan ahead or expand operations. You cannot even do the simple business planning without that farm bill.

Many of us in the Senate got our start in business and know the importance of a predictable business environment. Farming and agriculture is no different. You need certainty to grow and to prosper. The fact is the lack of a long-term farm bill is hurting economies from Montana to Maine. Folks need and are demanding a responsible long-term farm bill. I think it is time for the Senate to do the right thing; that is, pass the 5-year farm bill.

But I am not encouraging folks to vote for this bill just for the sake of certainty. They should also vote for it because I think it strengthens the hands of farmers, ranchers, American families who depend on them. Livestock owners will see many benefits from this farm bill. This 5-year plan makes livestock disaster assistance programs permanent and retroactive, helping those South Dakota ranchers whom I spoke of a minute ago to recoup their October losses as well as Montana ranchers who lost cattle to drought back in 2012.

All in all, livestock owners will be better able to manage risks, improve production, and meet the new challenges because of this bill. When it comes to farmers, this bill removes the term limits on USDA-guaranteed farm loans so farmers can continue to access credit at banks in rural communities.

It also provides more support for farmers and ranchers just getting their start in agriculture. In rural America we need more young producers willing to get up and work hard, keep small family farms and ranches going. This bill is a positive step for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Conserving land is another critical issue across this country, particularly rural America. Farmers and ranchers are the true stewards of the land. This bill continues that proud American tradition. By improving portions of the Conservation Reserve Program—or Sodbuster—this farm bill supports our outdoor economy by working with farmers and ranchers to preserve more native prairie for wildlife habitat.

That is good news for the hunters and anglers of this country. Montana is no exception. It is good news for folks who sell rifles and waders and the guides who show our hunters and anglers where to fish and where to hunt. All in all, this great outdoor economy adds up to $6 billion in the State of Montana alone.

This bill also includes an extension of PILT payments to rural communities that cannot generate enough revenue from lands that are controlled by the Federal Government. This is a big deal in rural America. It continues strong country-of-origin labeling so consumers know where their meat was born, raised, and processed, giving them the option to buy U.S.-made meat if they so choose.

The big multinational meat-packing firms may not like it, but for American ranchers it is critically important, as it is for consumers. Why? Because Americans know we produce the finest beef in the world. This 5-year farm bill takes all of these positive steps while saving taxpayers $23 billion by making tough choices in the nutrition assistance program and changing how we apply farm subsidies.

Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN have written a commonsense bill that is supported across our agricultural community. I wish to thank them for that. In an era when too many folks look for reasons to vote no instead of yes, it takes strong and determined leaders to bring a responsible, bipartisan bill such as this to the floor. That is why—because I am in production agriculture especially—the work that Chairman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN did for the American farmers and ranchers needs to be commended.

That commitment is going to keep America's rural economy strong. The Senators from Michigan and Mississippi are the reason this bill is finally at the finish line. Thanks to them, we are on the verge of approving a bipartisan bill that will strengthen production agriculture and support families, farmers, and ranchers across this country.

My wife and I took over our family's farm in north central Montana in 1978.

We had land and we had a strong work ethic, but we had little else. So with some hard work and a few good decisions and weather that cooperated, our farm is doing pretty well right now. Our story can be repeated across rural America. But production agriculture will only be strong if it has the certainty that comes with a commonsense, long-term farm bill. That is what is in front of us, a bill that lets farmers and ranchers know how to plan ahead, how to make their books balance, a bill that lets the distributors allocate resources and make sound business decisions, and a bill that takes responsible steps to strengthen programs that are working and ending others that are not.

Let's not leave farmers and ranchers and all Americans who depend on them high and dry again. With strong support for production agriculture, with strong support for a nutrition program, and with a bill that saves taxpayers significant dollars, it is time to vote yes and send this farm bill to the President's desk.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, before the Senator from Montana leaves the floor, I wish to thank him for his wise counsel throughout the process of writing the farm bill. It is nice to have a farmer in the Senate who can give practical ideas and reactions. This is somebody who has been out there fighting for the farmer, small farmers, to be able to make sure they have the same shot to be successful as the big producers.

I thank Senator TESTER not only for his support, but he has a very key voice in supporting farmers and ranchers across the country. I very much appreciate his counsel as we bring this effort to conclusion.

I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls be equally divided.

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

Ms. STABENOW. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the Agricultural Act of 2014 is the culmination of a lot of hard work by our conferees, Representatives MIKE ROGERS and MARTHA ROBY from Alabama, as well as my colleagues in the Senate, Senators STABENOW and COCHRAN and others.

This important legislation contains a number of commendable measures. During my time in the Senate, I have been a strong supporter of Alabama's farmers and believe this legislation does make a number of positive reforms over the long term that should help in the effort to reduce, not grow, the involvement of the Federal Government in agriculture.

For example, the legislation transitions farm subsidies from a system of direct payments to a more market-based crop insurance support program. Senator Lugar always favored that. I think many other people who have thought about agriculture think that is the right path to go. I have supported that.

As a 5-year bill, this legislation should also give our farmers and their families some certainty that they need to make prudent planning decisions and give them choices to select programs that best meet their needs.

I believe our farmers can move forward and help our Nation remain a global leader in the production of food and fiber which is critical to our economic well-being and national security.

The final bill also contains many other essential provisions to reduce unnecessary regulations, such as the inclusion of the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, forest roads fix, which I have strongly supported. It is an excessive intervention into the forest industry to have the EPA involved in the issues that they are talking about, and I think we have clarified that so that won't be a problem.

It also contains provisions that are designed to help Alabama catfish producers, peanut farmers, cotton farmers, and forest landowners who compete in the global economy.

I am pleased the final bill contains my provision to help farmers in States like Alabama that have not significantly used irrigation practices in the past. Under the current USDA policy, farmers have been excluded from the Federal irrigation program if they don't have a history of irrigation, and that makes no sense where we are trying to involve more people to smartly use more irrigation. I thank the ranking member and the chair of the committee for their work supporting us on that. My provision will help ensure that more Alabama farmers are able to access these programs. It has been a priority of mine for some time, although it is a small part of the overall bill.

As a whole, the Congressional Budget Office claims that the farm bill will reduce the deficit by $16.6 billion over 10 years. This is a step, a small step, however, in the right direction. It means that if current law were extended without change, we would be spending $16.6 billion more than if this bill were passed. So that is positive.

I wish we could do more, and we can do more. Unfortunately, we haven't done more, but this is a positive step. It is fair to say that the elimination of countercyclical and direct payments—almost entirely—is a historic occasion. Of course, Congress enacted Freedom to Farm in 1996, which was intended to slowly phase out these kinds of subsidies. But when times became particularly difficult for our farmers in the years following the 1996 bill with low prices and drought, these programs were, in essence, reinstituted by Congress. The retreat and the movement away from Federal intervention was greatly eroded.

In my view—and that is all I have at bottom, is my view—Congress should seek to steadily reduce the role of the Federal Government in farming. But millions are dependent upon farming for their livelihoods, and a thoughtful, conservative approach to reducing Federal intervention would be to continue this reduction steadily over time. It surely can't be done smartly all at once without some real dislocation in the agricultural marketplace—although I must say I think we could have gone a good bit further this year.

But I remain concerned that the reforms to the SNAP program, the food stamp program, are much too modest. I hope our actions today help set the table for continued and badly needed reforms that I and others have outlined during our debate on the farm bill in 2012, 2013, and this year.

Yet it seems clear to me that the bill before us today regretfully does not go nearly as far as it could in addressing the abuses and the wastefulness that are contained in those programs.

For example, the bill spends $956 billion over 10 years. Nearly 80 percent of that is for the SNAP program, food support programs.

It is, in reality, as someone has said, a SNAP bill, a food stamp bill. Eighty percent of the money goes to that one problem. It asks our farmers to contribute a disproportionate share to deficit reduction. The bill cuts food stamps by only about $8 billion and it cuts the agricultural programs by about $8 billion. That sounds fair, balanced, as my colleagues like to use that word, ''balanced.'' But we are cutting $8 billion from the 20 percent of the program and the other $8 billion from the other 80 percent of the program, and that is not balanced.

I want to say to my colleagues that there is no intent or desire of any Member of this Senate to have people who are hungry remain hungry and people who are in need of food not to have food. What we are saying is there are a great number of abuses in the program that have clearly been identified and should be fixed and haven't been sufficiently fixed.

Although it repeals direct payments, the bill replaces those payments with new programs that seek to help farmers in a more effective way and that will cost at least $27 billion. So we reduce some programs and increase others. I think most of that is in the agricultural insurance policy, which is probably, in general, a better way to help our agricultural industry.

Congress needs to be careful about spending more money, and many Senators and independent analysts think

these new programs may cost even more than CBO is currently projecting. It moves money from direct support to crop insurance, and I think that could be good. We have studied the farm bill conference report and note that the Congressional Budget Office has concluded it increases spending in 2014 by $2.1 billion above the spending limits Democrats and Republicans agreed to in December. It is more than what we agreed to in December—$2.1 billion over the limits we agreed to in a bipartisan way.

In the Senate this would normally subject the legislation before the Senate to two points of order, budget points of order, because it violates the budgeted spending limits we just agreed to. Proponents of the bill would then be required to either reduce the spending in the bill to the agreed-upon level or gather a supermajority of 60 votes to waive the point of order and agree to violate the budget.

However, the Senate majority, our Democratic colleagues have deployed a budget gimmick with Republican support that rendered these points of order—and consequently limit a minority's right to enforce the spending limits—ineffective. This is something I predicted 2 months ago when the Ryan-Murray legislation passed. I said on December 18, as that deal was being debated:

> With 57 different reserve funds, the Murray-Ryan spending bill that is before us now will allow Senator REID and Chairwoman MURRAY to bring to the floor a practically unlimited number of big tax-and-spend bills. It will not be subject to the 60-vote limit. Normally the minority party would be able to raise a point of order under section 302(f) of the Budget Act.

So the Budget Committee chairman has decided to make an adjustment to the budget spending levels, and she can do so because of the Ryan-Murray spending agreement that passed the House, the Republican House, and the Senate. This will allow increased spending in the farm bill above the amount we agreed to.

Though two points of order would lie against the bill, they are voided in the Ryan-Murray legislation because of the powers granted to the Budget Committee chairman in that legislation.

Let me explain this power that was granted, yet again. The Ryan-Murray agreement includes 57 deficit neutral reserve funds. Operationally, a reserve fund allows the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee to adjust the allocations of budget authority and outlays to a Senate committee or committees; aggregate levels of budget authority, outlays, and revenues; and other appropriate levels prior to Senate consideration. This allows the proposed legislation to avoid most spending and revenue-related budget points of order as long as the measure complies with both the subject matter and deficit neutrality instructions in the reserve fund.

In the case of the farm bill, the Ryan-Murray budget numbers refers to the Senate-passed budget which garnered bipartisan opposition.

The Senate budget, S. Con. Res. 8, in section 313 gives the chairman of the Budget Committee the power to adjust the budget for any farm bill reauthorization: ''Provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2013 through 2018 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2013 through 2023.''

Those are complex words I just read. But in other words, the farm bill is now in a situation where it can increase spending in the first fiscal year and promise that it will recoup the money later on, which is exactly what this bill does, and the minority's rights are diminished in its ability to stop it because of the Ryan-Murray budget agreement. That is what I warned about in December. Some said there wasn't anything to it. I warned that there was, and I think we are already seeing that there is something to the complaints I made.

I said on the floor of the Senate that the ''power that Senators had to block tax-and-spend legislation that breaks spending limits has been eroded significantly'' by Ryan-Murray.

The danger is that we will certainly have spending increases in the short-term, but we have only promises of spending limitations in the future.

There is no point of order that lies against the bill because the Ryan-Murray agreement passed by Congress, I acknowledge—I am not sure if Members of the House and Senate fully knew what was included in the Ryan-Murray agreement after that secret meeting between the two budget leaders.

This legislation is far from perfect, and we will see how we proceed with the agriculture bill. I appreciate those who have worked on it. We need to do the right thing for agriculture. It is an important part of our Nation's economy and our national security. I have invested a lot of time and effort in it, as I know most of my colleagues have. I appreciate the work of those who have produced this legislation for us.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. We all know the Senate and House agriculture leaders unveiled the long-awaited conference report last week for the 2014 farm bill. It has been a long trip getting this far. Every conference committee, of course, has some controversy, but the 2014 farm bill has had more than its fair share of twists and turns—right down to the negotiations on the dairy policy in the fleeting hours—before we, as conferees, signed this conference report. It sounds like the old days of The Perils of Pauline when we had the farm bill tied to the railroad tracks or about to head over the dairy cliff.

Fortunately, we had Chairwoman STABENOW, Ranking Member COCHRAN, and their superb staffs. I am also blessed with my own superb staff: Adrienne Wojciechowski, Kathryn Toomajian, Rebekah Weber, Kara Leene, and Tom Berry, all of whom spent hours away from their families while working on this important bill. We ended with a bipartisan, bicameral farm bill that addresses the needs of every region in the country. Senator STABENOW and I were on the phone or emailing about every hour of the day, night, and weekends from Michigan, Vermont, overseas, and from the Senate, but it worked. Everybody had a chance, Republicans and Democrats alike, to express their views. Now it is time to vote, pass the bill, send it to the President, and give sorely needed certainty to our farmers, our families, and our rural communities.

After all, the 2014 farm bill saves taxpayers $23 billion. It eliminates duplicative programs. It strengthens the toolbox for conserving our natural resources. It gives the farmers some much-needed, long-overdue certainty as they make planting decisions. They don't have the luxury that we seem to give ourselves to wait until the very last second to vote on something. They have to plan months in advance. It provides relief to struggling families, support for rural communities, and investments in a sustainable energy future. Is it a perfect bill? Of course not. No farm bill is. But while there are provisions I would not have preferred, I do believe it has a lot of provisions that will benefit Vermont and the Nation.

I wish the commonsense dairy policies that were passed twice by the full Senate and supported by Republicans and Democrats, by the chair and by the ranking member, and also by the House Committee on Agriculture had not been ambushed at the last hour. As a result, we don't have a market stabilization program—something that was proposed by dairy farmers themselves that would have protected taxpayers from the exorbitant costs and would have insulated dairy farmers and consumers from volatile rollercoastering milk prices.

Unfortunately, the Speaker of the House and some of the very powerful, huge industry figures from out West did not want it.

We do have, because of the constant work of everybody—and I again would praise the chair of our own committee, Senator STABENOW—a solution that while not perfect will help our small dairy farmers protect themselves from poor economic conditions when milk prices plummet or when feed prices skyrocket or, as we have sometimes seen in the worst scenario, when both happen at the same time. The final farm bill includes changes to lower the cost of the Dairy Producer Margin Protection Program for Vermont's small, family dairy farms. It will also discourage large dairies from using this program to flood the markets through overproduction of milk, something that wipes out small family farms.

But the bill is not just about farmers; it is a food bill that supports hungry children and struggling families and it has healthy food initiatives. I am disappointed the final bill contains many cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, but the conferees worked together and rejected the deepest cuts to the hunger safety net and the most harmful new conditions which were advocated by an extreme majority in the House, both of which would have undermined the very reasonably offered food assistance. These provisions would have slashed nearly $40 billion from nutrition assistance programs, eliminating the eligibility for millions of Americans, and making it harder for hungry children to receive free school meals.

Frankly, I am fed up with hearing Members, whether in the House or sometimes Members in this body, say: Oh, we can't afford to feed these hungry children when they go to school. These are the same Members who voted for a blank check to go to an unnecessary war in Iraq, something that has cost us $2 trillion, which they did on a credit card. We need to feed children in America so they might actually learn while they are at school, but some say: Oh, we can't afford that. Come on. Feeding those hungry children is an investment in the future of this great Nation.

Some of the demeaning and offensive provisions, such as allowing drug testing of beneficiaries and unrealistic work requirements, were left out. You're telling me that we can have tax-paying, hard-working citizens, who, when factories close, won't be able to feed themselves with supplemental nutrition. We are going to demean them after what they have done for the country? Of course not.

The legislation promotes food security in low-income communities and encourages healthy eating through increased access to fruits and vegetables. That is something we have done in Vermont for years and it is also one of the reasons—that and the fact we cover every child from birth to 18 years old for health care—that Vermont is always listed as either No. 1 or No. 2 of the healthiest States in the Nation.

This legislation also—and again I wish to compliment the Chair on this—continues to share the responsibility to conserve our working farmlands and our natural resources. If we lose these natural resources, we can't make them again. We are not going to get them back. Federally supported crop insurance will ease farmers' exposure when natural disasters strike. It will keep working lands in production. Meanwhile, enlisting farmers to continue the simple conservation practices they are already following will ensure the protection of our wetlands and our sensitive lands.

In a country as diverse as ours, it is no simple task to produce a farm bill that addresses the needs of every region or every industry or every priority. I am proud this is a bill that offers a targeted approach to tackling the needs of each State and agricultural sector, rather than doing it the easy way, which is a one-size-fits-all, which ends up not fitting anybody.

The regional equity program guarantees that no State is left out from receiving conservation resources under the farm bill. Not only Vermont communities but rural America everywhere will be strengthened by a broadband development program, energy efficiency initiatives, and water treatment and distribution loans. Vermont's very beautiful Northeast Kingdom REAP Zone will continue to be a catalyst for growth and progress to help build a resilient rural economy. Organic agriculture is supported through certification cost sharing, stronger enforcement, crop insurance, and funding for organic research. We should promote organics because it is the fastest growing sector in agriculture.

I am also pleased that many of the harmful provisions from the House farm bill were removed during the conference negotiations, including dangerous secrecy provisions and attacks on critical environmental regulations. One that was proposed by an extremely conservative Republican would have actually threatened to limit States rights. What an amazing turn of events. We got rid of all of these.

Bottom line, the Senate and the House have produced a farm bill that at its core is about keeping America strong. Make no mistake, farming is part of our national security. Look at the number of nations in this world that would give anything to be able to feed themselves and have food left over to export. We are more secure as a nation because we can do that.

This farm bill will boost the economy, will create jobs, will offer support for the hungry, conserve our national resources, improve our energy security, and stand up for our country's families. I am proud to have signed the conference report for another farm bill that will support Americans today and into America's future. I look forward to one of my few duties I get to perform after this bill passes: I will sign the bill as President pro tempore after the Speaker signs it. And I know from what he has said to all of us, the President will then sign it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am going to address a small part of this bill but a very important part of the bill, something I have been working on through at least two farm bills. Since the chairwoman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is here, Senator STABENOW, I thank her for defending my position up until the last day or two of the conference. She kept me informed fully about the difficulty of the position that both Houses had taken getting that out of conference.

I come to the floor not to discuss just my issue but to use it as an example that my colleagues may look forward to in the future; that is, that just because something goes through the Senate, even without controversy—because as far as I know it wasn't discussed or there was no amendment offered to strike what I am talking about that came out of committee and it passed in the House of Representatives by a 230-to-194 vote in the same language—one would assume that something which was the same in both Houses would not be changed by the conference. In fact, rule XXVIII of the Senate rules says this: ''Conferees shall not insert in their report matter not committed to them by either House, nor shall they strike from the bill matter agreed to by both Houses.''

So if Members are interested in the Senate rules being followed by conference committees in the future, understand in this particular case that was not followed. The provisions were not necessarily struck, but they were changed in such a manner that the $387 million the Congressional Budget Office said would be saved if my provision stayed in, that amount of money will not be saved.

We are talking about a situation that we are trying to correct, going back at least to the 2008 farm bill and maybe previous to that, where 10 percent of the biggest farmers get 70 percent of the benefits from the farm program, so it is subsidizing farmers as opposed to helping medium- and small-sized farmers get through conditions such as natural disasters, politics, and other aspects beyond the control of farmers that the safety net for farmers was intended to help.

So we could have saved $387 million, and the rules of Senate said this should have been in the final package that came back to the Senate, but it is not here. It seems to me my colleagues ought to be aware of that fact because they may be in a similar situation sometime on some other conference committee report, and the question is: Are you going to let a small number of people—for most of this conference report 4 people negotiating the difference between the House and the Senate—speak for the other 531 Members of the Congress? Are you going to let a majority of that group of people represent a minority of the Senate and a minority of the House? By this being taken out or this being changed in such a way so it has no value, that is exactly what has happened.

Making sure we have limits on the amount of money a farmer can get and real numbers that work is not something new. President Bush vetoed a farm bill in 2008 because he said it continues subsidies for the wealthy. In another part of his veto message he said the American taxpayer should not be forced to subsidize that group of farmers who have adjusted gross incomes up to $1.5 million as the rationale for vetoing that bill.

So what we have is the moral authority of a majority of the Senate, a moral authority of the House of Representatives, and their positions taken on this language—language that limited a farmer to no more than $250,000 and defining a farmer as somebody who is actually engaged in the business of farming so nonfarmers don't get help from the farm program—has been taken out, regardless of the moral authority that said it should be kept in the bill. In other words, conferees are taking out something that represented a minority of the House of Representatives and a minority of the Senate.

We are here to vote on a farm bill—cloture today, final passage tomorrow. The farm bill is a very important safety net for producers. It gives farmers a chance to survive in tough times. As a farmer, I understand the risk of farming. My payment limit reforms were adopted—and I can't say that too many times—in both bodies of Congress. It would have saved $387 million.

People said, when we limited through my amendment that you could have one nonfarming manager per farming operation, that was unreasonable.

There would have been a lot of money saved. But more importantly, as is the situation today and will probably be the situation in the future, nonfarmers are going to be able to get benefits from a farm program when they don't have legitimacy for it. This provision should not have been touched, because it was the same in both Houses.

Unlimited subsidies, when 10 percent of the biggest farmers get 70 percent of the benefits from the farm program, actually put a new generation of young and beginning farmers at a severe disadvantage. There is nothing wrong with farmers getting bigger. That is the American dream, to use your potential to do the best for yourself. But when large farmers who shouldn't get subsidized get big payments from the farm program, it is, in my estimation, wrong—particularly when it drives up the price of land as it has in the recent 5 to 8 years; drives up the price of cash rent as it has recently. It is very difficult for people who are just trying to get into the business of farming to start. So I think when nonfarmers can qualify for the farm program as managers when they might not even be making a phone call to the operation and having limits that don't mean much—which is exactly what we are doing, subsidizing big farmers to get bigger—it puts young and beginning farmers at a severe disadvantage.

Changing my reforms behind closed doors is wrong. The House and Senate had spoken on the issue. With no debate in the Senate here, a 230–194 vote in support of the Fortenberry amendment in the House of Representatives—something under the Senate rules that is the same in both bodies should not be messed with by the conferees, but it was changed dramatically.

Some are saying the effort the conferees took to give the U.S. Department of Agriculture authority to bring about some of these reforms on who is engaged in the business of farming will do the job. But they have had that authority for a long time, and I see this as a Washington hat trick to say you have done something when you haven't done anything.

I am not going to be able to vote for this bill because it would endorse what has happened. Egregious manipulation behind closed doors of something that is the same in both Houses should not be tolerated, and I hope my colleagues will take that into consideration so it doesn't happen to them in the future. How we will fix other entitlement programs if we can't cut subsidies to millionaire farmers who don't even farm makes it very difficult.

As I said, my friend from Michigan, Chairwoman STABENOW, has worked hard on this bill. I wanted to support this farm bill. I just can't get over what happened behind closed doors, once again, here in Washington. And as she has told me so many times, she has defended my position and I thank her for so doing.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, in spite of all the discussion about our great energy renaissance and ''all of the above,'' and new manufacturing—and, yes, we are going to be a test site for the unmanned aircraft—in North Dakota we live and we breathe agriculture. In summer, our plains are filled with beautiful sunflowers and canola fields and flax. It is the most amazing view, especially when the canola is next to the flax.

Our ranchers take serious pride in their cattle herds that graze around much of our State. The wheat, grain, corn, and soybeans farmers provide help to feed the world and have the best products produced in agriculture today.

Agriculture also supports 16 million jobs around the country, including thousands of manufacturing jobs in North Dakota. This is not surprising, given that our State is one of the most productive farm States in the country. Those jobs make it possible for our State to continue to harvest each year, supporting families across North Dakota but also throughout the country.

I take great pride in the work our farmers and ranchers do. I know all North Dakotans do as well. For too long we weren't supporting them enough to enable them to do their job. In fact, we held farmers and ranchers in limbo because they haven't been sure how to prepare for this crop year since the Congress had not done its job and passed a farm bill. Finally, that is about to change.

During my campaign I pledged to work tirelessly to get a long-term farm bill passed. Now we are literally at the 1-yard line of finally reaching the goal of passing a 5-year bipartisan farm bill. I am incredibly proud of the work we have done and what we have almost accomplished. And I do have to give a shout-out to our tremendous chairwoman, Senator DEBBIE STABENOW, who, as Senator HOEVEN put it, is a tough negotiator—tough but fair, and absolutely remarkable, not only this year but also in 2013 and 2012, and who never resists an opportunity to inform anyone who crosses her path about the importance to the economy of this country that a long-term farm bill positions us much better to be competitive in the world.

One subject we talk about a lot is the budget and about long-term systemic reforms that can give us what in public policy we need to do, such as a safety net for farmers, but also reduce costs to taxpayers. This farm bill saves 23 billion in Federal dollars, while still providing one of the strongest safety nets for farmers and ranchers ever crafted in a long-term farm bill. It makes critical reforms to target resources where they are most needed while also giving farmers the opportunity to thrive. This farm bill achieves that goal, and puts our agricultural system in a strong position to continue its role as a world leader.

This is achieved through effective farm programs for growers; livestock disaster coverage for ranchers and livestock producers; enhanced crop insurance offerings; expanded research, which is so critical to so many of our new crops; increased export production for agricultural products; critical investments in biofuels and in energy; our renewal of the Sugar Program to prevent excess imports of unfairly subsidized foreign sugar; and targeted conservation assistance to tackle the unique problems in this country, particularly in my State with Devils Lake and the Red River Valley.

In North Dakota we grow more than 20 different crops each year, and we lead the Nation in the production of 13 different commodities, including spring wheat, durum wheat, barley, edible beans, peas, lentils, canola, sunflowers, and flaxseed. So while we talk about this expansion and explosion of both corn and soybeans, North Dakota is leading the way in diversification, which I think is the future for agriculture.

North Dakota is also a leading livestock State, with thousands of cow-calf operators raising livestock in the West, and a leading producer of sugar beets from growers in the Red River Valley.

Approximately 25 percent of my State's economic base and employment is derived from work done on the farm. I talk about this quite a bit, because I think when we think about economics

and what generates economic activity, at the very beginning, we have to have new wealth creation, and in this country new wealth creation comes from what we extract from the earth, how we use our resources, and it comes from exportation of our goods and services. That is new wealth, and farming is such a critical component. When we think about it, we realize our farmers and ranchers help grow the economy and reduce our Nation's trade deficit. North Dakota alone exported more than $4.1 billion in commodities this year, contributing to farm cash receipts of over $7.6 billion.

But to simply put in a crop, an average grower in North Dakota spends upward to $1 million in import costs with the hope of earning a modest profit, a modest return on that investment at the end of the year.

What is more, each year North Dakota faces challenges completely out of their control, such as floods, droughts, price collapse, and the introduction of new pests and pathogens. Each year North Dakota growers face an incredible risk—within the last 2 years—the uncertainty of not having a farm bill. They are able to take the risk because the rest of the country takes a little bit of risk with them for that food security and national security that American agriculture provides.

For too long this body has debated farm and rural policies in place in our country without providing the needed certainty to America. Soon—in just a few hours—we will have the opportunity to prevail by putting rural America on a strong ground by passing a comprehensive long-term farm bill that stands for our ranchers and our producers and stands for the people who consume agricultural products in this country.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on this bill. It is good for my State, it is good for the country, and it is good for the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I have 20 to 30 minutes. I would appreciate it if the Presiding Officer would notify me when I have consumed 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will be so notified.

Mr. COBURN. I have been in the Congress for a lot of farm bills. I saw ''Freedom to Farm.'' I saw the last farm bill, the one before that, and now I am looking at this one. It reminds me of the auto commercial—something's up. Well, it sure is.

Only in Washington can we claim a bill saves $24 billion when it increases the spending 43 percent over the next 10 years. How does that fit? Is that just the language of Washington? In fact, we are going to spend almost $1 trillion over the next 10 years on what should be called a food security bill rather than a farm bill because this is not a farm bill. This is a food security bill.

The language we hear from our colleagues is totally parochial or product based. We hear all the claims that we are thinking about the best interests of the Nation. What we are truly thinking about is the best interests of the parochial values for our own States. That is how we get this conflagration of people coming together to pass a bill that, I admit, has some limited reforms in it.

I just heard the Senator from North Dakota talk about how we create wealth. I could not disagree more. We create wealth by making sure the risk of capital investment is responsive to market forces. This farm bill is anything but that. There is no response to market forces because there is no place else in this country where someone can go into a business or an enterprise and be guaranteed that their revenue is going to be secure. We even added a new supplemental low-cost Crop Insurance Program that all of us who are not farmers in America are going to pay the deductible on. Plus, we are going to subsidize 62 to 63 percent of all the crop insurance in the country.

When we subsidize crop insurance, what we are doing is taking the capital risk and modifying the risk; therefore, markets are not going to work.

We talk about sugar prices. Americans are losing candy manufacturers like crazy. Why is that? Because Americans pay twice as much as the rest of the world for sugar because we are protecting cane sugar and beet sugar farmers rather than letting market forces work.

I am very disturbed at the process of this bill as well. Senator DURBIN and I tried to put some income limitations on the benefits to the wealthiest in this country when it comes to crop insurance. It passed this Senate with 64 or 65 votes. It was in the bill when it left here. The House passed the same thing by a voice vote and the conferees took it out.

What is the farm bill about? It is about protecting the well-heeled and well-connected in the agricultural community.

I know a little bit about agriculture. My dad ran a ranch with 5,000 mother cows. I worked on it in the summer and after school. Back then—in the 1970s—there were no benefits for a cattle rancher. That has come into the farm program since the 1970s. It guarantees them that now they will make decisions that are against market forces but will farm the government.

So I say again, only in Washington when we are going to spend $350 billion more on a program over the next 10 years will somebody claim we are cutting spending $14 to $20 billion. Only in Washington will that happen. It is unique Washington accounting.

We have heard all the proponents say what a great job they did. Let me talk a little bit about some of the details of this farm bill.

One of the things the President talked about—he just put JOE BIDEN in charge of the job training programs. He is supposed to look at all of them to see if they have metrics. The GAO has studied that. I have looked at every job training program—State and Federal—in my State.

They have 10 job training pilot programs in this bill. We don't need any more job programs. What we need to do is make sure the ones we have work and have metrics on them. We need to make sure that when we spend American taxpayers' dollars that we are actually giving somebody a life skill rather than filling the coffers of the companies that contract to do all the job training programs or allowing the small bureaucracies that suck up the grants. Oklahoma's Federal programs are highly ineffective—especially when we compare them to the State-run programs, which are highly effective.

So in this farm bill we are creating more job-training programs. It sounds good. It is a good sound bite on the floor, and it is a good sound bite in the press back home. But something is up, and what is up is we continue to make the same mistakes as a legislative body. That mistake is that we want to please constituents at home more than we want to fix the real problems in front of this Nation.

Let me talk about SNAP for a minute. There is not anybody in this country I want to go hungry. When this country was first founded, we used some very good principles that the Senate and the House have totally disregarded in terms of how to help people.

I reference the historical blueprint from a book written by a man by the name of Marvin Olasky. The title of that book was called ''The Tragedy of American Compassion.'' It talks about how we used to help people versus how we are helping them now; how did we build up people as we helped them versus now; how are we tearing down people as we help them. It talks about creating dependency versus creating responsibility.

He outlines several factors this country has used in the past that we ought to be reembracing. Let me list a couple of them. One is we should give relief to people only after one-on-one personal investigation of their need. Let me say that again. We ought to know they need it. Contrast where the money is coming from. The money is not coming from today's taxpayer when we are running a $640 billion deficit. The money is coming from our kids and our grandkids.

Do we not have an obligation to know that when we give somebody a SNAP card they truly need it versus the fact that the SNAP cards and PIN numbers get sold? The SNAP card is then used by somebody else. That is going on throughout this country. That is not to say that most of the people who are getting this benefit don't need it. Because there is no personal investigation into it and there is no accountability on the part of the receiver or the giver, we are creating a situation in our country where we are undermining self-reliance.

The second point he made was to give necessary articles and only what is immediately necessary. That means you have to investigate it in order to give what is least susceptible to abuse; to give only in small quantities and in proportion to immediate needs and less than might be procured by labor except in cases of sickness. That is a great principle. Let's help people, but let's help people help themselves. Let's don't create a situation of temptation to do the wrong thing; to give assistance at the right moment, not prolong it beyond duration of the necessity which calls for it. We don't do that at all in any of our programs; to require each beneficiary absence from intoxicating liquors and drugs; to discontinue relieving all who manifest a purpose to depend on alms rather than their own exertion for support. I don't have one problem paying my taxes to make sure people don't go hungry and have food on the table for their kids.

I just watched a documentary my daughter referred to me. I have to say, as a physician, I understand the scientific tests and the great research that went into this. It is called ''Forks Over Knives.'' It makes the case that most of our health care cost is based on our diet. It is very accurate and well done—except we have no limitations.

Senator HARKIN and I have tried for years to get limitations on how food stamps and SNAP cards are used. We can't budge anybody to say we ought to limit it to healthy foods, because for every $1 we spend on food, we are creating $1 in health care costs down the road.

I recommend that my colleagues watch that study. It is unbelievable in terms of heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. No medicine, just a change in diet, and all of a sudden those things go away. They go away because we take Big Agribusiness's push to use what is profitable out of the food chain and then start supplying foods that are actually good for us.

It seems to me Congress looks backward instead of forward when it comes to the farm bill. One of the things we ought to do is look at the world and what the population is. I also wish to say that some of the hardest working people in this country are the people who are in agriculture. I don't say these things to demean them, but markets do work.

We hurt our farmers when we take them away from market forces because that will cause them to make decisions that are false choices when it comes to capital investment, and those are false choices for our country because that means capital is going into something that is subsidized by the government rather than going into something that is not subsidized that will create a greater good and more wealth for our country.

This bill does exactly that. You realize in this bill you are guaranteed 86 percent of your revenue. Let me think about that. Do you know anywhere else where you can get your revenue on your crops guaranteed at 86 percent and the Federal taxpayer is paying most of the cost of the insurance for that?

Individuals in Oklahoma, Maine, and Virginia are paying higher tax dollars so we can create a system where we are investing in crops that are not necessarily good for us and causes us to pay a higher price for a domestically produced crop versus world markets; whereas, we could direct the same inputs into a product that is much better for us and we would be much more competitive.

One of the points I wish to make is that in 2013, net farm income was $131 billion. That is 16.5 percent over what it was the year before, in an economy that is only growing less than 2 percent. Yet we are going to spend almost $100 billion a year in the future, of which only 18 percent of that will be for agricultural programs, outside of the Food Stamp Program. We are going to spend $18 billion to misdirect capital in a way that, in the long run, we won't see that kind of growth.

I will finish with other commentary. It is necessary that we have a farm program, but there is one little trick in this farm bill that everybody ought to be aware of. It is the pressure for the next farm bill that is put in this farm bill, and my colleagues know what it is. They didn't eliminate any of the permanent law that is on the books; they just let it stay there, and then we created the farm bill for 5 years. What is the purpose of that?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 15 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the Chair.

The purpose is so that in 10 years, and in 5 years when we come to another farm bill, the default position will fall back to 1940s-era agricultural law, which will create pressure to do a farm bill again. If we do the same next time, it is going to cost $1.5 trillion over the following 10 years.

My best friend is a feed corn, soybean, and wheat farmer. The farm is in excess of 2,000 acres in Oklahoma. On breaks, when they are harvesting, I go down there and drive a grain buggy. I have only bent the auger on it once. I hear it from a farmer's perspective. Do my colleagues know what he tells me? He tells me we don't need this anymore. We don't need it. We need decisions on capital investment to be made on risks and markets. No one can tell me, when we have $131 billion in net farm income this year, that we need to be subsidizing 86 percent of everybody's product, guaranteeing them, no matter what happens in yield or price, they are going to get 86 percent.

The cost of this bill isn't just the $1 trillion we are talking about; it is going to be much higher. We have had historically high commodity prices. They have moderated somewhat, but if they go back anywhere close to historical prices, this bill is going to cost at least another $100 billion, just in one program alone. CBO's assumption is that we are not going to do that. But most of the leading agricultural economists in this country think corn is going to be under $4, it is going to be $3.75, and wheat will decline and soybeans will decline. So the score we have on this bill is nonsense because it doesn't reflect the reality of what is happening out there.

I appreciate the hard work people did on the farm bill. I am highly critical of adding new job programs. I think we have missed it completely. We don't even know what the real problem is in terms of job training in this program, and the 10 pilot programs aren't going to make a difference anywhere. What we ought to have is real programs that are WTO-compliant, that reconnect capital investment with the real world forces of market prices and markets.

We spend $200 million a year just on one program—assisting farmers selling their products overseas. Do we know what sells products overseas? Price, quality. But we have a little $200 million program that everybody in organized agriculture gets to take advantage of. They get a couple of trips a year on the Federal taxpayer. It ought not be so. If we want to promote products, we ought to be out promoting them. We shouldn't be promoting private brands with Federal Government money. We ought to create the opportunity to promote it, but we shouldn't be doing it.

Needless to say, I will not be voting for cloture. I will reemphasize that Senator DURBIN and I had a great amendment. Those who signed the conference report and took that out can't stand up and say anything about anybody who is wealthy in this country or the tax rates or anything else, because they just gutted one of the things that would have put back equality in terms of the farm program for the very wealthy in this country. We are continuing to pay hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars monthly to the most well-connected, well-financed, wealthiest people in this country because they are farming the farm program. By taking that out, those who did lost all moral authority to ever say anything again about income inequality in this country, because those who signed the conference report chose to take that out.

We understand how politics works. I understand how politics works. But credibility is important in our country and we are losing it. We are losing it here. Look at the polls. We have lost it in the Nation's Capital as far as the American people are concerned. We haven't just lost credibility; we are losing legitimacy, because we wink and nod to do the parochial vote, even though in the best long-term interests of our country we are doing the wrong thing. But it sure sells well at home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on two matters.

The first is the farm bill and the second is the U.S. attorney situation in my State of Minnesota.

Being a Senator from a State that is a leader in agricultural products and now the sixth biggest State in terms of agricultural exports, I can tell my colleagues that the agricultural sector of this country is strong and it has, in fact, been a jewel in this economy when we look over the last few years and we look at the industries that were hit so hard during the downturn. Our food supply remains strong. Part of why it remains strong is because we have believed in investing in agriculture and agricultural research and in the next wave of machinery and all kinds of things, and it has helped our country, it has been a positive for our country.

We have 80,000 farms in Minnesota. We are an exporting State, and it is one of the major reasons our unemployment rate is down to 4.6. Because it is not just about the small farmers all over our State, it is also about the businesses and the employees, and it is also about the fact that we are a country that makes its own food and is not dependent on foreign food the way we are dependent on foreign oil.

I fought hard to get on the agriculture committee when I came to the Senate. I was honored to serve on the farm bill conference committee under Senator STABENOW's leadership. We worked together, as the Presiding Officer knows, on a bipartisan basis to put together a farm bill that strengthens the safety net for our Nation's family farms, preserves critical food and nutrition programs, and brings down the deficit compared to the last farm bill to the tune of over $20 billion, which is one of the reasons we wanted to put this new farm bill in place. The bulk of the savings comes from the transition from those direct agricultural subsidies to a more risk-based management system of crop insurance.

We also worked hard in the conservation area, which is very important in my State where hunting and fishing are a way of life. The conservation provisions are streamlined from 23 to 10 and we have the support of hundreds of environmental and conservation groups, including Pheasants Forever, which is based in Minnesota, as well as Ducks, Unlimited.

We also worked hard in the energy area to finally fund that title, to acknowledge that we need many sources of energy in this country, including biofuels, wind, and solar. That is a big part of this bill as well.

We kept the nutrition programs strong just by the fact that we were up against suggested cuts of $40 billion from the House of Representatives, and we found a way to make some changes that might not have been our top priority, but they were ways we were able to move on the farm bill and work with some of these States that were leveraging their heating assistance for food stamps. Most States were not affected. My State was not affected.

We also provided permanent disaster relief for our Nation's livestock producers, something that is very important when we look at all the dead cows in South Dakota and everything that happened there.

I believe the strength of this bill is a testament to the work and leadership of Chairman STABENOW and her tireless efforts. I thank Senator COCHRAN as well as Chairman LUCAS, and Ranking Member PETERSON from my State, and then also Congressman TIM WALZ who served on the conference committee as well.

This bill is important to the farmlands of our country, but it also is good for rural economies. I believe we do right by ourselves when we do right by our rural communities.

I was listening to my colleague from Oklahoma, and I too have been on combines with farmers. I will say I wasn't driving that combine, which wouldn't have been good for the farm or the neighboring farms. I was a passenger. I heard a different story from my farmers in terms of the concern about bouncing from year to year and not knowing what the policies are, and how good it has been to have a 5-year policy in place for farm policy, how far we have come from those freedom-to-farm days when we were foreclosing on farms all over our State, and how we want to be able to continue to produce food in our State and to encourage young farmers and ranchers. That is why that amendment was part of my major focus, which was to give them some breaks on crop insurance and grazing their cattle on CRP land.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

U.S. ATTORNEY FOR MINNESOTA

Now I wish to turn to a very different topic, which is Minnesota's U.S. attorney. This is an appalling situation, as the Presiding Officer will hear by the numbers. For 887 days, Minnesota has not had a full-time, permanent U.S. attorney—887 days. During that time, from August 2011 to August 2013, Todd Jones was responsible for doing two jobs. He was responsible for being the U.S. attorney in Minnesota as well as being the Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. As my colleagues can imagine, with the mess after Fast and Furious, he had a lot of work to do at the ATF and that was his major focus. Meanwhile, we kept going with some fine prosecutors, but we didn't have a full-time leader.

Over the summer, thanks to my colleague from the State of Arizona, Senator MCCAIN, we were able to finally confirm Todd Jones to that job. The ATF had been without a permanent director for 7 years. We got that done. Of course, then it officially left the Minnesota U.S. attorney's position open, even though it had already really been open for 2 years.

Even before that decision was made by the Senate to confirm Todd Jones, Senator FRANKEN and I had gathered together a bipartisan group, including the former U.S. attorney under President Bush, to advise us on a replacement for Mr. Jones—even before the time we confirmed Mr. Jones because of our concern over the problems in the office, many of which were on the front page of our newspaper. We were able to get a recommendation from our committee for a replacement, Mr. Andy Luger. He is a respected litigator, a former assistant U.S. attorney.

It has now been 196 days since we made that recommendation to the President. It has been 187 days since Director Jones was confirmed with no full-time U.S. attorney again in the office. While the office has continued to provide the United States with the high-quality legal representation it deserves, Minnesota needs a full-time U.S. attorney.

Mr. Luger sailed through the Judiciary Committee with no objections. He has passed all the tests necessary, including the FBI test. He has the support of law enforcement with whom I have spoken. He has the support of one of our Republican Congressmen in the area. I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY, who also supports him and has raised issues with the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office because of the fact that we have not had a full-time attorney for 888 days, and he has been supportive of our efforts to quickly move Mr. Luger's nomination, not just through the committee but to the floor.

Senator GRASSLEY is in a similar situation because his U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Iowa was nominated on the same day and is also awaiting confirmation on the floor. Again, they have both come through the Judiciary Committee without any objection.

So why is this important? Well, I ran a prosecutor's office with about 400 people for 8 years. We worked directly with the U.S. attorney's office. We were there during 9/11 when the U.S. Attorney's Office in Minnesota was dealing with the Moussaoui case. As you remember, he was caught in Minnesota. They were dealing with terrorism issues. We worked hand in hand. We took a number of their white-collar cases.

I have been able to witness firsthand how day in and day out you need a U.S. attorney to make very difficult decisions as to what cases to go forward on, and especially without a full-time U.S. attorney it is very difficult to decide where to put limited resources in terms of strategic decisions. We have not had that person in place for 888 days.

Protecting our Nation from terrorists is a top concern for all of us. When you hear of the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office, you might not think: terrorism. But in fact, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Minnesota is renowned for its counterterrorism efforts and terrorism prosecutions, especially investigating the terrorist organization al-Shabaab. For years, authorities have been on alert for al-Shabaab in Minnesota.

In Operation Rhino, the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted Omer Abdi Mohamed, who recruited young Somali Americans to fight for terrorists in Somalia. Mohamed was indicted in November 2009 in Minnesota and pled guilty in July 2011 to conspiracy to murder, kidnap, and maim abroad.

This operation is part of an ongoing terrorism investigation. As you know, there have been suicide bombings in Somalia—sadly, recruiting people out of our Somali community in Minnesota. We are proud of that community. They are an incredible part of our State. But this did happen. It has led to charges against 18 people for aiding al-Shabaab—8 of whom have been convicted, some receiving sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

So I ask you, why would you pick an office like this not to have a leader for 888 days? But through a variety of circumstances—the fact that the ATF job was held up in terms of an appointment, and then the fact that this is being held up right now—we still do not have a leader.

In addition to terrorism cases, the U.S. attorney's office is also responsible for prosecuting major drug crimes. Recently, the office won a major conviction and played a key role in shutting down a big synthetic drug-store in Duluth. And 2 weeks ago, the Minneapolis Star Tribune had a major news story about a growing and deadly heroin epidemic in Minnesota. As we have seen from the death this weekend of someone who was a celebrity, I think we all know there have also been heroin deaths all over this country, so Minnesota is not alone. But we are alone in that we have not had a chief leader in our U.S. attorney's office to come up with a strategy to deal with this case for 888 days.

In the first half of 2013, 69 people died of opiate-related overdoses in Hennepin County, MN. That would be 69 people died. Some of these deaths were young kids. This is a situation that demands attention immediately, and Mr. Luger is eager to work with law enforcement on a strategy.

Federal and State law enforcement also partnered to combat identity theft and white-collar crime. Minnesota had the second biggest white-collar conviction in terms of money—next to Madoff—in the country. Yet this is an office that we have chosen not to put a leader in for 888 days. The U.S. attorney's office won a conviction in a $3.65 billion-dollar Ponzi scheme case—as I mentioned, the second biggest Ponzi scheme in U.S. history.

Currently, Minnesota's U.S. Attorney's Office is headed by an acting director. But an acting director simply cannot provide the same kind of leadership as a full-time U.S. attorney.

I know that the local heads of the DEA, FBI, and other Federal and State law enforcement agencies are very anxious to get a U.S. attorney in full time.

I would also note that we also do not have an administrative officer because we are awaiting putting in a U.S. attorney so that Mr. Luger can hire an administrative officer. This is not a small office. There are more than 100 people working there, including 54 lawyers. Again, they are without a full-time boss and a leader. I think these hard-working prosecutors and the people they work with deserve a leader in the office.

When Minnesota was first made a State, President Zachary Taylor filled the position of U.S. attorney in 2 days for our young new State. Back then, they deserved a U.S. attorney. If they could get it done in 2 days, I think we should be able to get it done in 888 days.

I urge my colleagues to support his swift confirmation and give this office and its hard-working prosecutors the full-time prosecutor they deserve.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to make remarks about the farm bill conference agreement that is before us.

Of course, across the Nation Americans are demanding that Washington restore their faith in government. Last year we saw a Congress crippled by government shutdowns and debt-ceiling standoffs. We nearly failed to pass a Defense authorization bill.

While many of my colleagues have high hopes this year for returning to the practice of moving legislation through the regular order and perhaps working under a more open amendment process, I am profoundly disappointed that one of the first pieces of legislation we will send to the President this year is a $1.5 trillion farm bill. It is a mind-boggling sum of money that is spent on farm subsidies, duplicative nutrition and development assistance programs, and special-interest pet projects.

Taxpayer groups such as Citizens Against Government Waste blasted this farm bill as a ''Dung Deal.'' Last week, the Wall Street Journal called it ''A Bipartisan Taxpayer Raid,'' writing:

> It's no accident that Congress dropped this porker under the cover of the State of the Union hoopla. Handouts to agribusiness and millionaires, continued trade protectionism for the sugar industry—it's all still there.

How are we supposed to restore the confidence of the American people with this monstrosity? A few weeks ago we crammed down their throats a $1.1 trillion Omnibus appropriations bill loaded with wasteful spending. Tomorrow we will wash the omnibus down with another trillion dollars. The only policy that gets bipartisan traction in Congress is Washington's desire to hand out taxpayer money like it is candy.

We have heard about some of the ''savings'' generated by this farm bill. It is true there are noteworthy cuts to several outdated Depression-era farm subsidies such as the Direct Payments Program and the Countercyclical Program. We also close loopholes in our Food Stamp Programs and conservation programs, which generated about $16 billion in savings, according to the Congressional Budget Office, and I applaud the conferees for their efforts.

But, unfortunately, just about every subsidy eliminated under the farm bill is simply reinvented into a new and many times more expensive program. For example, we have a new thing called Agriculture Risk Coverage Program, which locks in today's record-high crop prices and guarantees farmers up to an 86-percent return on their crop. Depending on market conditions, ARC—agriculture risk coverage—could cost taxpayers between $3 billion to $14 billion each year—far more expensive than the $5 billion saved by the elimination of the Direct Payments Program. The bill also maintains the $95 billion federally backed crop insurance program which subsidizes crop insurance premiums. We then pile on a new $20 billion program called Supplemental Coverage Option that subsidizes crop insurance deductibles.

The bill also strips out an amendment offered by my colleagues Senator DURBIN and Senator COBURN which would have prevented crop insurance subsidies from going to individuals with a gross income greater than $750,000 a year. That amendment was adopted by 59 votes in the Senate's farm bill earlier last year. And guess what. Surprise. It is absent from the conference agreement. Millionaire farmers can rejoice that their crop insurance subsidies are safe. That is millionaire farmers, farmers with a gross income greater than $750,000 a year. So the next time I hear the managers of this bill talk about the small farmer, I guess they are talking about millionaires as well.

But it is all part of farm bill politics. In order to pass a farm bill, Congress must find a way to appease every special interest of every commodity association from asparagus farmers to wheat growers. If you cut somebody's subsidy, you give them a grant. If you kill their grant, then you subsidize their crop insurance. Let's look at several handouts that special interests have reaped in this year's farm bill.

The bill provides $7 million in grants for the marketing of sheep. Now some who may be viewing this at home will maybe think I am making it up that we are spending $7 million of their tax dollars for the marketing of sheep.

It also adds a thing called—and I am not sure I pronounce it right—''japonica rice.'' Japonica rice is a sushi ingredient grown primarily in California, and it is added to the list of products that can receive farm subsidies.

The bill provides $100 million to promote the maple syrup industry. I repeat: $100 million to promote the maple syrup industry. It says American tax dollars will go to—and I quote from the bill—''promote research and education for maple syrup production . . . promoting sustainability in the maple

syrup industry . . . and market promotion for maple syrup.''

So, my fellow citizens, the next time you see an advertisement for maple syrup, you may want to watch it because it is your tax dollars that paid for it.

It places a 15-cent fee on harvesting Christmas trees. Not even Christmas is left out of this one—a 15-cent fee on harvesting Christmas trees. That money then is earmarked for promoting the orchard industry.

There is $12 million for a ''wool research and promotion'' program. There are a lot of needy areas of America today, but I had no idea that wool research and promotion was worthy of $12 million of our tax dollars.

I think this next one is probably my favorite—or unfavorite: $5 million for a study to—again, I am quoting from the bill—''evaluate the impact of allowing schools to offer dried fruits and vegetables to children.''

I know that is a tough decision for schools to make, as to whether they should offer dried fruits and vegetables to children. Do we need $5 million to help them evaluate that?

There is $25 million for a new grant program to ''teach children about gardening, nutrition, cooking''—and get this—''and where food comes from.'' I am sure all over America children are asking: Where does food come from? This may sound like a well-intentioned initiative, but this grant program is a lot like 18 other food and nutrition programs that the Government Accountability Office declared duplicative in a report issued 2 years ago.

The Federal Government's duplication of nutrition programs has cost $62.5 million annually in previous years. So here is a new grant program under the label of ''nutrition education.''

The energy title of this bill doles out about $881 million in energy programs. Most Americans do not realize that the farm bill has become as much about energy subsidies as about farm subsidies. There is funding for ethanol research, biorefinery installations, and a sugar-to-ethanol program where the Federal Government purchases surplus sugar and sells it at a loss to ethanol producers.

American taxpayers will spend $5 million on the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program. Now, if there is anything that is needed in America, it is a good, vigorous biodiesel fuel education program. We are going to spend $5 million on it. It is to spread the gospel on the benefits of biodiesel. I have no objection to the use of biodiesel. In fact, I think I prefer it much more as an alternative compared to corn ethanol. But here we have $5 million to educate consumers on the benefits of biodiesel.

Hidden in this bill is a tax on heating oil. Just yesterday, the Washington Times talked about the farm bill's National Oilheat Research Alliance Program in an article entitled ''Congress seeks to jack up fees on home heating oil in midst of frigid winter.'' The article reads:

> Congress' mammoth farm bill restores the imposition of an extra fee on home heating oil, hitting consumers in the cold-weather states just as utility costs are spiking. The fee—two-tenths of a cent on every gallon sold—was tacked onto the end of the 959-page bill, which is winding its way through Capitol Hill. The fee would last for nearly 20 years and would siphon the money to develop equipment that is cheaper, more efficient and safer, and to encourage consumers to update their equipment. The heating oil fee was backed by Northeast lawmakers who said it would fund important research to benefit consumers.
>
> The bill prohibits oil companies from passing the fees on to consumers, but taxpayer advocates said that's a sham and that the money has to come from consumers. To say they can't pass on the cost, said Diane Katz, research fellow in regulatory policy at the Heritage Foundation, ''It's kind of silly because of course the costs are going to get passed on. Money is fungible.''

So here we have a special oil tax on consumers where the revenue is earmarked back to the heating oil industry, about $15 million a year according to the GAO. Why is the Federal Government in the business of collecting funds for heating oil research on behalf of the heating oil industry?

The bill reauthorizes USDA loan subsidies for peanut growers and allows them to use their peanuts as collateral. If a peanut grower forfeits on their USDA loan, the Federal Government takes ownership of the peanuts and taxpayers bear the cost of storing the peanuts.

The infamous sugar program is housed in this farm bill. This is probably the most ongoing scandal in the history of all of the farm bills and of all of the egregious aspects of it. Like the peanut program, USDA gives sugar growers, primarily in Florida, Louisiana, and Michigan, hundreds of millions of dollars in loans each year.

If a sugar grower misses their profit margins, they get to keep the loan and transfer their excess sugar to the Federal Government as collateral. Over the past year, sugar subsidies and forfeitures have cost the taxpayers $258 million, while over 640,000 tons of sugar was handed over to the USDA.

You know something. If you really look at it, there are a few families that control the sugar industry in Florida. Those families, God bless them, have given generous contributions to both Democratic and Republican parties. So the taxpayers have paid $258 million and over 640,000 tons of sugar was handed over to the USDA. Combined with import tariffs and marketing controls, the USDA Sugar Program costs consumers over $3 billion every year, one of the most obscene Federal farm subsidies ever conceived. This farm bill, advertised as full of reforms, does nothing.

Another bizarre handout in this farm bill that I have been involved in now for many years is the creation of a catfish office. Again, I assure my colleagues, I am not making this up—a catfish office inside the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a cost of $15 million a year.

The USDA will hire inspectors to visually inspect catfish in seafood facilities—only catfish and not shrimp, not a cod, not a tilapia, but only a catfish. We are going to have a special office called—appropriately—the catfish office, to inspect visually catfish in seafood facilities—and only catfish.

Senator SHAHEEN and I and 11 other Senators have sponsored legislation to kill this catfish program. I have been opposing it for years. In 2012, our legislation was adopted in the Senate by voice vote. I assure the distinguished manager of the bill that is the last time that on this issue I will accept a voice vote. The distinguished chairperson assured me that with a voice vote this amendment of ours would remain in the legislation, and obviously that has not been the case.

So next time the distinguished manager, if it ever comes up again, assures me that an amendment of mine will be adopted in the final legislation, I will have to have better authentication than just taking her word.

Last year, the House Agriculture Committee passed a bipartisan amendment to repeal it in the farm bill. Despite all this opposition, the unpopular catfish office resiliently survived conference. We do not need a new USDA catfish inspection program. The Food and Drug Administration already tests catfish, along with all other seafood.

But certain farm bill conferees are insisting on creating a catfish office because catfish farmers in Southern States do not want to compete against foreign catfish importers, particularly those from Vietnam. Its true purpose is trade protectionism at the taxpayer's expense. Under this farm bill, there will be a virtual ban on catfish imports for several years while foreign inspectors switch from FDA's inspection procedures to USDA's catfish procedures.

The Government Accountability Office investigated the proposed catfish office. In four different reports—four different reports—they called it ''duplicative'' and ''wasteful'' and warned that it fragments our food safety system by splitting FDA's ability to inspect seafood.

In fact, one GAO report was simply titled, ''Responsibility for Inspecting Catfish Should Not Be Assigned to USDA.'' It called on Congress to eliminate the catfish office. Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FDA have questioned the scientific value of the proposed catfish office. Several years ago, USDA studied the idea and concluded that there is substantial uncertainty regarding the actual effectiveness of a USDA catfish inspection program. Even the President's budget proposed to zero it out.

American consumers should also be concerned about the trade implications of this program. Some nations, including Vietnam, have threatened WTO retaliation against American agricultural exports, like beef and soybeans.

Trade experts warn that this catfish gimmick is the kind of protectionism that harms our efforts to win concessions under trade agreement negotiations like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which could reduce the tariffs on American products sold to Asian trading partners.

Again, Senator SHAHEEN and I tried to eliminate the catfish office in the Senate's farm bill, but the managers blocked the vote on our amendment. The House Agriculture Committee did the right thing and passed the farm bill amendment to eliminate it. Unfortunately, when this bill went to conference, several Senate conferees blocked the vote in conference to repeal it—actually blocked a vote in conference and actually rewrote the law to increase it.

It seems that catfish is one bottom feeder with friends in high places. At the end of the day, this farm bill will be hailed by its supporters as reform-minded. Let me assure the American public that this is hardly reform. It was managed under a closed amendment process and will prove to be more wasteful and costly than any farm bill we have ever seen.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Wall Street Journal Editorial appropriately entitled, ''A Bipartisan Taxpayer Raid.''

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Jan. 28, 2014]

A BIPARTISAN TAXPAYER RAID

(Editorial)

President Obama delivered his State of the Union address Tuesday night to the usual bipartisan cheers for proposals that don't have a chance of becoming law and that half the Members despise. If you want to know what they were really cheering about, take a gander at the gaudy spectacle of the 2014 farm bill, which gives bipartisanship a bad name.

Congressional negotiators on Monday unveiled this hulking 949-page special-interest bonanza, which will cost nearly $1 trillion over 10 years—or more than President Obama's stimulus. House Agriculture Chairman Frank Lucas, said to be a Republican, and Senate counterpart Debbie Stabenow (D., Mich.) are advertising the bill's token savings and reforms. The real headline is how complete a victory this is for the entitlement and farm-subsidy status quo.

Start with the fact that the subsidy programs are still linked to food stamps. House conservatives last summer revolted to force the chamber to separate the two, in an attempt to end to the unholy alliance of urban Democrats and rural Republicans that sustains the growth of both. The conferees negotiated a remarriage.

Republicans also caved on a House provision to limit the food-stamp reauthorization to three years, which would have required a debate on a separate timetable from farm subsidies in the future. The final bill reauthorizes everything for five years, setting the stage for a logrolling repeat.

As for food stamps, the House bill had reduced future 10-year spending by $39 billion—a mere 5%—in a program that has doubled in cost since 2008 and is now about $80 billion a year. The ''compromise'' settles for a cut of $8 billion over 10 years (1%), which is barely larger than Senate Democrats' opening bid of $4 billion.

The elated conferees are bragging that they closed a food-stamp ''loophole,'' but that's a rosy interpretation. ''Heat and eat'' is a classic liberal spending tactic by which states direct small home-heating assistance checks to households solely to make those households eligible for food stamps.

The reform requires that households receive all of $20 in annual federal heating assistance (rather than today's $1) to trigger benefits. They must be laughing at that one in the grocery lobby. Meanwhile, Republicans abandoned reforms that would have tightened the program, such as making food-stamp eligibility contingent upon asset tests (as used to be the case) or work requirements (as under welfare reform).

The farm crew is also boasting they eliminated the ''direct payment'' program—handouts that go to growers whether they produce a crop or not. Yet the $5 billion in savings is rolled back into the government-subsidized (and uncapped) crop-insurance program as well as a new ''shallow-loss'' program that guarantees farmers' revenues and could balloon to $14 billion a year.

Speaker John Boehner is getting credit for winning his showdown with Collin Peterson over the Minnesota Democrat's demand for a new Soviet-style program to manage U.S. milk supply. The conferees stripped that stinker, but they salved Mr. Peterson's feelings by fiddling with a separate insurance program as an alternate means to give government control over milk production.

Handouts to agribusiness and millionaires? Continued trade protectionism for the sugar industry? It's all still there. Heritage Foundation research fellow Daren Bakst notes that the GOP even rolled over for President Obama's Christmas tree tax, which demands a 15-cent assessment on every fresh-cut Christmas tree, to fund an industry promotional program.

Republicans get credit for keeping the bill free of earmarks, and for bucking Democratic demands that the bill's savings go to more spending, rather than deficit reduction. But with the Congressional Budget Office reporting on Tuesday that the bill saves a pathetic $16.5 billion over 10 years (rather than the $23 billion negotiators claimed), these are linings without much silver.

The apparent GOP political calculation is that it needs an election-year farm bill to solidify its rural-voter support and to ward off President Obama's attacks that they are mean to poor people. Talk about premature surrender. Unlike the autumn government shutdown, the farm bill did give them real political leverage. Democrats and Mr. Obama want food stamps and a farm bill. Republicans could have held out at least for some reform progress. The main achievement of this bill will be to re-elect Mr. Peterson, the Democrat, and give more GOP voters reason to wonder why they elected these guys.

Oh, and it's no accident that Congress dropped this porker under the cover of State of the Union hoopla. GOP leaders are eager to leave town for their annual retreat and to avoid a conservative revolt. So they are planning a vote Wednesday morning, fewer than 48 hours after it was unveiled.

So much for Mr. Boehner's promise to run a more transparent Congress and allow 72 hours for Members to read what they are voting on. The American people elected a GOP House not merely to oppose the Obama agenda, but to stand for real reform. They deserve a lot better than this.

Mr. MCCAIN. I yield the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the conference report for the 2014 farm bill represents a true compromise in the longstanding tradition of the Agriculture Committees. The proposal continues numerous reforms and progressive policies that we created, expanded, or strengthened in previous farm bills when I served as chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

This agreement is not perfect, and each side had to give. For example, we were very far apart and had to negotiate on how we were going to support the food assistance programs we have. But, in this bill we have preserved SNAP and rejected the draconian House provisions that would have meant the end of food assistance for nearly 4 million people. I take solace in knowing that no one who needs this assistance will be kicked off the program.

As a conferee and as a longtime supporter of SNAP, what we used to call food stamps, I am proud of what we have done in this bill to improve SNAP—the Nation's most effective nutrition program. It has been a crucial support to needy families around the country, particularly during the recent economic downturn.

First, we took a number of steps to improve overall program administration and program integrity. While SNAP is extremely efficient and effective with low rates of fraud, we can always strive to do better. This bill equips States and USDA with a number of new tools to continue their strong track record on program administration.

In this bill we have provided USDA with additional resources to improve integrity. USDA has a strong and commendable commitment to rooting out fraud in the program. But the number of stores accepting SNAP has increased significantly, which means that USDA must continue to improve its efforts to monitor retailers. This bill provides USDA with additional resources to boost its use of technology, for example, by taking advantage of innovations like data mining, which can show patterns of redemption among retailers and help pinpoint outlets that may be abusing the program. We expect USDA to use data analysis and other smart tools to uphold the program's high compliance standards.

The bill also provides funding for pilot projects for State and Federal partners to address retailer fraud. States selected for the pilot must demonstrate a commitment of resources to recipient trafficking and they must prove that they have accurately determined fraud. The States that have successfully found and fought fraud should receive priority in partnering with USDA on the retailer fraud pilot projects. But success is not defined as a State that has used threats to persuade recipients to accept disqualification. Subsequent audits must confirm that the State disqualified participants who truly were guilty of fraud and not confused about their rights or scared

about the possibility of being prosecuted under criminal law, as it is understandable that some innocent people may be.

One of the thorny issues we wanted to tackle was the issue of how to handle when clients request to have their EBT card replaced multiple times. The concern was that some households were repeatedly reporting their cards stolen or lost. USDA thought that some households requesting that their cards be replaced 10 or more times per year were selling those cards. We wanted to empower the agency to address that issue. In the case when a household requests an excessive amount of card replacements, the household must provide an explanation about why they need another card. We know from experience that some households request multiple cards because they are confused about program rules. We heard one report about an elderly woman who requested a card replacement each month because she thought she was supposed to throw away the card after she used the benefits. By asking households to provide an explanation, States will be able to accommodate individuals who need more help to access their benefits. Of course, making a household wait to receive a new card until it provides an explanation is a burden for the household. Increasingly, States aren't answering their phones in a timely way. So this requirement should not be imposed on households unless we have a reason to believe there is a problem—either with their ability to use the card or with program integrity. We expect that USDA will not impose this new requirement on households that lose their cards a few times. We understood that they would set the trigger for the explanation at least at 4 times a year.

It is also important that households be able to provide their explanation through any number of options, such as over the phone to their EBT customer service center, via e-mail or mail. Most important, we don't want SNAP agencies requiring households to provide their explanation in person. That is too burdensome a requirement, particularly when many offices may be far away from a given recipient and have long lines and delays to see someone. And, no matter what the reason a household provides, States cannot withhold their card or use withholding the card as leverage to compel some other action. Obviously, if the State believes the household has committed fraud or doesn't believe their explanation, the State should investigate. If they discover illegal activity, they can pursue a fraud violation through regular program rules. Those are steps that come after the State reissues the food card. I am particularly concerned about how this provision is implemented with respect to vulnerable groups such as the homeless, people with disabilities, or seniors. We don't want these individuals or any struggling household to lose access to their food benefits because their lives are chaotic and messy. We do not want vulnerable people to feel that their food benefits are conditioned upon giving the right answer about why they lost their card. We cautioned USDA to make sure that this provision was not used to delay benefits in any way. We can balance program integrity needs with compassion for our most vulnerable citizens.

The farm bill also tightens SNAP eligibility in response to some rare cases.

One of the provisions that got a lot of attention was the provision that reiterates that felons who have been convicted of certain crimes such as murder and who violate their parole or probation cannot be eligible for SNAP. SNAP has long banned fleeing felons from the program. My good friend former Senator Lugar championed that rule. But Members felt that it was important to reiterate this rule with respect to ex-offenders who served time for particularly heinous crimes. As has been the case for many years now, those who serve their sentence and are in compliance with the terms of their parole or probation and who are otherwise eligible for SNAP may apply for and receive assistance through the program. This provision does not change anything with respect to program eligibility or program operations. States already have the processes in place to implement this provision.

Second, over the last several years, there have been highly publicized instances where SNAP participants who won big at the lottery continued to receive SNAP. My understanding is that both of these winners lived in Michigan. Of course, people who win millions of dollars from the Powerball do not need the help of SNAP, and for the most part program rules would already exclude them. But we wanted to be sure that this type of thing never happens again. We included a provision to prohibit households where someone won a substantial amount of money from a lottery or gambling from participating in SNAP. We are leaving it to USDA to define ''substantial''. Our expectation is that they will not include nominal winnings that don't permanently change the household's economic circumstances or their ability to purchase food.

We also expect USDA to work with States to ensure that this provision is implemented behind the scenes without asking questions of clients. While we had two lottery winners, the nearly 47 million people who participate in this program are struggling. We don't want them to be asked if they had won the lottery when they are going through the process of applying for benefits. State lotteries and gaming commissions must report winners that exceed the threshold to state SNAP agencies. That way, State agencies can remove individuals with substantial lottery or gambling income without requiring reports from every participant or adding questions to current SNAP forms.

While I am focused on using back-end data matching to implement this provision, I would like to discuss the bill's provisions that have to do with what we call data matches. Data matching helps SNAP to preserve its record of strong program integrity and also cuts States' and applicants' paperwork requirements.

First, the bill makes it possible for SNAP to more easily exchange data with other programs by adding Federal standards for such data sharing. This sensible provision means that our systems can ''talk'' with each other across the various State and Federal programs. It is a welcome and timely change. We expect the administration to protect individuals' personal private information and prevent it from being misused.

We also are requiring States to use HHS's National Directory of New Hires when certifying a household for SNAP to help the State determine eligibility and what level of benefits the household should receive. Right now States' use of the database is optional. We think the Federal database could be helpful to States to find important information about the employment of noncustodial parents who live or work in other States.

Finally, the bill puts in statute the existing State practice of using the Federal Systemic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program, or SAVE, to verify immigration status. States can use this to efficiently determine eligibility without requiring a household to fill out unnecessary forms or find paperwork. This does not change anything with respect to immigrant eligibility rules or households' responsibilities. This requirement is another example of a behind-the-scenes administrative efficiency in the bill. The use of the Income Eligibility Verification System, or IEVS, will remain optional, though. It is sensible for the administration to set standards for how to verify immigration status through a national immigration data set. Given low rates of error and fraud in SNAP, we did not want to dictate how and when States use IEVS.

On the topic of data matches, I want to make clear that we want States to use available data sources containing up-to-date, accurate information that helps determine SNAP eligibility and benefit levels as States are making their decisions. Matches can help us to verify what clients tell us and reduce burdens on them. Matches can also identify information that clients failed to reveal. However, data matches are sometimes wrong and they can require a lot of staff work to correct, as well as place undue burdens on clients. This bill should not be interpreted to force States to seek or to use unhelpful data matches or where they determine the data match is not cost-effective. We expect the Secretary will help States determine the best ways to use the data sources. It is not sensible to pay for matches for all individuals or to do the

matches every month or quarter, rather than as the State is making an eligibility decision or if the State has uncertain information about a SNAP recipient. States need the flexibility to determine that an individual living a 2-hour drive from the State border with a verified long-term job in the community does not need to be checked in the new hire data base to determine if he is working out of State. We expect USDA to work with HHS to find ways to hold the costs of the match to State agencies and the Federal Government in check, while maximizing payment accuracy. As always, States must ensure that SNAP applicants and recipients always have a chance to prove that data matches are inaccurate.

As useful as data matching can be, we need to remember to ensure some balance on program integrity efforts. It is an inefficient use of resources to have eligibility workers looking for information about clients every minute of the day. Asking States to follow up on matches that may not yield any changes in eligibility or benefit levels isn't a good use of States' time and resources. In the last two farm bills, we took steps to establish certification rules such that States would carefully assess eligibility at certification and recertification. In the interim, unless States had information to suggest that clients were income ineligible or participating in two households, households were to continue to receive benefits without disruption or inquiries about their circumstances. Those changes worked. Overall program participation is up among eligible households, suggesting that we were right to make it easier for households to maintain benefits. States need to focus on adjudicating eligibility at application and renewal. This framework informed our approach to the use of datasets. We want States to use third-party data to make eligibility renewals as efficient as possible. But, this information is not meant to be used in fruitless fishing expeditions to prove households ineligible or to find data that requires needless back-and-forth between the client and the agency during their certification period.

I would like to turn now to talk about one of the more exciting aspects of the nutrition title. The final bill includes several reforms of SNAP's employment and training program, including new investments in identifying innovative job training opportunities for this population.

Most SNAP participants who can work, do work. As we know, however, millions of Americans are out of work. So we want to find more ways to help those who are able to work but have been unable to secure a job. We also want to find ways to build and grow the skills of workers so that they may find better jobs with better pay.

SNAP work programs will receive better, and more, funding in this bill. It gives $200 million to pilot and evaluate new state employment and training programs. States can draw these pilots from SNAP E&T components, but the programs can also include work supports, like child care or transportation assistance, that those with low-paying jobs often cannot afford. We want to help States build pioneering volunteer programs, which if focused on skills building or education programs, might boost an individual's employability. It was imperative in this effort that States be creative and try different approaches to addressing the barriers that could be keeping individuals from working, such as stable housing or childcare.

We recognize that it is far better for the long term for people to secure and keep unsubsidized jobs in the private sector. So we have allowed those types of arrangements to be considered part of the pilots. But because States will have much less control over information about what private employers are doing, we needed to include significant safeguards. We fully expect that these pilots will operate under longstanding protections from the SNAP law and other laws against the displacement of other workers, as well as workplace protection laws such as those for health and safety, wage and hour standards, family leave, workers' compensation, and the like.

The initial House proposal in this area was surprising in its harshness. The House essentially gave States incentives to throw off of SNAP people who could not find jobs. Furthermore, the proposal allowed States to then spend on whatever they wanted the savings obtained from throwing people out of the SNAP program. I thank the leadership of the conference committee, especially Chairwoman STABENOW, for holding firm to the principle in designing these work pilot projects that we should not give States any new authority to take away people's SNAP benefits when they cannot find jobs. The rules under the pilot project for sanctioning people will be the same as under current law in terms of when sanctions can be applied and for how long.

When it comes to sanctioning individuals for refusing to cooperate in employment and training programs, we already have in place protections to ensure that if there are good cause reasons for noncompliance that individuals cannot be sanctioned. Similarly, for how these are extended to employment activities under the pilots, the agreement ensures that unless clear evidence shows that an individual wilfully refused to take actions that she or he could safely and properly take, participants in employment activities in the work pilots may not be subject to sanctions. For instance, no sanction will apply if the employer gives the individual fewer hours than expected or if the individual's mental or physical disability prevents the individual from succeeding at the work or if childcare or transportation is not available at the time when he or she has been asked to work. Willful refusal to cooperate is different from failing to perform adequately at work. Some low-skilled workers will fall short at the workplace as a result of taking jobs that may be at the outer limits of their ability. This is a difficult determination, and a State may have a hard time telling with a private sector employer whether an individual wilfully refused to comply or whether the employer made demands that the employee could not, for whatever reason, comply with. In such instances, it is inappropriate for States to take away SNAP benefits.

In designing the pilots, we did not intend in any way to take away from States' existing authority to treat jobs that SNAP applicants and recipients have found for themselves as allowable work activities and support such work with support services like childcare and transportation.

Figuring out which services and activities work the best for different types of people is a hard nut to crack in the job training world, but it is one of the main goals of these pilots, and so we have required a careful evaluation. With the low-wage labor market the way it is and such a high percentage of SNAP recipients working already, we must ask how we will know whether the State's program and services made a difference. So we have required that only projects where the State can guarantee they will participate fully in the evaluation should be included in the pilot. We especially want to know more about how States can most effectively assess SNAP participants' needs early and match those needs to the right education and training programs and other supportive services that will positively affect that individual's job prospects.

Even though we have invested heavily in these handful of pilots, we also want to learn more broadly what is working and not working so well across the country in getting SNAP participants the skills and training they need to get and keep a well-paying job. So under the bill States must report more on the results of the services that they provide to SNAP participants. Using this information, USDA will work with the other experts in job training to improve assessment of whether SNAP employment and training can attain more longlasting results and will push States to focus on proven activities. We will rely upon this information when we reauthorize the program five years from now. We understand that SNAP participants are often poorer and have lower education and skills than people who participate in other job training programs, and as such, we made clear we must have appropriate expectations of these services' outcomes and take those differences into account. In this slow-growing economy, everyone will not find work immediately. Sometimes we have to invest now in building skills to see a better outcome for people in the future, and when designing measures, we expect USDA to take a long-term view.

As I mentioned above, upfront assessment is key, and so, while individual assessments already are a requirement for SNAP work registrants, we expect the USDA to have a focus on assessment as part of the state measures.

Now, let's turn to how this farm bill modernizes SNAP through a number of improvements for retailers.

The way we buy our food is evolving rapidly, and this bill helps SNAP remain in step. This bill gives the Secretary authority to test mobile technology use in SNAP, such as applications for smartphones that have become increasingly common and hold special promise to simplify SNAP transactions at farmers markets and vegetable stands. But we don't want recipients to see higher prices and we don't want program integrity to lapse as we seek additional ways to accept benefits. As a result, we start in this bill with a pilot project to test the idea. We expect USDA to pay special attention to testing fraud-prevention measures, so that these new technologies do not open the program up to new schemes for criminal activity. Some things will be tricky in a mobile environment. USDA currently relies on inspections of retailers' stores as a way of keeping out unscrupulous retailers, and so will need to find ways to reliably distinguish between eligible and ineligible or disqualified retailers in a comparable fashion as it implements this provision.

Pilot projects testing purchasing food online with SNAP benefits also are allowed under the bill, reflecting a trend in the food industry towards online transactions. The delivery of groceries could potentially help elderly or disabled recipients to access food more easily. Of course, we worked here too, to ensure that the same strong program integrity standards apply to this potential new way of redeeming benefits and we require, in the bill, that the agency stop the expansion of online transactions if the Department determines the fraud risk is too great. We were clear that SNAP benefits cannot pay for any delivery fees associated with online purchases, but we also expect USDA to also set standards for the fees to ensure that they are not so high that, on balance, this provision results in more hunger. After all, SNAP recipients rely on the program because they cannot purchase enough food—high fees would make hunger worse. USDA should ensure that fees are capped at very low levels and are clear to the recipients so that they are not surprised at the time the food is delivered.

On the topic of modernizing SNAP benefits, I am troubled by the recent reports of States seeking to include photo identification or fingerprinting as a way of supposedly ensuring program integrity. That is not a direction I think the program should go. One of the main advantages of moving to SNAP benefit cards, away from the paper coupons, was that the transaction looks the same and so there is less stigma. USDA should not approve State attempts to require photos on SNAP cards unless there is an airtight way of making sure every household member can use the card, as well as any other person who is authorized to shop for the SNAP recipient. There is no need for SNAP to pursue such measures when other card issuers, like credit card companies, have not insisted on such measures to maintain security even though those cards are issued to individuals.

One final point I want to make about EBT cards. Last fall, because of a glitch with the computers at an EBT contractor, Iowa and about 15 other States had their EBT systems go out of commission for hours, wreaking havoc in grocery store aisles and leaving thousands without food. In this bill we have taken another step to ''modernize'' by restricting the ability of States to routinely issue manual vouchers, but we have created an important exception for disasters or system outages. We expect USDA to create a simple, fast way for States to declare that they need to invoke this back-up plan.

In addition to these changes for how retailers take SNAP benefits, the bill also raises the bar for retailers in an effort to increase the availability of healthy foods. Stores that want to participate in SNAP have an obligation to participate as full partners in making healthy food available to low-income Americans.

Some retailers have sought to spread SNAP issuances out over longer periods during the month for the purposes of evening out their business. This is allowed now through staggered issuance, and some language in the statement of the bill managers encourages USDA to allow benefits to be staggered throughout the month.

I am sympathetic to the need for retailers to not have spikes and troughs in their business, but I am deeply concerned about a practice in some States I have heard of where, as part of a State's staggered issuance plan, households may receive no benefits for as long as 10 days during a month. Apparently this is in the ''transition'' to staggering benefits, but this kind of hardship in the name of smoothing retailers business is very troubling. SNAP benefits already are low and run out for many households before the end of the month. To add on another 10 days before the household receives the next month's benefits could be a devastating hardship and means more children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities going to bed hungry or facing heart-wrenching decisions.

The SNAP law regarding staggered issuance actually does provide a requirement to protect households from stretches without food during the transition. We revisited this provision in the last farm bill and again reaffirmed that households may not experience a cut as a result of staggering benefits over the month. Nonetheless, I understand that the Department has not fully enforced this rule. One solution would be for the Department to allow States to protect households during the transition with a one-time increase in the month prior to cover the transition period.

In this debate over the last several years I heard repeated concerns, particularly from some House Members, that SNAP was somehow out there recruiting people who don't need food assistance to sign up. This is a ridiculous claim. Quite the opposite is true. Some people need help learning about the program, and there are many groups around the country who are working day in and day out to ensure that people who need some assistance have the information they need to sign up, have misperceptions cleared up, and can get some help navigating what is a very complicated and burdensome process.

At the insistence of the House, we included some narrow provisions to prevent some perceived, uncommon abuses. We ended the USDA's collaboration with the Mexican consulate and we prohibit groups who help sign up eligible households from being paid on a ''bounty'' basis for each successful application, a practice I don't believe occurs very often, if at all.

But we have been assured that we have done nothing in this bill to undermine the great work that goes on around the country by dedicated individuals and community groups to help educate and assist our low-income neighbors. We still hear that the main reasons eligible households don't sign up are that they are not aware of the program, they don't understand how it works, or they don't understand the program rules and can't get through the process. In this bill, we have done nothing to change the education and application assistance activities that states and community groups can engage in. We have long prohibited ''recruitment,'' which is trying to talk someone into applying if that person has made an educated choice to not apply. In this bill we codify that definition. But we fully expect that it will continue to be allowable for USDA, States, and other partners to share information about the program, the advantages of participation, how the rules work, and to assist people in applying for benefits. Such activities may change someone's mind about applying, but it is acceptable to change your mind because you learned new, accurate information or because you understand what you have to do to apply. That is not persuasion, but rather, is education, and is still completely appropriate under this bill.

So to be clear, we have severed the relationship with the Mexican Government related to SNAP. And while it is inappropriate for anybody to receive their pay as a ''bounty'' per application, it is fine to be tracking how many people a group assists in applying and the outcome of the application process. That is just a common, responsible

practice for assessing whether the group successfully is achieving its goals. Section 16(a) already prohibits tying anyone's pay to the number of people disqualified from SNAP and we have extended that principle to application assistance.

I do want to address the one significant cut in SNAP benefits that the nutrition title includes. I am disappointed that as a result of this bill 850,000 very low-income households are going to lose food assistance. There are certainly many ways we could have reinvested these funds into SNAP to improve the program and reduce hardship, but I have to agree with my colleagues that the practice of issuing a household just $1 in energy assistance so that they can deduct more income than we had intended goes too far and it is sensible to address this issue.

In this bill we have limited this practice. It is a painful loss for families who benefit from this policy, but the change repairs the unintended oversight. What happens is that States can give SNAP households without heating or cooling expenses a token LIHEAP payment of $1 or less, which enables them to qualify for a utility deduction and in turn increases their SNAP benefits.

But we do not want this provision to affect any households in the States that have not engaged in this practice or to cut benefits for households that do pay for utility expenses in the States that engaged in the practice. I know LIHEAP is a critical program in helping low-income families meet their energy needs, especially in cold weather places and in winters like the one we're having this year. When the State has already determined that a household needs help paying for utilities, it is wholly appropriate for SNAP to piggy-back on that information. We expect the Secretary to work with States to ensure that where a legitimate LIHEAP payment is made—that is, when LIHEAP has determined the household pays heating or cooling costs that such information still can be used to authorize a utility allowance in SNAP and that nothing should change in how the State makes this determination. All we wanted to do was shut down the inappropriate practice of very small LIHEAP payments to households without utility expenses from triggering a full SUA.

In addition, we also expect USDA and States will work to ensure that households that do not receive LIHEAP but that do incur utility expenses will continue to be able to receive the appropriate allowance. Many households do pay separately for utilities and need the SUA to receive adequate benefits. In cases where the cost of gas for heating is included in rent but the household pays for air conditioning or where the landlord has a surcharge to rent for utilities, the tenant should be able to claim the higher standard utility allowance.

We understand and regret that some of the effective dates in this legislation will result in considerable time pressure for the Department and States as a result of the slow process by which the final bill came together. We hope they make their best effort to meet these deadlines. But agencies should not establish any claims against households for benefits that would have been proper under prior rules because new rules have not yet been implemented. None of this is the fault of any household, and they should not have to experience the hardship of recoupment or tax intercept because the policymaking process moved slowly.

Several other provisions in the bill's nutrition title deserve a mention.

In Puerto Rico the Nutrition Assistance Program block grant plays a unique role in the safety net because the island does not receive significant funds from other programs that are available in States, such as TANF and SSI. Despite this, Puerto Rico remains shortchanged on nutrition assistance too—if NAP operated as SNAP does in the States, participation would be 15 percent higher and the program would cost more than 22 percent more in Federal dollars. Because of these inequities, Puerto Rico can currently issue 25 percent of its SNAP benefits to households as cash, rather than in a form that can only be spent on food. As a result, some of the benefits likely are spent on other essential household items. Although I have no objections to current law, responding as it does to the unique circumstances of Puerto Rico, on the Agriculture Committee we have been under pressure to end this cash allotment. However, I fear that such a change could be very problematic for some participants who really need access to certain nonfood items and lack any other means of obtaining them. This bill requires a study on how eliminating the cash portion of the nutrition grant would affect Puerto Ricans. Assuming the study shows that it's feasible to make such a change, the cash allotment will be gradually phased out. But we wanted to be sure to protect poor Puerto Ricans, and so under the bill, if the Secretary determines that eliminating the cash portion would cause hardship, he or she can exempt categories of participants. The exemption could apply to the entire NAP caseload if the study shows that changing the policy would significantly and adversely affect all participants.

The bill also requires USDA to test changes to food assistance in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. USDA will explore whether CNMI's food aid can be configured more like the national SNAP structure and then a pilot is authorized subsequently to test this new approach. We understand that many of SNAP's administrative requirements may not be appropriate for CNMI, so we don't expect an identical program, just one that moves in that direction. If the Secretary finds that it is not feasible to run such a pilot, the funds available in this bill can be used for any of the things that the existing CNMI block grant currently allows for.

The bill also provides for a pilot program to test the provision of canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. The program, as the name suggests, currently allows for only fresh fruits and vegetables. The pilot in the conference report was included at the suggestion of some in Congress who believe that providing other forms of fruits and vegetables will be beneficial for the health of children.

I myself am skeptical of the need to make changes to current law with respect to the program. As we know from a recent, rigorous evaluation of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the program is currently effectively improving child health and increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables. In addition, the program is extremely popular with both children and with schools, with far more schools desiring to be included in the program than are able to do so because of limited funding. This doesn't sound to me like a program that is not working.

But the pilot program will settle the question of the health impact of canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables, allowing us to know from a sound scientific study whether allowing canned, frozen, and dried fruits increases consumption at a level consistent with a fresh-only program. Luckily, we have a sound benchmark for purposes of comparison that can be found in the evaluation of the fresh-only program. And it will be interesting to learn whether other forms of fruits and vegetables improve kids diets in the same way the current program does. In carrying out this pilot, we expect USDA to put together the soundest methodology possible so that we can compare the performance of the fresh-only program with one that also provides canned, dried, or frozen fruits and vegetables.

In addition, the bill makes a couple of changes to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children program, known as WIC.

WIC provides healthy foods, nutrition education, and health care referrals to nearly 9 million pregnant and postpartem women, infants, and very young children, and has a strong track record of improving birth outcomes as well as the diets and health of participants. One reason that WIC has been so effective is that the foods the program provides were selected through a rigorous, science-based process to fill gaps in the diets of the low-income women and very young children who participate. There have been many efforts over the years to get Congress to intervene in the specific foods offered by WIC, the most recent of which has been an attempt to require WIC to offer white potatoes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to exclude

white potatoes was based on the recommendation of the Institute of Medicine, which found that Americans already consume plenty of white potatoes and providing them through WIC would crowd out purchases of other vegetables, like leafy greens, that are truly lacking in participants' diets. The absence of such a requirement in this legislation reflects a firm commitment by Congress to protecting the integrity of the WIC Program by keeping the process of selecting which food to offer science-based.

Another one of WIC's hallmarks is that it is very cost-efficient. Each year Federal WIC spending is reduced by $1.5 billion to $2 billion as a result of a competitive bidding process for infant formula, which results in sole-source contracts between State WIC programs and infant formula manufacturers. In light of the tremendous savings associated with these sole-source contracts and the valuable health improvements that WIC participation brings, Congress has remained strongly committed to WIC's competitive bidding process for infant formula. This legislation calls upon USDA to study the implications of sole-source contracting across all nutrition programs, as well as upon retailers and consumers, including the important role that sole-source contracts play in WIC. Our consideration of the WIC Program when it is next reauthorized will benefit from a comprehensive assessment of the implications of WIC's infant formula bidding process for participants, retails, and other consumers, as well the implications for federal cost-containment efforts and the ability of the WIC program to serve all eligible applicants.

As I said at the start, this agreement is not perfect. Each side had to give a little, but I am proud that we have rejected provisions that would have kicked worthy SNAP recipients off the program and this proposal is a sound, balanced, bipartisan bill. It contains significant reforms, and extends and funds progressive elements that I was proud to include in previous farm bills. Coming to agreement wasn't easy, but this farm bill takes an important step forward in dealing with the Nation's most important food and agricultural issues. I urge my colleagues to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first of all, I thank our majority leader again, as I did earlier today, for his help in bringing this conference report to the Senate as quickly as possible and for his willingness every step of the way to work with us. I thank my partner in the Senate, Senator COCHRAN from Mississippi, for his wonderful leadership.

At this point in time I will turn to him and allow him to make his statement before proceeding with mine. I want to say to Senator COCHRAN and to all of those in Mississippi who are lucky to have him as their Senator fighting for them what a pleasure it has been to partner with him and his really excellent staff, and to have the opportunity to come here today with a strong bipartisan product that represents the agricultural and food interests of all parts of our country.

I yield to the distinguished Senator from Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am honored to be invited by the distinguished chairman to proceed in describing our work product, the farm bill conference report. It has been a true pleasure working with her and the members of her staff, it seems like over a long period of time with her coming to my State of Mississippi and traveling to other regions of the country to get a first-hand impression and a lot of knowledge about the challenges being faced by the agricultural sector in our country. She has brought to this effort a lot of enthusiasm and commonsense intelligence and pure old hard work. Also, there are the personal courtesies that abound to all of us who serve on the agriculture committee in the Senate, during hearings preparing for the mark-up of an agriculture bill and during conference with our colleagues in the House to produce a conference report.

I am pleased that this conference report represents a 5-year farm bill. It is very important to production agriculture and to all Americans, as a matter of fact. The leadership that we have had from other Senators on the committee is reflected here too. We have had an active committee participating in hearings as well as our mark-up sessions. It has been a pleasure to work with Senator STABENOW and with all of our fellow colleagues on the committee.

We are recommending reforms in this legislation that are designed to assure producers that we understand the value of a safety net that will support them when they are struck by disasters or other things that are out of their control. Marketing disasters are just as severe as weather-related disasters. The risk management policies in the bill recognize the regional differences in priorities of agricultural production throughout the country. The commodity and crop insurance titles of the conference report reflect how Congress can work effectively to support American agriculture and at the same time be responsible to taxpayers.

The conference agreement consolidates and improves programs to encourage farmers and ranchers to use healthy land and forest management practices to conserve land, water, and wildlife resources. Programs such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, which will become a part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program, are very important elements of a new emphasis on conservation.

We also achieve savings that are significant from reforms in the nutrition title of the program. The expected costs of nutrition programs are reduced by $8 billion. The conference report includes programs to combat waste, fraud, and abuse.

I am particularly proud of our work to address the needs of our Nation's food banks because whether it is in Jackson, MS, or in Indianapolis, IN, many people turn to these facilities when other options are not available.

Other titles of this legislation, such as the research title, have proven that keeping the United States' lead in agricultural research is essential to our maintaining an edge in global competition. Our land-grant universities, such as Mississippi State University and Alcorn State University in my State, have seen their university-based research commercialized to improve American agricultural production.

In addition to agricultural production reforms, this conference agreement contributes to the goal of deficit reduction. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the bill will save taxpayers nearly $17 billion. The farm bill baseline was trimmed by $6 billion from sequestration, resulting in an overall savings of $23 billion.

Failure to enact this farm bill would leave farmers and related businesses with uncertainties that have been hanging over the agricultural sector for the past 2 years. This bill achieves significant savings and addresses a variety of agriculture needs across the country.

I urge the Senate to support passage of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Again, I wish to say what a pleasure it has been to work with the distinguished Senator from Mississippi and also with the chairman in the House, Congressman LUCAS, and the ranking member, Congressman PETERSON.

This really has been an example of the House and the Senate working in a bipartisan way. We are about to take the final steps now in passing the 2014 farm bill. We have actually passed this twice in the Senate. Each time we have gotten large bipartisan majorities because of the fact that we have worked together.

The final conference report that we have before us is one of which I believe we can all be proud. I hope my colleagues will support it and send it to the President for his signature.

We all know this has been a long time in coming—in fact, frankly, way too long. Our farmers and ranchers have waited way too long.

This bill has seen a long and winding road, but in the process we have worked together. We have not quit. We have worked across the aisle. The final bill has the support of over 370 different groups, and they represent those from all over the country and all over the ideological spectrum. That is because we wrote this bill when we were working hard to find common ground.

We listened to each other, we respected each other, and we developed a bill that works for every kind of agricultural production in every region of our country, for families, and for consumers across the country.

We have 16 million people who work in America because of agriculture—16 million people. Many of them work in Michigan. Many of them work in Mississippi, California, New England, Virginia, North Dakota, and in every other State in this great country. They grow different crops in different climates, and they have different needs. That certainly is one of the challenges, always, for a farm bill, particularly when we are talking about a farm bill that reforms programs. Those 16 million people were on our minds every single minute as we wrote this bill, and that is why we have such a strong coalition supporting this farm bill.

This is a farm bill for the future with a whole new focus on responsible risk management, healthy, locally-grown foods, strong conservation practices, clean energy, and research. In fact, it is a bit of a misnomer to call it a farm bill. It is 12 different bills, all of them impressive and worthy of colleagues' votes, and they all are put together in what we call the farm bill.

I want to take a moment to talk about these different pieces and all of the great policies that we have been working on for 2½ years.

The first title, the commodity title, if we were going to split off the commodity title of the farm bill and give it a name of its own, we would probably call it the farm bill. That pretty well describes the commodity title. Maybe that is why—even though the commodity title of the farm bill is, in fact, smaller in terms of spending this year than it has been before—the farm bill has held onto its name all of these years.

Once upon a time the commodity title was the be-all and end-all. The first farm bill was written during the Great Depression, when the entire agricultural system in the country broke down. Farmers left food to rot in the fields because crop prices were so low. It would bankrupt them to spend the money to harvest and to ship their products to market.

At the same time, people were so desperate for food that some of the most iconic images of the Great Depression are long, crowded bread lines that stretched for blocks and blocks. We have come a long way since the Great Depression, and our agricultural farm policies are very different than they once were. That is why this farm bill focuses on the future of agriculture in this country. This is not your father's farm bill.

In 1996 Congress passed a law called Freedom to Farm that eliminated the last vestiges of those production controls. To give farmers time to get used to the new system, that bill created a system of direct payment subsidies, which were supposed to be temporary.

But it didn't quite work out that way. Those payments continued, farm bill after farm bill, even when it was quite clear they were no longer defensible. The checks kept coming in good years and in bad. In some cases the checks went to people who weren't even farming.

In the budget climate of today, we just cannot afford those business-as-usual policies of the past. It was one of my top goals, as we wrote this bill, to end direct payments once and for all, and that is exactly what we have done together in this farm bill.

We also went through this bill page-by-page and made major reforms. We streamlined programs. We have cut red tape. We have eliminated waste. The first thing in this bill, on page 1, line 1, is repealing direct payments.

This is not your father's farm bill. This is a critical step in changing the paradigm of agricultural policy. Instead of direct payment subsidies, we are shifting the focus of the farm bill to responsible risk management. Farming is a risky business. In fact, I can't think of a more risky business than farming in this country. We saw this in South Dakota last fall when a freak blizzard wiped out tens of thousands of cattle and devastated ranchers. We saw this the year before when record-setting droughts wiped out crops across America's heartland. We saw it in Michigan where the combination of an early thaw and a late freeze almost destroyed our entire cherry crop and our apple crop.

No other industry is as dependent on the whims of Mother Nature or on the wild swings of the market as agriculture. That is why we have a farm bill. We have a stake, and we should be proud we have the safest, most affordable food supply in the world because we partner with farmers. That is why risk management is our No. 1 goal in this bill.

In fact, it is what farmers have been asking for. They want the ability and, more importantly, the responsibility of managing their own risk. Of course, in a country as big and diverse as ours, the risks faced by farmers in Michigan are very different from the risks faced by farmers in Mississippi or Oklahoma or Minnesota. That is the key principle that guided us when we wrote the bill to make sure it worked for all different kinds of crops throughout the country.

As farmers are managing their risk, we are giving them the choice to participate in an Agricultural Risk Coverage Program—that we are calling ARC—which will help them cover losses they incur at the individual farm level or county level or they can participate in a Price Loss Coverage Program which will trigger if prices drop below a reference price.

Both of these programs will use historically-based acres decoupled from production to minimize any influence from the program on farmers' decisions on what or where to plant. We don't want them planting to the government program.

In addition, in order to qualify for either of these programs, farmers must agree to comply with conservation and wetlands requirements. They are so important.

We are reforming the system to stop subsidy payments to millionaires, and we have imposed a new, overall cap—a first-time overall cap—of $125,000, for the first time covering both crop support and marketing loans, all parts of the commodity title.

This is the overall commodity title cap passed by the Senate, even though underneath the cap there were differences. We are requesting the USDA to close what is called the management loophole by updating its definition of ''management'' and giving the Secretary, for the first time, the authority to put limits on the numbers of managers on a farm that can qualify for payments.

By ending direct payments once and for all—by asking farmers to take responsibility for managing their own risk, and by partnering with them so that they can do it, and by capping farm payments and stopping payments to millionaires—we are putting in place the most significant reforms in agricultural policy in decades. This is a bill our colleagues can be proud to vote for.

In hearing some of the opposition, people are debating the old farm bills and not understanding what we have done.

Every farmer we have talked to in writing this bill said that crop insurance was their top priority. So we strengthened crop insurance and gave more crops access to this kind of insurance.

With this bill, we are taking significant steps to change the paradigm of farmer programs. With crop insurance, farmers don't get a check, they get a bill. They may pay tens of thousands of dollars in premiums and never get a check in a year because it is a good year and there is no disaster, just like any other kind of insurance.

This bill also includes a very important permanent livestock disaster assistance program for ranchers who lose livestock due to severe weather, disease or other acts of nature. In the past, Congress had to pass ad hoc disaster assistance for livestock producers, adding to the cost and the complexity of the program. These have been some very tough years for ranchers. In fact, livestock herds are down to their lowest level since 1951—imagine that—because of what we have seen.

That is why this bill, for the first time, has a permanent, funding baseline, and a system that will ensure our ranchers don't go bankrupt because of a freak blizzard in October or a scorching drought that wipes out a rancher's feed supply. This disaster assistance is applied retroactively to October 1, 2011, and makes the program permanent.

One of the worst agricultural disasters happened in 2009 to our American dairy farmers. That is why we worked

very hard in this bill to strengthen the dairy safety net by replacing the existing dairy supports with two new programs. The dairy margin insurance program, another insurance program, protects producer margins equal to the difference between the all-milk price and a national feed cost. We are taking special care to make sure that these insurance premiums are affordable for small and medium-sized dairy farms, making sure, especially, that we focus on any farm with fewer than 200 cows.

The Dairy Product Purchase Program, which is new and is a part of this, gives the Department of Agriculture the flexibility to purchase dairy products, milk, and other products when margins fall below $4. Those dairy products will be donated for the first time to families in need, through public and private organizations, including food banks, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens. This was a hard-fought compromise on dairy. I have to say my preference would have been what we passed twice in the Senate as a strong dairy policy. But given the resistance of the Speaker and the leadership in the House and the need to be able to find something we could move forward on and pass that would work for dairy farmers, we worked very hard to find a way to move forward to get the votes and support and make sure we were helping farm operations in every region of the country. We know the pressures on the New England area farmers are very different from the pressures on our own producers in Michigan or in the Midwest or on the west coast, and we have worked hard to find something that works.

While title I of the farm bill reforms programs so farmers are taking responsibility for their own risk, title II of the farm bill is about risk management for the whole country. This is the conservation bill in this farm bill. In all the discussions in the farm bill, it too often gets overlooked. In fact, it is our Nation's largest and most enduring investment in conservation on private lands, which are the majority of our lands in America.

This farm bill includes a historic agreement between supporters of traditional commodities and environmental and conservation groups to link conservation compliance to crop insurance—critically important as we eliminate direct payments and ask farmers to manage their risk through crop insurance. We do not want to create unintended consequences of risk for our lands and our water resources.

At the start of this farm bill process, commodity groups and conservation groups were on very different sides on this issue, but they sat down together, they listened, and they found common ground. It turned out their differences weren't as great as they thought they were. In fact, no one has a bigger stake in protecting our land and our water than our farmers. With a little compromise and a lot of hard work, which is the story of this entire bill, they brought us a plan that conserves soil and water resources for generations to come and protects the safety net for farmers to rely on.

This has been called the greatest advancement in conservation in three decades. I wish to underscore for my colleagues that this is an important and historic agreement, and I thank everyone who has been involved in the hard work of putting it together.

We have also created a new sodsaver provision to prevent farmers from plowing up native prairie lands, saving money for taxpayers and saving absolutely critical wildlife habitat. We need to manage land to prevent erosion. That is how we avoid having another dust bowl during droughts. It is equally important to continue preserving wetlands that help prevent flooding and create important wildlife habitats for ducks and birds and other waterfowl.

What else does the conservation title do? It directly preserves millions of acres of wildlife habitat, which in turn has helped to rebuild populations of duck, quail, and pheasants, among others. That is why the bill has the strong support of the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Quail Forever, Pheasants Forever, the Audubon Society, World Food Program USA, and the World Wildlife Fund, which are only a handful of the more than 250 conservation groups that have endorsed this bill.

To strengthen conservation, we went through every program and focused on making it more flexible, easier to use, and we were able to take 23 different programs, cut it down to 13, and put it into 4 different areas with a lot of flexibility that also allowed us to save dollars in this bill.

The first is working lands, giving farmers the tools they need to be the best stewards of their natural resources. The centerpiece of this function is called EQIP—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program—one of the most important conservation programs out there for farmers. EQIP gives technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners to help them conserve soil and water.

Working lands conservation also includes the Conservation Stewardship Program, which encourages higher levels of conservation and the adoption of new conservation technologies. We continued the conservation innovation grants and the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program, which allows landowners to get value-added benefits from their land by opening them to hunting and fishing and bird watching. We made these programs even more flexible and added a focus on wildlife habitat, making them easier for farmers to use.

The second area, the Conservation Reserve Program, recovers highly erodible land from production to benefit soil and water quality as well as wildlife habitat. Despite record droughts over the last few years—droughts that in many ways were worse than during the Dust Bowl—the soil stayed on the ground. We haven't had a Dust Bowl. The soil has stayed on the ground. CRP was a big part of that, protecting not only the soil but air quality as well.

We also continued an important incentive program to help older farmers transition their land to beginning farmers.

One of the parts of the conservation title that I am most proud of is a new focus on regional partnerships. This will have a big impact on my own Great Lakes—that we in the Great Lakes area love so much—as well as the Chesapeake Bay and other critical areas where there are large-scale regional conservation challenges. We consolidated several programs into one, which will offer competitive, merit-braced grants to regional partnerships made up of conservation groups, universities, farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners to support improved soil health, water quality and quantity and habitat for wildlife.

The final area includes conservation easements, which lets landowners voluntarily enter into agreements to preserve wetlands and farmlands and protect them against development and sprawl. We consolidated and streamlined existing easement programs to protect important land for generations to come.

The farm bill is also an export bill. In fact, agriculture is one of the few areas where our Nation maintains a healthy trade surplus. That is why this farm bill continues efforts to expand opportunities for American exports, including the Market Access Program, to promote U.S. agricultural products in overseas markets and develop programs to open new markets for American agricultural products.

The farm bill is also a humanitarian bill that speaks to the best about us and our American values. Around the world millions of people get their only meals as a result of the generosity of the American people through the Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole program.

I saw this last year firsthand in Haiti, where schools would open bags stamped with the American flag and provide a modest meal to students every day—very likely their only meal that day. I met one little boy who saved part of his lunch to take it home in his bag to his parents so they could have something to eat that night.

In fact, in the life of this program, more than 3 billion—billion—people in over 150 countries have gotten a meal thanks to the generosity of the American people and the American farmer.

The farm bill makes major reforms to our food aid program, speeding up emergency food aid response and giving flexibility to organizations on the ground to supply local food to people in need. These reforms mean that because of this farm bill we will feed another 500,000 people around the world. That is

why this bill has earned the endorsement of many humanitarian and religious groups, including Feed the Children, the ONE Campaign, CARE USA, Church World Service, Catholic Relief Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, and the American Jewish World Service, among many others.

Of course, we know hunger and poverty strike families all around the globe, including right here at home. I believe in the richest country in the world it is a disgrace for any child to go to bed hungry at night or go to school hungry in the morning. Crop insurance is disaster assistance for farmers who have been hit by a natural disaster. The nutrition title of the farm bill is disaster assistance for families who have been hit by an economic disaster. Most families who need food assistance only need it for a few months, and the vast majority of people receiving food help are children, the elderly, and the disabled, including our disabled veterans.

When the House of Representatives passed their nutrition bill, they included many provisions that would have seriously hurt Americans, such as many in Michigan who have paid taxes all their lives, lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and are mortified they need help to put food on the table for their families while they are getting back on their feet. This conference report rejects every single one of those harmful provisions. Instead, this final conference report before us strengthens the integrity and accountability of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—or SNAP—ensuring every dollar is spent responsibly so those who need help can get it.

The bill stops lottery winners from being able to get SNAP benefits and stops the use of SNAP funds at liquor stores. It also includes an important provision that addresses what the Washington Post called ''a black eye on the program.'' We have streamlined eligibility requirements to cut down on wasteful duplication, but a number of States discovered a way to use that streamlining to give some families additional SNAP benefits by counting utility bills they do not have. By sending out as little as $1 in home heating assistance, States have been able to qualify families for a utility deduction, even if they do not pay any utility bills.

I salute those who want to help people get additional funds. I would have very much supported adding additional help in this bill, but this cannot be justified—what is being done here. We addressed this loophole and protected the entire program for 47 million people.

Here is what we have done and here is what it means to someone on SNAP. If you receive $20 or more a year in low-income heating assistance—if you receive $20 a year in low-income heating assistance—nothing changes for you. If you receive less than $20 a year, you will need to go back to the old system of producing an actual utility bill in order to receive credit for a utility bill.

That is the sum total of where we have received and garnered the savings in this bill as it relates to closing loopholes. This is about strengthening the integrity of this program to ensure that food assistance is there for families who have fallen on hard times.

The farm bill also includes a number of pilot programs to help people find work or receive job training so they do not need food assistance. The Secretary of Agriculture can approve these pilots, which include funding for child care and transportation to make sure individuals are able to succeed.

The bill increases funding for food banks, continues an important effort that provides supplemental food for seniors as well as the senior farmers market program.

I am pleased this bill has the support of the AARP and others who understand the importance of senior nutrition.

The farm bill continues efforts to serve fresh fruit and vegetable snacks in schools, and includes a new national pilot based on something we do in Michigan called double Up Food Bucks. It essentially doubles the SNAP benefits for families when they shop for fresh produce at farmers markets.

I also wish to mention the healthy food financing initiative, which addresses the very serious problem of lack of access to grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods. There are many places in Michigan where this is a very serious issue. This financing initiative will help families put healthy food on the table while creating jobs in neighborhoods across the country.

It is also important to stress that the Congressional Budget Office projects that this farm bill, in addition to addressing fraud and abuse, will spend $11.5 billion less on food assistance the right way—by the economy improving and people going back to work. So when we look at the fact that the numbers are going down, it is because of the economy improving. Frankly, this is where we need to be focusing our efforts, on supporting businesses to create jobs, and part of the way to do that is by passing this jobs bill called the farm bill.

The farm bill is also a credit bill, increasing access to resources which help farmers, especially the beginning and veteran farmers, own and operate farms. This results in jobs. This title will make more qualified farmers, of all sizes, eligible for USDA farm loans and gives more flexibility to the USDA so they can better reach new types of farming, including local and regional producers.

With 16 million people working in agriculture across the country, the farm bill is a jobs bill—and nowhere is that more evident than in America's rural communities. The rural development title of the farm bill authorizes programs which are absolutely essential to small towns and rural communities and those who work in those communities.

We are continuing the important work of rural economic development and rural broadband. Just as rural electrification brought opportunities to families across the country in the last century, rural broadband opens doors for increased commerce and interconnectedness for the 21st century.

Ninety percent of community water systems serve 10,000 people or less. We provide mandatory funding to address the backlog of rural water applications at USDA so rural communities have a safe supply of drinking water.

For the first time we prioritize and reserve funding for rural development applications submitted by communities working together on long-term, sustainable community and economic development plans because these regional strategies will be more effective at the local level, and we want to provide as much flexibility as possible. The farm bill's rural development title is about entrepreneurship and the lasting strength of small towns across America in which it invests.

As I mentioned earlier today, we are creating an innovative new Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research in this bill—modeled after what we do with medical research—to tackle the difficult fight against pests and diseases, and it increases opportunities through innovation to create jobs. For too many years, agricultural research has suffered because of budget cuts over and over. This new research foundation will bring together public and private funds to maintain a steady stream of funding for this important research. We provide $200 million in seed money, and it can be matched by $200 million from the private sector in an ongoing commitment.

In addition to the new research foundation, we have a major new focus on food and agricultural research throughout this bill. We have a major focus on the specialty crops research initiative to find solutions to pests and diseases that affect fruit and vegetable crops, and we have efforts in this title to support beginning farmers and ranchers as well. We are also continuing successful research and extension efforts, including work done by our premier land grant universities—such as my alma mater, Michigan State University.

As to the forestry title, healthy forests mean clean air, fresh water, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Coupled with the tools we have in the conservation title, the forestry title of the farm bill helps foresters maintain the health of our private forest lands.

We are strengthening our efforts to fight invasive pests that have destroyed many thousands of trees, particularly in the West. We worked hard to ensure that private landowners can continue to effectively manage their operations.

As I mentioned earlier this afternoon, the farm bill is an energy bill. I

am extremely pleased that during negotiations with the House we kept the full funding from the Senate's energy title.

Our rural communities have been at the forefront of the effort to achieve American energy independence. We are strengthening these efforts through the highly successful Rural Energy for America Program, which helps farmers and rural small business owners generate their own power or improve energy efficiency to lower their utility bills. Thousands of farms across the country have lowered their input costs thanks to the REAP program.

We are continuing our commitment to the development of the next generation of advanced biofuels. Scientific advancements are allowing us to develop ethanol with food and agricultural waste products. With this farm bill, we will see even more biorefineries come online, producing homegrown fuels which bring competition and lower prices for consumers at the pump.

This farm bill also supports our growing biobased economy with my new grow it here, make it here initiative. Biobased products are manufactured items made from all kinds of plant materials that replace petroleum and other chemicals. These products are everywhere, from the cups in the Senate cafeteria—which are made by a Michigan company, by the way—to cleaning products, industrial lubricants, and even the foam in the seats of cars which, if it is a new American-made car, will be based on soy oil foam rather than petroleum oil. Biobased manufacturing creates jobs, strengthens our economy, and reduces our use of fossil fuels.

As I have said before, this is a farm bill focused on the future, and nowhere is that more evident than in the specialty crops title. This is essentially the produce aisle of the farm bill. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, nuts, and nursery crops. We are strengthening the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, expanding specialty crop research, expanding crop insurance to include specialty crops, and continuing the highly successful fresh fruits and vegetables SNAP program in our schools.

We don't want to just grow more fruits and vegetables, we need to be able to get them to consumers. That is why this farm bill more than quadruples support for farmers markets. We are also strengthening local food hubs, which bring farmers together with local supermarkets, restaurants, and schools to supply locally grown healthy foods.

The farm bill also recognizes an incredibly fast-growing segment of agriculture—organics. We continue our efforts to support farmers to get certified as organic, expand crop insurance options to organic farmers, and provide funding for continued organic research.

This bill truly reflects the diversity of crops we grow in America, and nowhere is that more evident than in the specialty crops and organics title.

In every part of this farm bill we worked on streamlining and consolidating programs. In fact, we ended over 100 different programs and authorizations in this process. I said to my staff at the very beginning: Don't think about programs. Think about principles—what should we be doing in agriculture and food policy, not what programs do we want to protect. That is how we have moved forward throughout this entire process.

There is one thing we did add and I am very pleased with; that is, a new veterans agriculture liaison at USDA to work with our men and women in uniform who are coming home and want to get involved in agriculture. We know the majority of our men and women are coming home to small towns, such as where I grew up in northern Michigan, and rural communities, and we want to support them so they can be successful if they choose to go into agriculture.

This is a new kind of farm bill, designed to meet new challenges of a changing world. We are also making major reforms, eliminating unnecessary, unjustified programs to cut government spending and to increase the integrity of farm programs.

This farm bill reflects critical steps in changing the paradigm, where we are ending subsidies and giving farmers the tools they need to manage their own risks. We support them, but in doing that, as we know, when we have insurance products—and that is what we are looking at throughout this bill, whether it is a new insurance-type approach for cotton or dairy or for our traditional commodities. With any other kind of insurance, you pay the premium, pay the premium, and pay the premium but don't get any help unless there is a loss, a disaster. This is a fundamental shift in this farm bill, helping our farmers to manage risk in a fiscally responsible way.

I think my distinguished ranking member would admit it was a lot of work. After all of this work, to my knowledge, we offer the Senate the only effort where a group of people within their jurisdiction of authority have voluntarily cut spending to reduce the deficit. If we couple the sequestration cuts of approximately $6 billion and the cuts in this bill to agriculture, we are coming to the Senate and offering a bill of reform, cutting programs, cutting duplication, cutting spending that actually creates $23 billion in deficit reduction. I am proud of that. This truly is not your father's farm bill.

We are about to vote to bring debate on this conference report to a close. But before we do, I once again thank my ranking member, the senior Senator from Mississippi, who has been a friend and a partner throughout this entire process. I have enjoyed very much having the opportunity to work with Senator COCHRAN and his very competent staff. I learned along the way that we have a great love of music in piano playing and the blues—which sometimes we were singing during this process. But it has been my great honor to work with him and our House colleagues as we have worked to bring this forward.

My ranking member had a different perspective than I had, and we have written this bill together. I have learned a lot about the perspective of Mississippi and the South, and I hope I have shared the perspective of Michigan and the North—and the East and the West—as we have listened to our colleagues. I urge our colleagues to support this conference report.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, the Federal Agricultural Reform and Risk Management Act.

Harry Reid, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Bill Nelson, Tom Harkin, Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Michael F. Bennet, Patrick J. Leahy, Max Baucus, Amy Klobuchar, Heidi Heitkamp, Joe Donnelly, Richard J. Durbin, Mark Udall, Martin Heinrich, Sherrod Brown.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, an act to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 20 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Fischer	Merkley
Baldwin	Franken	Mikulski
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Moran
Baucus	Graham	Murkowski
Bennet	Hagan	Murphy
Blunt	Harkin	Murray
Booker	Hatch	Nelson
Boozman	Heinrich	Portman
Boxer	Heitkamp	Pryor
Brown	Hirono	Reed
Burr	Hoeven	Reid
Cantwell	Isakson	Risch
Cardin	Johanns	Sanders
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Casey	Kaine	Schumer
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Crapo	Levin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Manchin	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Feinstein	Menendez	Wyden

NAYS—22

Ayotte	Grassley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Heller	Rubio
Coburn	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Corker	Lee	Shelby
Cornyn	Markey	Warren
Cruz	McCain	
Flake	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Begich	Rockefeller	Udall (CO)
Landrieu	Toomey	Vitter

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 72, the nays are 22. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from New Jersey.

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, it is an honor to speak for my first time in the Senate. As I speak today on the urgent need to extend unemployment insurance, I feel a sense of profound gratitude that I first want to note. First, I feel this gratitude to the people of the State of New Jersey. It is remarkable, the privilege they have given me to walk into this hall, to stand right in the area where the great Senator Frank Lautenberg stood, to work here in this hall which is filled with such history, to have the privilege of sitting there at the desk where the Presiding Officer is sitting and touch things that seem like they should belong in a museum, like a gavel from hundreds of years ago, to walk in here and see over our heads words like ''courage'' and ''wisdom'' and ''patriotism.'' Most importantly, it is a privilege to walk here among my colleagues, all 99 of them, every single one senior to me in months and years served, in wisdom, and in experience. It is my prayer, first and foremost, that I prove worthy of this incredible honor.

With all of that said, I also realize that I joined this body at a time when Congress is not really thought that well of by the American public. In fact, this institution's approval ratings are at an all-time low. I find that not surprising. Even when I was running for this office, I encountered so much frustration. In the days before I came down here, people who you would think would love Congress would look at me and say: Go down there and give them hell. I think that is because so many people in America understand what we have endured for the last 6 years, which is the worst economy of my lifetime. While we are seeing some progress in our national recovery, it has come slowly and unevenly. Many families are still hurting. Americans believe Congress is not doing all it can to address the urgent problems they face. They believe that we have, in some cases, made problems worse. Some people, I understand, have surrendered to cynicism about government, cynicism about America's future, cynicism about the ability for people themselves to shape their own lives and their destiny. But we cannot allow the pain of so many Americans to overshadow that long history we all share. There is a reason why American history does not look kindly upon cynics and naysayers, for even with all of its wrenching pain and savage problems, our collective past offers a resounding testimony to overcoming impossible challenges, to righting terrible wrongs and advancing deeper and deeper meaning to those very American words ''liberty and justice for all.''

That is what our Nation is, the oldest constitutional democracy, a country founded not so that its people get special treatment because of divine rights of Kings and Queens but because everyone is valued. We did not get there right away. Even in our founding documents, where Native Americans are referred to as savages, African American as fractions of human beings, and women not at all, we have made progress.

I know I am here in this Chamber because of what this Nation has done by coming together. Like all of my colleagues, all 99 of them, we are not here because of some royal lineage or entitled ancestor. I personally stand here like others because of the grit, work, sacrifice, and discipline of my ancestors but also because they had the blessing to labor in a Nation that for generation after generation advanced to greater and greater inclusion, greater and greater opportunity, spread among more and more people.

Our Nation has an enduring belief that when we struggle together for a common cause America is better and we are all better. It is the understanding that we are a Nation with a profound and sacred Declaration of Independence. Also, our country has a historical chorus that profoundly proclaimed a declaration of interdependence.

We began and have endured because our ancestors understood the common cause that is America. This cause was heralded by our greatest leaders in every single generation, the people whose words and speeches and examples inspired me to be here today. George Washington, an original Founding Father, reminded us of this principle and American ideal in his farewell address where he wrote:

> The name American belongs to us. We have in common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty we possess are the work of joint counsel and joint effort, of common dangers, common suffering and common successes.

So standing here I am grateful that I have never forgotten what my mom has told me time and time again: ''Boy, don't forget where you come from.'' Well, I know from whence I come. I now from whence all of my colleagues come. I am proud that we, all 100 of us, descendents of slaves, of immigrants, labor factory workers, domestics, of farmers who through toil brought from the earth hope, of business people, who with impossible mountains before them climbed high and commanded forth new opportunity—all of us, despite our political differences, share a common heritage, and we share a common desire to solve problems, to address the challenges that plague this Nation, that hurt families, to serve our country so that we may give truth to the words like ''courage'' and ''patriotism'' and ''wisdom,'' so that they never become simply empty words etched above our heads but they constantly fuel the passion and desire of our hearts.

That is why 3 months in, almost to the day, I am inspired by the work of this body. I have not surrendered to the cynicism about it. I am inspired by the remarkable people who sit around me right now. This is a great institution. I now have an even more fervent, relentless belief that together we can address our common cause and the common challenges afflicting our national strength.

Principal among these challenges facing the United States is the persistent economic hardship and insecurity facing too many Americans. Our economy, though improving, is nonetheless failing too many people. Economic trends and challenges, not of any individual's making, and particularly not of the making of those who felt the pain of this great recession the most, are forcing too many families out of the middle class and into poverty.

This is not a threat to just some. It is a threat to us all. A shrinking middle class and intractable poverty is a threat to America. It is a challenge to the very idea of who we profess to be as a Nation; that each generation should do better than the one before; that we are a land of growing prosperity shared by a widening population; that the idea that anyone born in any station, through hard work, self discipline, and sacrifice can make it in America.

But over the last few decades this has become less and less the case. You see, wages are stagnant and by some measures have declined for the middle class. Social mobility in America, almost embarrassingly, lags behind many of our competitor nations. More and more families are beginning to question that idea that in America every generation does better than the one before.

More and more people now are getting stuck and feeling stuck through

no fault of their own in a dismal hope-subduing economic condition. I watched, when I was Mayor of New Jersey's largest city, how company after company shed workers during the recession, how retirement savings collapsed, how the ratio of people looking for jobs to jobs available jaggedly cut against the American worker, still standing now at roughly 3 Americans looking for a job for every job that is available.

Amidst this jarring recession, other economic trends continue to deepen our national economic wounds. Companies are now outsourcing jobs and investment. New technologies bring incredible societal benefit, but they are also driving many jobs into obsolescence. The worker in America is facing a weakening in negotiating position.

So as a new Senator, I am inspired by my colleagues, many of them, and especially their incredible staff, the unsung giants of our Federal Government who are working hard to meet the challenges. I profess that I hear from Members on both sides of the aisle a true understanding of our common cause and our collective responsibility here in the Senate.

Senator after Senator to whom I talked in my first 3 months is driving an agenda that gives my very hope sustenance. I am proud to roll up my sleeves and work with them regardless of party. While we may have differences in approach and disagreements on strategy, the common call to improve our economy has Senators nobly pushing what I believe are critical important legislative measures, measures that range from efforts to address our national skills gap, to expand educational opportunities, to boost our manufacturing sector, to lift small businesses, to promote research, development and investment in infrastructure, and efforts to stop the perverse incentive that drives jobs and investment overseas, and so much more.

But these critical and worthy efforts may take months or longer to move through Congress and even more time to have an effect to expand our economy at the necessary rate. Thus they do not relieve us from the urgency to do more right now to help those families caught amidst these treacherous economic trends.

These are families who so desperately want to work, who spend their days searching for jobs, sending out resume after resume after resume, going online and filling out application after application after application. There are tens of thousands of New Jersey families who are visiting food pantries for food or depleting their savings accounts or are cashing out their IRAs and who are racking up credit cards just to pay for necessities, who are skipping prescriptions, who are missing rent payments, and who are falling behind on their mortgages, letting car insurance lapse, having their utilities canceled, and having their children miss out—sitting out of field trips or afterschool activities just because their parents can't afford the costs.

This is why unemployment insurance is critical. It is America answering the call to help people in a crisis not of their own making.

I am proud, God, I am so proud, that for the past 50 years America has answered that call time and time again to help others in crisis. We are America. We have been America. This is our tradition. When times are tough, as the great New Jersey poet sings: ''We Take Care of Our Own.'' In fact, we are a nation that takes care of its own and reaches beyond. If there is a crisis, America is there. If there is a crisis, be it a typhoon in the Philippines, an earthquake in Haiti, America responds; be it an act of terror in New York or Washington, an oilspill in the gulf, flooding in Colorado or a hurricane barreling up the northeastern coast, America responds.

Our tradition is clear. When the vicious vicissitudes of the market create economic crises for our people at levels as high as they are now, America responds. Extending unemployment insurance has always been viewed in this light.

When Senator Robert Wagner rose in the Senate in the mid-1930s amidst a depression that cast millions of families—my family—into economic peril, he called the Social Security Act and its unemployment provision a compound in which blended elements of economic wisdom and social justice exist.

George Bush, who extended unemployment benefits five times, at a time when unemployment was lower than it is now, said in very plain English:

> Americans rely on their unemployment benefits to pay for the mortgage or rent, food and other critical bills. They need our assistance in these difficult times, and we cannot let them down.

Our inaction in the Senate in not renewing emergency unemployment benefits at the end of December, with national unemployment as high as it is now, has let millions of Americans, adults and their children down—down into an avoidable economic misery.

In New Jersey, I found it was particularly stinging to our residents, even confusing to them, that when times were not as bad as they are now, we acted with bipartisan, no-strings-attached conviction for our fellow Americans. Not only did we act when the unemployment rate was lower than it is now, but we acted to extend unemployment insurance time after time when long-term unemployment was about half of what it is today.

President after President, Congress after Congress responded—but not now.

When times were better, we responded—but not now.

When fewer people were struggling, we responded—but not now.

When foreign competition was not as fierce, we responded—but not now.

When banks were irresponsibly overleveraged and when insurance companies were dangerously undercapitalized, when rating agencies rated trash as treasure and when mortgage companies used reprehensible practices that harmed family after family, all together threatening to create cataclysmic crisis, we responded—but not now.

For millions of Americans suffering in these horrible economic conditions not of their own making, who play by the rules, who are looking for work, who are struggling, who are suffering, we have more than 50 years of history of responding and extending unemployment insurance—but not now.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment just to extend and single out my gratitude for the leadership of my colleague JACK REED. For his efforts, he has been incredible in trying to extend these benefits. He, along with other of my colleagues, refused to give up. He has worked quietly and relentlessly to find a bipartisan solution. He has offered compromise, offered payfors, and has offered a way forward that would bring hope. But so far that solution has proved to be elusive.

If we are to honor our collective legacy and tradition, we cannot surrender in this moment to the partisanship of today. So many people are depending on this body to come together and find a way not left or right but forward for America, because every week that we delay, 70,000 Americans lose their benefits. For thousands, every week, that means losing a house, an eviction from an apartment, and depletion of savings. Because 40 percent of those who received benefits have children, it means depriving our children of things we would all consider the basics. Nearly 3 weeks ago I stood with Senator REED and pledged to go back to New Jersey and return with stories of the people I met who needed our collective action and needed us to come together. Twelve events later, after stops all across New Jersey, my heart has broken time and time again.

It is broken by the former A&P manager in River Edge, working every day to find a job and has burned through his entire life's savings; by the Hunterdon woman whose home of decades has gone into foreclosure. She is working every day to find a job but is in crisis; by the soon-to-be father in Paterson, working hard every day to find a job but is wracked with worry about providing for his new baby; by the father of five in Bridgetowne who now struggles every day to find a job but also to afford life's basic necessities. He was talking to me about keeping the heat on, about how they can keep gas in the car and food on the table. He told me about the strain and the stress it is creating in his oldest, a 10-year-old son.

These stories from cities to suburbs, from Barbara and Robert's kitchen table in Old Bridge, NJ, to the County Griddle Lounge in Clinton, NJ, to the One Stop Center in Plainfield, NJ, were eerily similar and, most of all, they

were all avoidable with action from Congress.

Eileen from Bernardsville told me she had been looking for work for 1 year. Federal benefits allowed her to stay afloat and afford the things necessary to find a job, money for gas, dry cleaning, a cell phone. Even in front of other job seekers, she couldn't disguise her anger and disappointment with Washington. Her anger was about feeling that she and others were being ignored. She told me she felt ashamed of a country that would turn its back on its own people. She is mad about a Congress that she feels doesn't hear her, but she is mostly mad that anyone, especially a Member of Congress, would say she is lazy.

She is right to be mad, especially about the absurd notion that unemployment benefits provide a disincentive to work. That allegation frankly burns me. It is something I have heard too often; that somehow people are lazy or that unemployment insurance and payments, as meager as they are, provide a disincentive to work. This, to me, is intellectually dishonest and, according to most studies, factually not true.

This is one of those corrosive political strains that burns the collective gut of our national truth, pitting, actually, American against American and violates that American wisdom—my mom always told me—that we should not look down on another person unless we are extending a hand of help. We are not calling them lazy.

When I was mayor of Newark, I saw my share of lines of good people doing that well, offering a hand of help. These lines, I will tell you as mayor, motivated me even harder to double down because they were lines at soup kitchens where Americans were helping Americans. They were lines at the one-stop job center where Americans were helping Americans.

But the longest lines I saw as mayor were when we had successes, when a new business, supermarket or company would come to town and say they were hiring. The lines would go on for blocks or wrap around buildings with people desperate to work, even for minimum-wage jobs.

I can vividly remember scenes just like that when Newark opened a Home Depot or then-Continental Airlines held a job fair. It was Americans in line with pride in their hearts, resumes in their hands, and hunger to find a job, any job, to get to work.

I heard that the last 2 weeks all over my State from former managers applying for entry-level jobs to no avail and people with years of experience so desperate they were applying for minimum-wage jobs with no success.

The people who really blew me away, who just set me aback because I honestly should have expected it—but I didn't expect to hear it—were people who told me in order to keep their pride and to keep their feelings of self-worth, on top of all of their stress and strain of unemployment, they found ways to volunteer at their local libraries, at their schools, at their churches. These were folks such as Mary, whom I met in Hunterdon County. Mary told me she was helping women look for work as she herself was. She was helping them develop skills from her experience while she was trying to find her own job.

This is the America I know. From our cities to our wealthier suburbs, people want to work. They want to give back. They want to contribute. They want to represent the truth of who we are as a country. Time and time again I heard people say, ''We don't want unemployment insurance, we want a job.''

Even folks who had jobs, though, told me of the pain of congressional inaction.

I stopped to meet with folks in Woodbury. I went to a restaurant, Marlene Mangia Bene—Senator MENENDEZ can probably pronounce that better. I spoke with the owners: Christopher, Maria, Frank, and other business leaders. The community of businesspeople told me how high the prevalence of unemployed people was and how many people were losing their benefits, and they came to the simple conclusion, as they watched how it hurt businesses in that town—less money coming to people in their time of need, less money spent, and that meant less revenue for businesses, which meant that some businesses might not be able to hold on to as many employees, and then those laid-off employees would then need unemployment insurance and more social services.

The cycle feeds itself.

If we fail to extend unemployment benefits, economists say it is going to cost the country almost one-quarter of a million jobs this year alone. This is another government self-inflicted wound we can avoid. Reinstating benefits will save 19,000 jobs in New Jersey alone.

But it is bigger than that. Every single job is a family-added distress. While all families are important, there are some who should weigh especially heavy on the conscience of our country.

Take New Jersey State Assemblyman Bob Andrzejzak, an Iraq war vet who lost his leg in service to our country. He pulled together a group of veterans, young and old, for me to talk with at a Rio Grande diner in Middle Township in Cape May County.

I challenge any Member of Congress who hasn't done so already to sit with veterans who are receiving unemployment benefits or who, because of our inaction, just lost them. It is not hard to find them.

Unfortunately, nearly 21,000 veterans lost their benefits earlier than anticipated when we failed to extend benefits in December, and about 3,000 or more will join them each month unless we right this wrong.

Listen to the testimony of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who have come back into this economy after fighting on the frontlines, after facing peril and danger most of us can't imagine, and then here in America they have to face the harsh realities of, despite their best efforts, being unemployed and even facing the potential horrors of homelessness.

These men and women who fought for our country, who stood for our Nation, are not lazy. There is no disincentive to work in these benefits. These are people who signed up to go to war. The assemblyman told me how hard it was for his friends and even him to find a job. He told me what it does to their spirits and what it is like to give all for your country and then have your country fail to do what it has consistently done for others during times of crisis over the last 50 years—to extend unemployment benefits.

This man, Bob Andrzejzak, is shorter than me but he stands taller than I will ever stand—and on a prosthetic leg. He works a job as an assemblyman in New Jersey, with honor, battling to give more hope to his constituents in counties with high unemployment, such as Cape May County, with an over 12-percent unemployment rate.

He has good days, he has bad days, fighting it out on the front lines of our economic struggle. This Iraq war veteran is still fighting to protect his country, to advance it, and make real his country for the lives of thousands of people. His cause is our common cause. This burden should not be his to bear alone. We too, U.S. Senators, like him, have jobs, elected by the people. We swore an oath to be there for our countrymen. We too pledged our sacred honor to serve America, to return to the words of General Washington. The name ''America'' belongs to all of us. We must be there for everyone, especially in this time of trial.

It is my hope this body, in this generation of America, finds our measure of commonality and comes together to find a way so we can better tend to those in crisis, so that we too may add our humble measure to the greatness of that enduring American ideal.

Let us extend unemployment insurance.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, if I could praise my colleague for his eloquence and for his passion and say how right he is. I thank my colleague Senator MENENDEZ for allowing me to speak, but I wanted to commend Senator BOOKER for his brilliance and for his dedication.

I want to applaud the Senator for New Jersey for his maiden speech and for using this opportunity to focus on the urgent need to renew unemployment insurance for over 1.7 million Americans. The expiration has drained an estimated $2.2 billion from State economies according to estimates based on data from the Department of Labor and the Ways and Means Committee.

Our constituents, who lost their job through no fault of their own and are searching for work in this extremely challenging economy, are looking to Congress to renew this commonsense and very modest support. They've worked hard and are searching for work with just as much fervor. But on December 28 the rug was pulled out from under them because some of my colleagues on the other side had decided they would rather let emergency unemployment insurance expire. And yet we have traditionally extended aid when the long-term unemployment rate remains as high as it still unfortunately is.

Democrats have been pushing to extend this vital lifeline since before its expiration. And on December 17, Senator HELLER and I introduced a bipartisan path forward—and I thank the Senator from New Jersey for his support for that measure. This emergency extension for unemployment insurance for 3 months would give us more time to work on a year-long extension and address the concerns raised by some of my colleagues. This way folks in Rhode Island, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Kentucky—jobseekers all over the Nation—would not lose unemployment insurance as we work through these complex issues. Unfortunately, that immediate aid was filibustered despite our efforts.

That did not deter us. We have kept on working through those issues raised by some of my Republican colleagues and we have addressed them. We are now proposing a 3-month fully paid extension—which is way out of line with past extensions. Indeed, 17 of the 20 times that emergency aid was extended no strings were attached.

President Reagan extended emergency aid three times and President George W. Bush did it five times.

We are still working to secure enough votes to break a potential filibuster. We are not there yet, but I remain hopeful. Yet the clock is ticking. I hope some of my Republican colleagues understand that jobseekers deserve a solution now and not procedural delays or obstruction. So I look forward to continue working with Senator BOOKER on doing everything we can to extend this vital aid to our constituents immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I want to commend my colleague from New Jersey for an eloquent and soaring speech that speaks to the collective aspirations we should have in this body on behalf of the collective Nation we represent. I am not at all surprised at Senator BOOKER's ability to relate to this body the lives of people from New Jersey and across the country who depend upon us to respond to them in their times of need and to remind us of the greater nature of what we should stand for as an institution and on behalf of this country. He did it with such aplomb and such passion and intensity, yet at the same time with such sincerity that I think it is an excellent beginning to what will be a very long series of remarks in the Senate on critical issues that will both inform us and at the same time remind us of the high calling for which we are all brought to the Senate.

I want to take one moment to add to what Senator BOOKER said, specifically on the topic he ultimately drove home, and that is this question of unemployment. I want to relate one story—I see the Senator from Utah is up, so I will relate only one story—but it speaks to the very heart of what Senator BOOKER was conveying here.

I get thousands of letters from people who depend on their meager unemployment benefits to avert economic disaster while they desperately look for work. As Senator BOOKER said, these people are not lazy; they are not looking for a handout. They just want a job, any job. I want to talk about one constituent in particular—Noelle from Atlantic County, who described herself as ''a middle-aged unemployed single mother trying to raise two sons to be successful contributing members of our society.'' She relates what happened after her marriage ended:

I didn't shrug my shoulders and give up, even though the ''system'' said I didn't qualify for assistance . . . I took care of children in my home to pay the bills and avoid child care costs. In 2000, when my children were school age, I found a minimum wage seasonal job and worked hard to become a permanent employee . . . I worked even harder to rise up in the organization and become a respected manager. When that company went bankrupt in 2009, I found another job within two weeks taking a large pay cut and making far less than I would have made on unemployment. I stayed with that company for 4 years until I was laid off in July of 2013. Once again, I didn't shrug my shoulders and give up. For the following 26 weeks I sought employment. I have joined every employment website I could find and I applied for any job remotely within my limited job skills. Unfortunately, the responses I have gotten have not been encouraging. Thirteen years of retail experience, including nine years of management experience, translates into few opportunities. No one will consider me for any entry level positions based on my previous experience.

She closes by saying:

No, I do not think unemployment should be a way of life. No, I do not think you can be unemployed and disabled. No, I do not think 3 million unemployed Americans are going to find jobs in 26 weeks.

She is so right, and these are the type of Americans Senator BOOKER was talking about, and this is why the Senate should act.

I don't believe that is too much to ask, and I am pleased Senator BOOKER has come to this floor to lend his voice to the debate and to stand for people such as her. Again, I congratulate my colleague from New Jersey on an eloquent speech on such an important issue.

I am pleased that he chose to speak about unemployment insurance, an issue critical to so many families in New Jersey and across this Nation so they can make ends meet while they're looking for work.

Senator BOOKER has always been a voice for the voiceless, given hope to the vulnerable, and a helping hand to those who need it. It is why he chose public service. It is who he is and what he has always stood for.

He spoke eloquently and I commend him for his remarks. He rightfully pointed out that the issue of unemployment insurance isn't just about the poor. It is about all those people who need help while they continue to look for work.

We have seen the recession chip away at the middle class, pulling more and more families to the edge.

In this job market, they need more time to find work, and extending unemployment benefits will give them that time. It will allow them to step back from the edge.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we are better than this. This farm bill is a monument to every dysfunction Washington indulges in to defend our policies and twist our economy to benefit itself at the expense of the American people.

The top-line talking point among defenders of this bill is ''compromise.'' The farm bill, we are told, may be imperfect, but it is a compromise we can all live with. They said negotiators from both Houses and both political parties came together and hammered out a deal. They said: This is just how you have to act to get things done in Washington.

There is, of course, some truth to this, but it is more of a half truth. There absolutely is compromise in this thousand-page $1 trillion mess. But it is not a compromise between House Republicans and Senate Democrats. No, it is collusion between both parties against the American people. It benefits special interests at the expense of national interest.

This bill does not demonstrate how to do things in Washington but instead demonstrates how to do things for Washington. The final product before us is not just a legislative vehicle, it is a legislative getaway car.

And what did they get away with? Well, the farm bill is really two bills—one that spends about $200 billion to subsidize the agricultural industry and another that spends $750 billion on the public assistance program previously known as food stamps. The farm bill is, thus, a beltway marriage of convenience between welfare and corporate welfare, ensuring the passage of both while preventing reform in either. Instead, Congress broke out the neck bolts and sutures and put Frankenstein's monster back together.

This was the year the farm bill was supposed to be different. This was supposed to be the year when we would finally split the bill into its logical component pieces and would subject them both to overdue scrutiny and reform.

This was the year we might have strengthened the Food Stamp Program with work and other requirements for able-bodied adults, to help transition beneficiaries into full-time jobs. This was the year we might have added an asset test, to make sure wealthy Americans with large personal bank accounts were no longer eligible for food stamps. But those reforms aren't there. Those reforms aren't here—not in this bill.

Under this legislation, the Food Stamp Program is not really reformed, it is just expanded. Once again, the give and take of compromise in Congress boils down to the American people give and Washington takes. Yet, if anything, the other side of this bill is even worse. Not only did the conference committee fail to reform programs subsidizing agricultural businesses, the conference committee removed many of the few improvements the House and Senate tried to include in the first place.

For instance, the original Senate bill, for all its faults, included a novel provision to limit farm subsidies to actual farms, actual farmers. The Senate bill was also going to phase out crop insurance subsidies for wealthy Americans with an annual income of more than $750,000; farmers who made three-quarters of a million dollars a year, after all, should not need taxpayer assistance to keep their farms afloat.

The House bill included a transparency reform requiring Members of Congress to disclose any subsidies they personally receive under the crop insurance programs. Yet all of the above reforms mysteriously disappeared from the final legislation now before us.

It is not as though the farm bill was a paragon of accountability and fairness to begin with. Agricultural policy follows a troubling trend in Washington, using raw political power to twist public policy against the American people to profit political and corporate insiders.

For instance, under this legislation, the Federal Government will continue to force taxpayers to subsidize sugar companies, both in the law and in the grocery store. The bill maintains the so-called ''dairy cliff,'' keeping dairy policy temporary. This will create an artificial crisis the next time we take up the farm bill, which will once again undermine thoughtful debate and reform.

Perhaps of all the shiny ornaments hung on this special-interest Christmas tree, the shiniest may be the actual croniest handout to the Christmas tree industry itself. Under this farm bill, small independent Christmas tree farmers will now be required to pay a special tax to a government-created organization controlled by larger corporate producers, like some medieval tribute to feudal lords. These costs will, of course, be passed on to working families. So every December, Washington will, in effect, rob the Cratchits to pay Mr. Scrooge and his lobbyists in Washington.

Yet, even all this is squeaky-clean legislating compared to this farm bill's most offensive feature—its bullying, disenfranchising shakedown of the American West. Most Americans who live east of the Mississippi have no idea that most of the land west of the great river is owned by the Federal Government. I don't mean national parks, protected wilderness, national monuments, and the like. We have a lot of those and we love them. But that is a fraction of a fraction of the land I am talking about. I am just talking about garden-variety land—the kind that is privately owned in every neighborhood and community across the country. More than 50 percent of all of the land west of the Mississippi River is controlled by a Federal bureaucracy and it cannot be developed: no homes, no businesses, no communities or community centers, no farms or farmers markets, no hospitals or colleges or schools, no Little League fields, no playgrounds, nothing.

In my own State, it is 63 percent of the land. In Daggett County, it is 81 percent. In Wayne County, it is 85 percent. In Garfield County, it is 90 percent. Ninety percent of the land in Garfield County isn't theirs. In communities such as these, financing local government is a huge challenge. There, as in the East, local government is funded primarily by property taxes. But in counties and towns where the Federal Government owns 70, 80, or even 90 percent of the land, there simply isn't enough private property to tax to fund basic local services: another sheriff's deputy to police their streets, another truck or ambulance to save their lives and protect their property from fires, another teacher to educate their children.

To compensate local governments for the tax revenue Washington unfairly denies them, Congress created—as only Congress could—the PILT program. PILT stands for Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

Under PILT, Congress sends a few cents on the dollar out West every year to make up for lost property taxes. There is no guaranteed amount. Washington just sends what Washington feels like sending.

Local governments across the Western United States, and especially in counties such as Garfield, Daggett, and Wayne County, UT, completely depend on Congress making good on this promise. Given this situation, there are three possible courses of congressional action:

First, Congress could do the right thing and transfer the land to the States that want it.

Second, Congress could compromise and fully compensate western communities for the growth and opportunity current law denies them.

But in this bill it is neither. Congress instead chooses option three: lording its power over western communities to extort political concessions from them, like some two-bit protection racket. ''That's a nice fire department you got there,'' Congress effectively says to many western communities. ''Nice school your kids have. It would be a shame if anything should happen to it.''

These States and communities are looking for nothing more than certainty and equality under the law. Yet Congress treats these not as rights to be protected but as vulnerabilities to be shamelessly exploited.

For weeks I have been on the phone with county commissioners who feel they have no choice but to support a policy they know doesn't work. This bill takes away their ability to plan and budget with certainty and forces them to come back to Congress, hat in hand, every year. County commissioners know this is no way to run a community.

I share their frustration, and I applaud their commitment to their neighbors and their communities. I am convinced that in the long run, the best way to protect these communities is to find a real permanent solution—one that gives them the certainty and the equality under the law they deserve.

My vote against the farm bill will be a vote to rescue Utahns from second-class citizenship and local communities in my State from permanent dependence on the whims of faraway politicians and bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

For all the talk we hear in this Chamber about inequality, we nonetheless seem oblivious to its causes. This bill—and thousands of other bills, laws, and regulations like it—are themselves the root cause of our shortage of opportunity in America today. The end result of this legislation will be to disenfranchise and extort the American people to benefit special interests, to enrich the well-connected at the expense of the disconnected.

The true cost of that transaction—just another forced deposit and withdrawal from Washington's dysfunctional favored bank—is a lot more than $956 billion. The true cost of this kind of unequal cronyist policymaking is the trust of the American people in the legitimacy of our political institutions, in the fairness of our economy, and in the good faith of their countrymen.

Our constitutional republic, our free enterprise economy, and our voluntary civil society depend absolutely on the equality of all Americans under the law, the equality of all citizen opportunity to pursue happiness in their own communities, according to their own values, each on a level playing field with everyone else. This legislation dangerously subverts that principle and mocks any patriot who still holds it dear.

All Americans may be equal but—as George Orwell might put it if he were here today—under the farm bill some Americans are simply more equal than others.

I will not be a part of it, and I encourage my colleagues to recognize

that there is another way, there is a better way, a new approach that remembers what—and whom—we are supposed to really stand for.

What we are supposed to stand for is deliberation—open debate and transparent amendments on this floor, in this Chamber. These programs should not be coupled to shield them from scrutiny and protect them from reform. If we need food stamps to fight poverty and farm subsidies to maintain our food supply, let those programs stand on their own merits or not at all.

Furthermore, the land out West is not going anywhere. This should be an opportunity for us to bring our people together, not turn our regions against each other and turn the right to local government into a dangerous political football.

It is time to have a serious debate about a permanent solution to federally-owned lands which can improve economic opportunity and mobility while reducing the national debt and deficit. All the evidence in this farm bill to the contrary, I believe we are capable of finding such a solution.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Senator BOOKER for his maiden speech. It is great to have him with us, and I thank Senator BOOKER also for calling upon the better angels in all of us to do what is right. Opportunity and fairness for all are not just empty words. They are words to live by and words to live up to.

Today I rise to add my support for extending unemployment benefits to those among us who need and deserve this lifeline.

In December over 2,000 Hawaii workers lost their unemployment benefits. Since then about 250 more Hawaii workers are losing their benefits every week.

In 2008 our country was plunged into the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression. Many lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Many are still unemployed. Since 2008 unemployment benefits have kept over 11 million people out of poverty. Unemployed workers spend their benefits immediately on food and other necessities. Unemployment benefits go immediately into the local economy. Every dollar of spending on unemployment benefits generates almost $1.60 in local economic activity.

But this isn't just about numbers. For people struggling to find work, emergency unemployment insurance is a vital safety net. It can mean the difference between being able to get back on your feet or falling into poverty. These programs provide real hope and real opportunity for people. I know this because I have lived it.

My mother raised three children by herself as a single parent. Most of us have relied upon or know families who have used the earned unemployment assistance they paid for. When my mother lost her job through no fault of her own, her unemployment checks went for rent and putting food on the table for her three children while she searched for work. So I know the anxiety when the family breadwinner loses her job, when every dime makes a difference.

Those who say people on unemployment are lazy or don't want to work are insulting and injuring millions of Americans, about whom nothing could be further from the truth.

High unemployment particularly hurts women. Among female heads of households, the U.S. unemployment rate was 8.7 percent in December. That is two points higher than the 6.7 percent unemployment rate for the Nation as a whole. Neither one of these statistics takes into account workers who have given up looking for work. We should support a short-term extension of unemployment benefits while Congress works on a needed longer-term bill.

Last Friday President Obama announced a new effort to support the long-term unemployed. He gathered over 300 companies who have signed onto a set of best practices for recruiting and hiring unemployed—especially those long-term unemployed—to prevent discrimination against these Americans.

The Federal Government will lead by example in a new Presidential memorandum to improve its own recruiting and hiring of long-term unemployed people. Congress can do its part by updating and strengthening job-training programs, such as through the Workforce Investment Act which we will take up later this year. For right now, millions of families are counting on us to extend a vital life line to them. I urge my colleagues to support extending unemployment benefits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise this evening to discuss the Agricultural Act of 2014—the farm bill conference report.

This legislation has been delayed over 2½ years, weighing the entire time on the minds of farmers and ranchers all across the country.

Last Tuesday I came to the floor to explain why I was the only Senator on the farm bill conference not to sign the conference report and why I cannot in good conscience support this legislation. I am here today to go beyond my philosophical concerns with the direction of the legislation, and I will instead focus on how the farm bill will negatively impact agriculture in my home State of Kansas, as well as other States.

The farm bill is not a simple reauthorization or continuation of our Nation's farm and food programs. We have already done that once with the 1-year extension of the 2008 bill. Instead, the legislation before us should be a wholesale rewrite of the programs and policies at the Department of Agriculture.

When this bill is signed into law by the President and fully implemented, our producers will have to make choices among new safety net programs, new regulations, and new rules. Some of these choices will happen only once and will be irrevocable. They cannot be changed for the next 5 years. This is a 5-year bill. We owe it to these farmers, ranchers, small business owners, as well as to the next generation of producers to get this legislation right. Unfortunately, I believe the Congress has missed the mark in that the conference report goes backwards toward protectionist subsidy programs instead of forward with innovative and responsible solutions.

I am not alone in that assessment. As reported by the Kansas City Star last Friday, January 31, all four Kansas House members voted ''no'' on what is arguably the single most important piece of Federal legislation in Kansas. Now, that should grab everybody in America's attention. The entire House delegation from the wheat State was united in opposing this version of the farm bill.

It is not that we do not appreciate agriculture or the producers and their families in our State. It is entirely the opposite. We care so much that after 3 years of work, we will not settle for supporting backwards legislation just to get something done. I call it a look in the rearview mirror.

I understand compromises were made. But I cannot support a bill which marches backwards toward producers making bad decisions based off of government subsidies, retaliation against our livestock producers, and, once again, agriculture taking a disproportionate cut in spending compared—yes—to Federal nutrition programs.

When Chairperson STABENOW and I started the process of rewriting the farm bill, Kansas producers, regardless of what they planted, over and over again said their number one priority and concern was the availability of crop insurance which protects in case of disaster. They were also fully aware that direct payments would no longer be available to them, and most were OK with that direction. Kansas producers did not ask for a continuation of a target-priced subsidy program and they certainly did not want Congress to raise the target prices of all commodities.

Two years ago, in 2012, the Senate Agriculture Committee and the full Senate passed a farm bill that ended the countercyclical and commodity subsidy programs. If signed into law, the 2012 Senate farm bill would have taken the Federal Government and the Department of Agriculture out of the business of sending signals to producers, essentially telling them what crops to plant. Unfortunately, that reform was never fully realized.

We have something called the new Price Loss Coverage Program that is contained in this conference report. It

sets high fixed target prices and subsidies for all commodities and regions of the country.

Last week, after the final details of the bill were released, I talked with a young producer near Dodge City, my hometown, who is a member of my volunteer agriculture advisory council. I fondly refer to them as my ''ag posse.''

With the current cash price for wheat at the Dodge City grain elevator around $6 and a target price guaranteed for wheat set at $5.50 a bushel for the next 5 years, I asked this young, successful, and informed producer: What are you going to plant? What he told me should not surprise anyone in this body—or anyone. He said: Pat, I am going to plant wheat for the government subsidy.

His answer only reinforces one of my biggest concerns with this conference report. When the Federal Government guarantees producers a subsidy triggered off a target price, reference price, a countercylical price—whatever you want to call it—it always has and always will lead to planting and marketing distortions.

Today many producers have a college or advanced degree, often in business. They are going to evaluate the programs at the Department of Agriculture and make decisions that benefit their business's bottom line.

Instead of planting grain sorghum or corn or soybeans, my friend in western Kansas already knows he is going to plant the crop he is guaranteed to receive the highest subsidy payment from the government, not from the market. In this case, he plans to plant wheat at $5.50 per bushel over corn which has a target price of $3.70 a bushel.

I have yet to hear one explanation for why Congress is not only including target prices for corn, wheat, sorghum, soybeans, rice, peanuts, and barley but raising and fixing their prices regardless of movements in the market.

Kansas is the breadbasket of the world. So you might think Kansas producers planting more wheat would be a good thing; however, simple economics and history demonstrate why this is such a dangerous road for the Federal Government to take.

When all producers in Kansas and the rest of America have the same price guarantees and signals to plant wheat—no matter where you are—and the majority makes the business decision to follow subsidy signals instead of the market, over time there will undoubtedly be more production than global demand or otherwise.

We will have a surplus of wheat leading to lower wheat prices. That could normally be corrected by market signals, but with the fixed target price, farmers will continue to plant wheat for the subsidy—that subsidy guarantee—leading to further overproduction and even lower crop prices. We have been there before, and that is why we tried to reform the program several farm bills back.

This cycle of overproduction, low grain prices, and expensive support payments could eventually lead back to the days of mandatory quotas and acreage allotments—it has happened before—known as set-asides, paying farmers not to grow anything. We don't need to go back to those days. Our producers in Kansas want none of that from their Federal Government.

Besides having high fixed target prices, the new Price Loss Coverage Program sets the price guarantees so high that some are at or above the producer's cost of production. This would mean the government is essentially subsidizing a producer so much that they are guaranteed to make a profit if they have a normal or average year.

It gets worse. The early analysis I have seen shows that the target prices are high enough that rice, peanuts, and barley growers will receive a subsidy payment at least 75 percent of any given year, likely triggering a payment 4 out of the next 5 years.

Other commodities are not treated as favorably. Wheat prices are likely to trigger a payment, on average, only 35 percent of the time and soybeans less than 15 percent.

What that tells me is that the new target price guarantees are set high enough for a few commodities to trigger subsidy payments with a high frequency.

Folks, this is no longer a risk-management tool or part of a responsible safety net. Make no mistake, the Price Loss Coverage Program is nothing more than a profit protection program from some of our commodity growers.

The lone commodity that has moved out of the price supports entirely was forced to after learning the lesson the hard way.

In 2002, the World Trade Organization ruled against the United States for cotton programs, including a decoupled target price subsidy. In a settlement with Brazil, we have been paying their producers $147 million a year for damages. We are still paying them.

As much as I disagree with the backward direction of the commodity title, Kansas livestock producers may have more beef with this conference report. Kansas is in the heart of cattle country. After 3 years of drought, livestock producers in my home State are waiting for disaster assistance that has been unnecessarily delayed for over 3 years.

Yet when taking the full conference report under consideration, both the Kansas Livestock Association and the Kansas Pork Association strongly oppose this bill. Why?

In a letter sent to me by Jeff Sternberger, president of the Kansas Livestock Association, he says:

> We are deeply disappointed the report does not address our two priority issues, mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, GIPSA, rule on cattle marketing.

Mandatory country-of-origin labeling, or COOL, is a marketing program; however, our closest trading partners have found the practice anything but cool. Canada and Mexico are two of our biggest and historically strong markets for U.S. beef, pork, and chicken exports. In 2012 alone, Canada imported over $1 billion worth of U.S. beef and Mexico imported over $800 million.

If we do not come into compliance, as required by the World Trade Organization, Canada and Mexico will retaliate against the United States.

Without these markets, Kansas livestock producers will lose value on their products, negatively impacting one of the biggest drivers of our State's economy. Unfortunately, our efforts to fix COOL in the farm bill conference committee fell short—to the displeasure of our livestock producers and trading partners.

The GIPSA rule on livestock marketing should have been addressed in the final farm bill conference report as well. The House version of the farm bill had strong provisions that would have let our livestock producers make their own marketing decisions instead of GIPSA. Yet the provisions were left entirely out of the conference report with no explanation or transparency—behind closed doors.

Finally, I have to address a major inequality in the final conference report; that is, nutrition spending. When the Congressional Budget Office released their official estimate of the budgetary effects of this agriculture act, I was more than disappointed.

According to their letter:

> CBO estimates that direct spending stemming from the programs authorized by the conference agreement would total $956 billion over the 2014 to 2023 period, of which $756 billion would be for nutrition programs.

That is almost $800 billion. By the way, that lower figure is a bet on the economy improving and people getting off the SNAP program, which would certainly be good but is not certain.

When you do the math, that means 79 percent—almost 80 percent—of the total spending in the farm bill will go to nutrition programs, including SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The final compromise includes $8 billion in food stamp savings mainly from tightening the Low-Income Heating and Assistance Program, the infamous LIHEAP loophole, and that is a good thing. States were gaming the system. I am all for that, but that amounts to a 1-percent reduction to the nutrition spending out of a $750 billion program if you believe the projections. I think it is probably more toward $800 billion.

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry recently released a statement with the headline ''Deficit Reduction: The 2014 Farm Bill,'' showcasing the savings in this legislation. The release highlights the inequality between farm and food programs:

> Farm subsidy programs were cut far more significantly than any other area of the budget under the Agriculture Committee's

jurisdiction. By comparison, farm subsidy programs were cut by 31 percent, while nutrition programs were reduced 1 percent.

You heard that right. Farmers, ranchers, farm broadcasters listening in, you heard that right. The farm bill once again prioritizes spending for food stamps over all other Department of Agriculture programs, including important conservation programs, research programs, and rural development programs.

I am fine with reducing farm subsidies such as the target price program, but we should have included additional reforms to the nutritional programs, which we tried to do—in several votes—in a reasonable and responsible manner. We were not touching anybody's benefits; we were just looking at the eligibility requirements. But the conference principals decided on the final compromise—again behind closed doors.

While we all want to provide much needed certainty to producers—goodness knows it is been a long time since we had a farm bill in place—the conference missed an opportunity for greater and necessary reforms to our Nation's farm programs, burdensome regulations on livestock producers, and Federal nutrition programs.

After over 3 years of deliberation and disputes over the farm bill, our producers, consumers, taxpayers, and global trading partners expect and deserve more than what is found in this conference report.

As a conferee, I did not sign the conference report last week. That didn't give me any pleasure. As a Kansan and a Senator from a large agriculture State, I am going to vote against this rearview mirror legislation for all the reasons I have itemized.

Having said that, I do wish to take a moment to personally thank Chairperson STABENOW and Chairman LUCAS, over in the House, for their unwavering drive and perseverance to finalize a farm bill. It is one thing for me to stand and criticize it and find in my heart and my mind and on behalf of my Kansas producers to vote no because I think that is the right vote, but I also know they have endeavored—Chairman STABENOW and Chairman LUCAS—to at least get a bill. It is a tall task to get a majority of the Members of Congress to understand that the farm bill is not simply a bill that you pay off.

I can remember when I was chairman of the committee over in the House and I asked a colleague to help me on the farm bill. He said: Why don't you just pay it? That indicated his broad knowledge of the farm bill at that particular time.

The farm bill is not simply a bill you just pay off. It instead represents important legislation for both urban, rural States and districts and the stability of the world, if you will, knowing we have to feed 9 billion people in the next several decades. At last, the Chairs have beaten all the odds and are on the verge of completing a very complicated and time-consuming undertaking, to say the least.

I must also thank my colleagues and friends on the House and Senate agriculture committees for their knowledge, their expertise, and their diverse perspectives on agriculture. It is going to be really hard to imagine that many of the faces in the Senate agriculture committee room will not be there in person for the next farm bill 5 years down the road—Senator TOM HARKIN, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS, both of whom will be sorely missed as they have both led the committee in their respective caucuses through previous farms bills. However, they will literally ''watch over'' the committee for years to come, because their portraits are on the wall, hanging just above us. I think their eyes move when we consider amendments.

Senator MAX BAUCUS will continue his service to the country as the next Ambassador to China, but we will miss his advice and counsel in the committee.

Finally, it is hard to describe the void that will be created with the departure of Senator MIKE JOHANNS of Nebraska. As the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, he has seen both sides of the farm bill, implementing one and writing another. Even though Nebraska left the Big 12 for the Big 10, this K-State fan can admit we will all miss having this champion from the Cornhusker State around.

So although I will not vote for the farm bill conference report, I promise to all of Kansas agriculture that I fully appreciate the need for a farm bill, especially one that has been delayed for years. But while we need a farm bill, we do not need this farm bill.

I truly respect the farmers and ranchers and everybody connected with agriculture for what they do as a profession for our economy and for global stability in a troubled and angry world. I just wish the rest of this Senate would do the same thing. I will continue to work and to advocate and to champion agriculture on their behalf every single day.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I wish to commend the junior Senator from New Jersey on his first speech on the Senate floor. He brings a strong voice to the U.S. Senate. Today he raises that voice for our friends and neighbors who need it, and I am proud to stand alongside him.

Just 5 years ago middle-class families got hammered by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. These families didn't cause the crisis. They worked hard and played by the rules. But they ended up paying the price for Wall Street's wild risk-taking and Washington's failed oversight. People lost jobs, lost savings, lost homes. Far too many of them are still struggling.

For these families every dollar counts. An extra couple of hundred dollars a week can keep food on the table or the heat on during cold winter months. It can mean the difference between making the rent or mortgage payment or being out on the street.

That is what emergency unemployment insurance is for—to give folks the little bit of help they need to keep their heads above water while they search for a job. Unemployment insurance represents our commitment as a country that we will pitch in when our friends and neighbors have fallen on rough times, knowing they would do the same for us.

So far, Republicans seem determined to break that commitment. Because of Republican filibusters, 1.6 million Americans and counting have lost access to unemployment insurance since the end of last year, including more than 60,000 people in Massachusetts. Their obstruction means we cannot fulfill our commitment to the families who need it most.

My Republican colleagues should be looking for a way to say yes—yes to helping middle-class American families and their 2.3 million children who rely on unemployment insurance. But, once again, they just want a way to say no.

Extending unemployment insurance should be a simple matter. It happened five times during the Bush administration and not once—not once—did Republicans demand that the costs be offset by cuts or revenue increases elsewhere. But the Republicans have insisted on a different standard this time, filibustering because the extension of benefits wasn't offset. Democrats thought this was wrong, but we compromised and we agreed to offset the cost. So did we have a deal? No. The Republicans refused to take yes for an answer and filibustered again.

Why would Republicans block the extension of unemployment benefits? Some seem to believe unemployment insurance is actually bad for struggling families. One Republican Senator recently said emergency unemployment insurance does a ''disservice'' to people because it causes them to ''become part of this perpetual unemployed group in our economy.'' Last year's Republican Vice Presidential nominee, Congressman RYAN, said that Federal safety net programs such as unemployment insurance are like ''a hammock, which lulls able-bodied people into lives of complacency and dependency.''

This is an insult to hard-working people across this country—people who are doing their best and can't find a job.

This is an insult to people such as Terri, a 41-year-old resident of Gardner, MA, who lost her job last year. Here is what she wrote to me after Congress let the unemployment insurance program expire:

[M]y employer suddenly let me go and I found myself unemployed for the first time since my very first part-time job at 15. I have been diligently looking for work, applying everywhere, but I haven't had any job offers . . .

She writes that unemployment insurance:

. . . is all we have. I'm already on the brink of losing my home, we are struggling to hang on to what very little we have. . . . I know I'm one of 1.3 million faces, but I'm a face from near your home. I'm a face that never thought I'd be in this situation. I'm a face that needs the help of my government's services that I have paid into for many, many years. I'm a face that has done everything I'm supposed to—but I feel like I've fallen aside and no one sees me.

I'm not an abuser of the system. I'm someone who really needs my government to be there for me now. Please see me.

Terri isn't looking for a life of complacency and dependency. And she is not the exception. A person can't get unemployment benefits unless they prove they lost their job through no fault of their own, and they prove they are actively looking for work. Unemployment insurance is a critical lifeline for people who are trying their hardest and need a little help—a recognition that Wall Street and Washington caused the financial crisis but Main Street is still paying the price.

And there is the rub. Republicans line up to protect billions in tax breaks and subsidies for big corporations with armies of lobbyists, but they can't find a way to help struggling families get back on their feet.

People such as Terri are hurting. They worked hard their whole lives and paid into the system, and after the worst economic crisis in generations, they are searching for jobs and scrambling to stay in the middle class. They are not looking for a handout; they are looking for a chance to rebuild their lives. They would be there for us; we should be there for them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am reminded even at this late hour, when most of the world has moved on to other pursuits, what a great privilege it is to be with two magnificent voices and advocates for fairness and economic opportunity: Senator WARREN of Massachusetts, and my very good friend, Senator BOOKER of New Jersey, on his first occasion here on the floor. I feel very blessed and fortunate and privileged to be here with them. I feel that way at any moment on this floor in this body but particularly as we face this great challenge ahead: how to preserve and enhance our middle class in America; how to make sure America fulfills its great promise Senator BOOKER evoked so eloquently, going back to the days of George Washington; and now, with great leaders facing many of the same kinds of basic questions about whether we can provide that opportunity going forward, whether we are equal to the task in an increasingly complex society.

Just today, in the New York Times, there was a very profound and telling story about markets losing middle-class consumers. Only the high-end and the low-end retailers are being able to find markets for their products because our middle class is dwindling, squeezed by the vise of an increasingly desperate situation. How desperate it is for people who are depending now on unemployment insurance, as they see the deadlines for them approaching and they know they will lose roofs over their heads, meals on their table, for families they are struggling to keep together. As Senator BOOKER and Senator WARREN said so well, the unfairness of the economic crisis caused by Wall Street and Washington but visited upon Main Street America, middle-class America, mainstream America, still struggling to recover.

We know the unemployment we face today is deeper and more intractable than at any other time in our history. Long-term unemployment is larger percentagewise than it has been in previous recessions. That is a tragedy for those families but also for our economy, because those consumers are lost to the retailers and to the mainstream small- and middle-sized businesses that depend on them to grow and hire more people.

In Connecticut, as of last month, almost half of all of the individuals who have suffered a job loss—43.6 percent—were unable to find work for 6 months or more. That is more than 60,000 people. Those numbers don't tell the stories. They are not the voices and faces I have seen who are depending on a meager $300 a week and who have lost even that amount.

Rosa Dicker, who has a deep knowledge of health care reform from her previous work, has received only three call-back interviews out of 500 jobs she has sought, and her job search lasted almost a year. Michael Kubica, who went back to get his MBA after years of experience in insurance and publishing, and, again, has been repeatedly turned away for employment. Alicia Nesbitt, proud to have been employed continuously from the age of 16—decades ago—recently found herself applying for food stamps. Then, of course, there is Katherine Hacket of Moodus, CT, who joined the President recently to speak out about the need for extending these benefits. Katherine's family has sacrificed greatly for this Nation, because she has not one but two children serving in our military. Yet, because of Congress's inaction, Katherine is struggling to pay for food and heating bills during her job search.

There are good guys out there helping people to find jobs. Capital Workforce Partners has done tremendous work. I have met with them and other job creators, as well as job seekers around Connecticut, and sometimes those job searches actually succeed, because people are able to sustain their lives and continue to search for work.

Erin Londen, one of the constituents whom I met as I have gone around the State, has found work after 10 months of unemployment. She writes:

I could not be happier! I just love my new job, it is everything I was looking for.

She is not a person who wanted to be without work. She is not a person who sought to be unemployed for 10 months. None of these people—none of the people on long-term unemployment insurance—want to be without work. She wrote to me:

It can take up to three months to get an interview. Then if you have follow-up, it could be another month. So I do not think it is reasonable to only offer six months of unemployment benefits.

That pretty much says it.

I want to emphasize one aspect of this problem that I think is absolutely unconscionable for this Nation to tolerate, and that is the high unemployment rate among our veterans.

This situation for post-9/11 veterans is beyond comprehension and beyond accepting. The male post-9/11 veterans in particular face rates of 8.6 percent, almost 2 points above the national average. Many of these veterans have been out of work for more than 6 months.

Long-term unemployment among our veterans is a scourge that this Congress has an obligation to address. Many of them left good-paying jobs. They came back to a nation that said it was grateful, and now they find no jobs and no unemployment insurance to keep a roof over their head and food on their table.

That is why I have introduced the VOW to Hire Heroes Act that would extend a key tax credit to incentivize companies to hire veterans. This credit expired last year, but veteran unemployment remains a serious problem, and I urge the Congress again to pass it. I have been joined by Senator BEGICH and Senator UDALL of New Mexico in writing to the Finance Committee to urge it to approve this measure so we can bring it to the floor.

I want to thank AMVETS as well for its support on a measure that is, unfortunately, increasingly important; that is, to ban discrimination against veterans in both employment and housing. Believe it or not, this phenomenon occurs. Most would find it incredible. Yet a measure is necessary to ban discrimination against men and women who served in uniform, who served and sacrificed, who have given to this Nation.

Discrimination, unfortunately, is also a fact of life against the long-term unemployed. I have proposed again and reintroduced the Fair Employment Opportunity Act, which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of employment status.

Discrimination has been established by various studies—researchers at Northeastern University. Similar studies involving academics at Yale, the University of Chicago, and the University of Toronto have found that the long-term unemployed—the longer they have been unemployed—are much more likely to be victims of discrimination. I want to thank seven cosponsors on this bill: Senators MARKEY, GILLIBRAND, SANDERS, SHAHEEN, MURPHY, MENENDEZ, and BROWN. I urge other colleagues to support it as well. f

Finally, I want to thank again Senator BOOKER. He honors not only his own long history of public service but also the memory of our late colleague, our extraordinary and esteemed colleague, and my wonderful mentor and friend, Frank Lautenberg. He joins the ranks of others in the Senate who are fighting for the needs of the economically disadvantaged—people, as he said so eloquently, who play by the rules. They believe in this country, its ideals, its goals, and they want to serve it and give back and contribute.

This Nation depends on a covenant. It is the covenant that each of our generations leaves the country better for the one that follows—not only that the country is better for the next generation, but that each of our generations, on our watch, pledges to do better.

That is the reason we need to extend unemployment insurance. Without it, we will be a lesser nation, not just economically but in fairness and morality as well. I thank Senator BOOKER for reminding us of that fundamental fact about our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I would like to briefly say thank you to my fellow Senators who took time to come and listen to my maiden speech but especially those who also spoke on the issue as well. They spoke with eloquence. They spoke poignantly about people in their State. And I pray they spoke persuasively.

I thank Senator HIRONO, Senator MENENDEZ, my senior Senator, especially. I thank Senator WARREN and Senator BLUMENTHAL, who are still here. I thank, also, Senator JACK REED and Senate Majority Leader REID, as well, for their working on this issue.

I finally want to say that I have already gotten word from people who actually saw some of the speeches from myself and my colleagues that even the words alone made a difference to them. At least they felt someone heard them, is understanding what they are going through. But that urgency persists, and my hope is that we, working together, can find a way to extend these benefits.

Thank you very much.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

FEDERAL COAL PROGRAM INVESTIGATION

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the coal under our Federal public lands is a tremendously valuable asset that belongs to the American people. For nearly my entire career in Congress, I have been working to ensure that we do not shortchange taxpayers by giving this asset away to the coal companies for bargain-basement prices. As we are facing Federal deficits and budget cuts for programs that benefit hard-working, middle-class families, we need to ensure more than ever that we are not giving a windfall to coal companies on the backs of taxpayers in Massachusetts and across the Nation by selling this public coal for less than it is worth.

In 1982, following coal lease sales by the Department of the Interior on public lands in the Powder River Basin, PRB, in Wyoming and Montana, I asked the Government Accountability Office, GAO, to investigate whether taxpayers had received a proper return in these lease sales. The GAO found that this Federal coal was sold for pennies on the dollar. The GAO report concluded that the Interior Department had sold this public coal in the Powder River Basin for $100 million less than it was worth. Following that revelation, there were a number of recommendations made to reform the Federal coal leasing program and ensure that taxpayers were protected. Unfortunately, I have concerns that similar problems with the Federal coal program may persist today at the expense of taxpayers in Massachusetts and around the country.

This week, I am releasing a new public GAO report on the Federal coal leasing program. This is the first time in 20 years that the GAO has evaluated this program and it is well overdue.

The findings in the latest GAO report highlight the fact that there still is a lack of competition for Federal coal leases. This dearth of competition amongst coal companies means that it is the Interior Department, and not the market, that is ensuring a fair price is set for these valuable resources. To give you an idea of the magnitude of this issue, for every cent per ton that coal companies decrease their bids for the largest coal leases, it could mean the loss of nearly $7 million for the American people. We have to act to correct the issues identified in the report and make sure national resources are not being given away at below market prices.

The GAO has found that the Interior Department is not properly considering the potential of future exports of this coal from Federal leases. These coal leases are issued for 20 years and can be further extended. Coal exports for electricity generation in other countries have doubled in just a few years. Companies want to sell U.S. coal overseas to China and European markets to increase their profits. If we are not properly valuing the possibility that coal exports to higher priced markets will continue to increase, we risk not only costing taxpayers money but also exacerbating climate change by, in effect, subsidizing coal companies to send more coal abroad to be burned in dirty power plants.

Moreover, the GAO has concluded in its public report that the Interior Department lacks transparency and is not providing sufficient information to the public on the Federal coal leasing program. I am extremely concerned that a lack of transparency and public information for the American people and for the Congress is inhibiting proper oversight of this important program to protect taxpayers.

When I was serving as ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I began an oversight inquiry into the Federal coal leasing program in July 2012. While the Department has provided me, and my staff has reviewed, hundreds of pages of leasing documents, certain critical information necessary to properly evaluate this program has been withheld. As a result, the Interior Department is not providing information on the Federal coal program to the Congress in a way that allows for proper oversight. While the intent of this restriction may be to protect the integrity of future lease sales, the effect is to hamper congressional oversight.

As part of its investigation, the GAO released two reports to me, one that is public and one that is not able to be made public. GAO kept one of these reports nonpublic because the Interior Department believes that the proprietary information contained in the nonpublic report could harm the integrity of future lease sales. I believe that increased transparency with these coal lease sales would increase the integrity of the process, not lessen it. It would be very helpful for the American people to be able to review this information. But even if that is not possible because of concerns about proprietary information, Senators should be able to review this information and debate it in order to ensure that taxpayers are protected. Unfortunately, we are not able to have that debate on the floor of the Senate for the American people. That is wrong and very troubling.

It is concerning to me that an agency would seek to withhold this sort of information from Congress. Without this information, we cannot make a legislative decision about whether the statutes governing coal leasing on Federal lands are working as intended and whether the Department is administering them properly.

Based on my staff's examination of the materials provided to me by the Department and included in the nonpublic report issued to me by the GAO, it appears that the Interior Department may be consistently undervaluing Federal coal leases. The GAO report found that the Interior Department is using information that is outdated in valuing coal leases. Based on

the examination of the materials provided to me, I believe that this problem may be even greater than stated in the GAO report. I am concerned that the Department may be using extremely outdated information and boilerplate analysis that does not reflect current market conditions.

These are tremendously serious problems. Based on my staff's examination of the materials, I believe that using appropriate market calculations and assumptions in some recent coal lease sales could potentially have yielded $200 million more for the American people and possibly hundreds of millions of dollars more.

Therefore, I am transmitting two letters to the Interior Department, one that I am able to release publicly and one that I cannot, which seek answers to how the Department will respond to the recommendations in the GAO report and other issues involved in Federal coal leasing. I believe that until the questions and issues that I have raised in my letters to the Department are properly addressed to guarantee sufficient taxpayer protections are in place, the Interior Department should temporarily suspend further Federal coal leasing. I will also be introducing legislation in the future to reform the Federal coal program to guarantee a fair return for the American people.

Congress needs to be able to conduct the necessary oversight to ensure that the problems we have seen in the Federal coal program in the past do not continue. Until that happens we cannot assure taxpayers in Massachusetts and every State that they are getting a fair return on this public resource that they own. Until that happens, we lack the assurances that we are not subsidizing coal companies to increase carbon pollution by sending our coal overseas. It is time for the Congress to be able to conduct the oversight of this program that is required.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 5:11 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1901. An act to authorize the President to extend the term of the nuclear energy agreement with the Republic of Korea until March 19, 2016.

H.R. 2860. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management may use amounts in the revolving fund of the Office to fund audits, investigations, and oversight activities, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1977. A bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, relating to an annual adjustment of retired pay for members of the Armed Forces under the age of 62, and to provide an offset.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1982. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4477. A communication from the Chief of the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Automated Data Processing and Information Retrieval Systems Requirements: System Testing'' (RIN0584–AD99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4478. A communication from the Chief of the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Certification of Compliance With Meal Requirements for the National School Lunch Program Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010'' (RIN0584–AE15) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4479. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dinotefuran; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions'' (FRL No. 9402–8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4480. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Acetochlor; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9904–19) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4481. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Indaziflam; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9903–88) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4482. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standards of Conduct and Referral of Known Suspected Criminal Violations; Standards of Conduct'' (RIN3052–AC44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4483. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–4484. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of a completion date of April 2014 for a report relative to the Department of Defense purchases from foreign entities for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4485. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Barriers to Nontraditional Suppliers to the Department of Defense''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4486. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense (DoD) intending to assign women to previously closed positions in the Army; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4487. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Proposal Adequacy Checklist Revision'' ((RIN0750–AI15) (DFARS Case 2013–D033)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4488. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Limitation on Use of Cost-reimbursement Line Items'' ((RIN0750–AI16) (DFARS Case 2013–D016)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4489. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Libya that was originally declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4490. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004, relative to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4491. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report to Congress describing actions taken to support and preserve Minority Depository Institutions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4492. A communication from the Director, Office of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Financial Research's annual report on activities of the office to date; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4493. A communication from the Director, Office of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Financial Research's 2013 Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4494. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4495. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 3, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4496. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4497. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Treatment of Certain Collateralized Debt Obligations Backed Primarily by Trust Preferred Securities with Regard to Prohibitions and Restrictions on Certain Interests In, and Relationships With, Hedge Funds and Private Equity Funds'' (RIN3235–AL52) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4498. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA–2013–0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 22, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4499. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Community Reinvestment Act Regulations'' (RIN3064–AD90) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 24, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4500. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Prohibitions and Restrictions on Proprietary Trading and Certain Interests In, and Relationships With, Hedge Funds and Private Equity Funds'' (RIN7100–AD61 and FRB Docket No. R–1432) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4501. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to transnational criminal organizations that was declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4502. A communication from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting draft legislation entitled ''Antarctic Environmental Liability Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4503. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, the report of a draft bill entitled ''U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Protection Act'' received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 6, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4504. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, prospectuses that support the Administration's fiscal year 2014 Capital Investment and Leasing Program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4505. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dispositioning Boiling Water Reactor Licensee Noncompliance with Technical Specification Containment Requirements During Operations with a Potential for Draining the Reactor Vessel'' (EGM 11–003, Revision 2) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4506. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Generic Letter 2008–1, Managing Gas Accumulation'' (NRC–2013–0173) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4507. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks: HI–STORM 100 Cask System; Amendment No. 9'' (RIN3150–AJ12) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4508. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Decommissioning Financial Assurance Instrument Security Program'' (MD 8.12) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4509. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes to Dispute Procedures'' (FRL No. 9803–9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4510. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Title V Operating Permit Program; State of Iowa'' (FRL No. 9905–21–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4511. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Section 110(a)(2) Infrastructure Requirements for the 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards'' (FRL No. 9905–62–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4512. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana; Consent Decree Requirements'' (FRL No. 9905–54–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4513. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standards'' (FRL No. 9905–63–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4514. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Waste Management System; Modification of the Hazardous Waste Manifest System; Electronic Manifests'' (FRL No. 9828–9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4515. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2013 Revisions to the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Rule and Final Confidentiality Determinations for New or Substantially Revised Data Elements'' (FRL No. 9905–71–OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4516. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; North Carolina: Non-interference Demonstration for Removal of Federal Low-Reid Vapor Pressure Requirement for the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Area'' (FRL No. 9905–70–Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4517. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Kansas; Annual Emissions Fee and Annual Emissions Inventory'' (FRL No. 9905–66–Region 7) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4518. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District'' (FRL No.

9904–02–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4519. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Quality Implementation Plan; Alabama; Attainment Plan for the Troy Area 2008 Lead Nonattainment Area'' (FRL No. 9904–91–Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 23, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1980. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program and to promote quality care; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1981. A bill to provide that the rules of the Federal Communications Commission relating to preserving the open Internet and broadband industry practices shall be restored to effect until the date when the Commission takes final action in the proceedings on such rules that were remanded to the Commission by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1982. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 1983. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation, to convey, by quitclaim deed, to the City of Fernley, Nevada, all right, title, and interest of the United States, to any Federal land within that city that is under the jurisdiction of either of those agencies; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KIRK:

S. 1984. A bill to enhance penalties for computer crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 1985. A bill to reauthorize and modify the pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs under which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides health services to veterans through qualifying non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1986. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide for outreach, and coordination of services, to veterans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 114

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 114, a bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy.

S. 315

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to reauthorize and extend the Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research, and Education Amendments of 2008.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 489, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to increase and adjust for inflation the maximum value of articles that may be imported duty-free by one person on one day, and for other purposes.

S. 1033

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1033, a bill to authorize a grant program to promote physical education, activity, and fitness and nutrition, and to ensure healthy students, and for other purposes.

S. 1135

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1135, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to repeal a certain exemption for hydraulic fracturing, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1181

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1181, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain stock of real estate investment trusts from the tax on foreign investments in United States real property interests, and for other purposes.

S. 1184

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1184, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include information on the coverage of intensive behavioral therapy for obesity in the Medicare and You Handbook and to provide for the coordination of programs to prevent and treat obesity, and for other purposes.

S. 1236

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1236, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 1407

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1407, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to strengthen elementary and secondary computer science education, and for other purposes.

S. 1456

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1456, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

S. 1507

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1507, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of general welfare benefits provided by Indian tribes.

S. 1529

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1529, a bill to provide benefits to domestic partners of Federal employees.

S. 1688

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1688, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), collectively, in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

S. 1712

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1712, a bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization.

S. 1803

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1803, a bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes.

S. 1950

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1950, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1961

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1961, a bill to protect surface water from contamination by chemical storage facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1977

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1977, a bill to repeal section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, relating to an annual adjustment of retired pay for members of the Armed Forces under the age of 62, and to provide an offset.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women.

S. RES. 270

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 270, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Polio Day and commending the international community and others for their efforts to prevent and eradicate polio.

S. RES. 271

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 271, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that United States military assistance for Cambodia should be suspended until an independent and credible investigation occurs into the July 28, 2013, parliamentary elections, and election reforms are being implemented by the Government of Cambodia.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2712. Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BEGICH, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1845, to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2713. Ms. WARREN (for Mr. PRYOR) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 376, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2712. Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BEGICH, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1845, to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the matter proposed to be inserted, add the following:

SEC. ___. REPEAL OF CERTAIN REDUCTIONS MADE BY THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013.

Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67) is repealed as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

SA 2713. Ms. WARREN (for Mr. PRYOR) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 376, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 9, line 2, strike ''$14,500,000'' and insert ''$12,000,000''.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet during the session of the Senate on February 4, 2013, at 10:30 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Hearing on the nomination of Surgeon General designate, Vivek Hallegere Murthy.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Emily Schlichting of the committee staff on (202) 224–6480.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet during the session of the Senate on February 6, 2013, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Supporting Children and Families through Investments in High-Quality Early Education.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Aissa Canchola of the committee staff on (202) 224–2009.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE TO MEET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, February 3, 2014, at 3:00 p.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Safeguarding Consumers' Financial Data.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that detailees Nona McCoy and Kevin Batteh be granted floor privileges for the duration of the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, the farm bill.

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

DROUGHT INFORMATION ACT OF 2013

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar Number No. 222, S. 376.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 376) to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Drought Information Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

(a) SYSTEM AMENDMENTS.—Section 3 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''and continue to support'' after ''establish''; and

(B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''to better inform and provide for more timely decisionmaking to reduce drought related impacts and costs''; and

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.—The National Integrated Drought Information System shall—

''(1) provide an effective drought early warning system that—

''(A) collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought and drought impacts, including water supplies and soil moisture, in order to make usable, reliable, and timely forecasts of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and

''(B) provides such information, forecasts, and assessments on both national and regional levels;

''(2) communicate drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to stakeholders and entities engaged in drought planning, preparedness, and management, including—

''(A) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

''(B) the private sector; and

''(C) the public;

''(3) provide timely data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions;

''(4) coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research and monitoring in support of a drought early warning system;

''(5) build upon existing Federal, State, regional, private, public, and academic forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships; and

''(6) continue ongoing research and monitoring activities related to drought, including research activities relating to length, severity, and impacts of drought and the role of extreme weather events and climate variability in drought.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 4 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 313d note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) $14,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018.''.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and

Technology of the House of Representatives a report on the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System, including an assessment of how the information, forecasts, and assessments produced by such system are utilized in drought policy planning and response activities.

(B) Specific plans for continued development of the system, including future milestones.

(C) An identification of research, monitoring, and forecasting needs to enhance the predictive capability of drought early warnings that include—

(i) the length and severity of droughts;

(ii) the contribution of weather events to reducing the severity or ending drought conditions; and

(iii) regionally-specific drought impacts.

(D) A list of partners with whom the Under Secretary collaborates to implement the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(E) A description of the outreach activities conducted by the Under Secretary regarding the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In developing the report required by paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall consult with relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be considered, the Pryor amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the committee substitute, as amended, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 2713) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To reduce the authorization of appropriations amount)

On page 9, line 2, strike ''$14,500,000'' and insert ''$12,000,000''.

The committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 376), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 376

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Drought Information Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

(a) SYSTEM AMENDMENTS.—Section 3 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''and continue to support'' after ''establish''; and

(B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''to better inform and provide for more timely decisionmaking to reduce drought related impacts and costs''; and

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b) SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.—The National Integrated Drought Information System shall—

''(1) provide an effective drought early warning system that—

''(A) collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought and drought impacts, including water supplies and soil moisture, in order to make usable, reliable, and timely forecasts of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and

''(B) provides such information, forecasts, and assessments on both national and regional levels;

''(2) communicate drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to stakeholders and entities engaged in drought planning, preparedness, and management, including—

''(A) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

''(B) the private sector; and

''(C) the public;

''(3) provide timely data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions;

''(4) coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research and monitoring in support of a drought early warning system;

''(5) build upon existing Federal, State, regional, private, public, and academic forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships; and

''(6) continue ongoing research and monitoring activities related to drought, including research activities relating to length, severity, and impacts of drought and the role of extreme weather events and climate variability in drought.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 4 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 313d note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) $12,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018.''.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report on the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System, including an assessment of how the information, forecasts, and assessments produced by such system are utilized in drought policy planning and response activities.

(B) Specific plans for continued development of the system, including future milestones.

(C) An identification of research, monitoring, and forecasting needs to enhance the predictive capability of drought early warnings that include—

(i) the length and severity of droughts;

(ii) the contribution of weather events to reducing the severity or ending drought conditions; and

(iii) regionally-specific drought impacts.

(D) A list of partners with whom the Under Secretary collaborates to implement the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(E) A description of the outreach activities conducted by the Under Secretary regarding the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In developing the report required by paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall consult with relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 340 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 340) expressing the sense of the Senate that all necessary measures should be taken to protect children in the United States from human trafficking, especially during the upcoming Super Bowl, an event around which many children are trafficked for sex.

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

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 340) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of Tuesday, January 28, 2014, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

OBSERVING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF DAISY BATES

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 341 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 341) observing the 100th birthday of civil rights leader Daisy Bates and honoring her legacy as an American heroine.

Without objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 341) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of Wednesday, January 29, 2014, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1982

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I understand that S. 1982, introduced earlier today by Senator SANDERS, is at the desk and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1982) to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

Ms. WARREN. I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2014

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m on Tuesday, February 4, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, the farm bill, with the time until 12:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; and that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

PROGRAM

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, there will be a rollcall vote at approximately 2:35 p.m. on adoption of the farm bill conference report.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:56 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, February 4, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING ALL AMERICANS' RIGHT TO LIFE

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on January 22, 2013, we remembered the unborn children who have died as a direct result of the Supreme Court's rulings in Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton on January 22, 1973.

An estimated 55 million children have been aborted in the United States since those Supreme Court decisions were handed down from our Nation's highest court 41 years ago. This staggering number represents nearly three times the total population of my home state of Florida. In 2012 alone, Planned Parenthood reported performing 330,000 abortion procedures—more than the entire population of Orlando.

On this 41st anniversary of those historic decisions, I mourn for the loss of our Nation's unborn children and for their families. Every child is an invaluable gift with unique talents, interests and personality. My wife, Sandy, and I have six children, and it has been a privilege to raise them and watch them as they've grown over the years. Three of our children are now married, and Sandy and I have eight beautiful grandchildren. As our family continues to grow, it is a blessing to welcome more grandchildren and great-grandchildren into our lives.

Life is a precious gift, and I am grateful every day for the lives of my children and grandchildren. I am saddened by the loss of 55 million unborn children, children who would have lived to be our cherished sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, our neighbors, and our friends. Our Nation is strongest when every child's right to life is honored. To that end, we must never cease to fight for life, nor cease to be grateful for our own.

HONORING MEREDITH EARL ROBERTS FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful man and close friend, Meredith Earl Roberts, Jr., of Longview, TX, who passed away on January 2, 2014, at the age of 77 following a brief battle with cancer. Earl was one of the most influential leaders in Longview for many years and leaves an extraordinary legacy of service.

Born and raised in Longview, Earl earned a Bachelor of Arts from Baylor University and a law degree from The University of Texas. He was an esteemed attorney in Longview for more than 50 years, serving as President of the Gregg County Bar Association. He also served as an advisor to the City Council and was an attorney for the Sabine River Authority of Texas for 35 years, during which time he helped to acquire land for the Lake Fork Reservoir.

Earl's parents impressed upon him the value of community service, and he devoted a lifetime to many worthy causes. From 2000 to 2003, Earl served as Mayor of Longview. As Mayor, Earl established public transportation in Longview, developed water resources, and reduced the City's debt, among other accomplishments. Earl also served on the Board of Directors of many not-for-profit organizations, including the Longview YMCA, the Longview Chamber of Commerce, the Longview Economic Development Foundation, LeTourneau University, and the Highway 80 Rescue Mission. Additionally, he served as Chairman of Deacons at First Baptist Church of Longview where he taught Sunday School for many years.

Earl was an avid runner who could be found on the streets in the early morning with his fellow group of runners affectionately known as ''The Pack of Fools.'' In addition to numerous local races, he participated in more than 40 marathons, including five times in the Boston Marathon.

Earl was an outstanding American, a leader in his hometown, and beloved by all who knew him. I am proud to have known him as a personal friend. He was always loyal to his family and will be remembered fondly by his wife of 55 years, Elizabeth Hull ''Betty'' Roberts; his two children Murray and David, along with David's wife Amanda; his siblings Claire and James; his five grandchildren; and other family members and friends. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this great American, Earl Roberts, Jr. Longview has lost one of its favorites sons.

HONORING JOHN DOWLING'S SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. John Dowling, Middleport Township Supervisor, and to recognize his many years of service to the citizens of the City of Watseka, Iroquois County and the State of Illinois.

Mr. Dowling has served for 35 years in education as a teacher, coach and administrator in the Watseka Unit 9 District. For the past twenty five years, John has also been a member of the Watseka Public Library Board and plans to serve in this role until his term expires. Additionally, he served on the Iroquois County Board for 26 years until November 2010 when he retired.

In recognition of his tremendous service to the community, he has been named the Watseka Citizen of the Year and awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Watseka Area Chamber of Commerce and the Iroquois County Times Republic.

Mr. Dowling will be retiring from the position of Middleport Township Supervisor at the end of March and I would like to thank him for all he has done for the residents of Middleport Township, the City of Watseka, and Iroquois County. He has been a leader and advocate for many important issues throughout his years of service, and has become a well-respected member of the community.

While he is leaving this post and heading into retirement, I know that Mr. Dowling will always be there to lend a helping hand or give advice to those in need. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 16th District of Illinois, I wish to express our deepest thanks to John Dowling for his exemplary service and dedication.

RECOGNIZING JOE CRANKSHAW

HON. PATRICK MURPHY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Joe Crankshaw for his 56 years in the newspaper business. Mr. Crankshaw was born during the Great Depression, an era in journalism known as the ''Age of the Columnists'' which saw a rise in photojournalism and 35mm photography. It was the heyday of newsreels and copy was still done by typewriters and edited with scissors and glue.

Mr. Crankshaw began his career in 1958 when he was hired by Ernie Lyons, editor of the then-weekly Stuart News. After five years, Mr. Crankshaw moved on to The Florida Times Union and The Miami Herald where his stories consistently made the front page.

In 1991 Mr. Crankshaw rejoined the Scripps Treasure Coast team where he was recognized as one of the best by his publisher and colleagues. In the years since, Mr. Crankshaw has been quick to take advantage of modern technology and the many more recent innovations in media. According to a Scripps Treasure Coast reporter, Mr. Crankshaw received an iPhone for his 80th birthday and within a few days was sharing apps with co-workers half his age.

It is humbling to recognize Mr. Crankshaw's engagement and activism outside of the newsroom. In addition to being a family man with two daughters and two stepchildren, Mr. Crankshaw loves sharing his knowledge and experiences to those with journalistic ambitions. Last year, he presented a guest lecture to journalism students in Utah where he was warmly welcomed via video conferencing. A Korean War veteran, he has always made it a mission to keep the best interests of our military and veterans and their families a priority; and ultimately, Mr. Crankshaw has served as a role model and inspiring figure in northern

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Palm Beach and Treasure Coast communities. Though he will be sincerely missed in the newsroom, I wish him the best in retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF GARRY BROWN

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce an article entitled ''Garry Brown will join a Hall of Fame that would be incomplete without him'' that was published in the Springfield Republican on January 28, 2014. This tribute written by Ron Chimelis highlights the outstanding career of Garry Brown.

Garry has been a well-known and beloved sports writer in Western Massachusetts for over sixty years. Even after retiring, he still offers features and his famed column Hitting on All Fields, which he has written for the Springfield Republican for over forty years. Garry's passion and dedication to all sports in Western Massachusetts has earned him the admiration of his readers as well as his peers. As a result, Garry was inducted into the Western Massachusetts Baseball Hall of Fame on Friday, January 31, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to congratulate Garry on this well-deserved honor and wish him the best in the future.

GARRY BROWN WILL JOIN A HALL OF FAME THAT WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT HIM

(By Ron Chimelis, The Republican)

He was born in the same year as Mickey Mantle, grew up watching Ted Williams and began his sports writing career when Joe DiMaggio was playing center field at Yankee Stadium.

Garry Brown was there at Busch Stadium in 2004, when the Boston Red Sox ended an 86-year World Series title drought. His encyclopedic knowledge of baseball's local history is unmatched.

It is not who he has covered or where he has been, however, that best defines Brown. It is how he is viewed by others who find themselves practically forcing well-deserved honors upon a man too humble to expect them.

One such honor will come Friday night. Brown is part of the seven-man inaugural class of the Western Massachusetts Baseball Hall of Fame, which will hold enshrinement at the La Quinta Inn & Suites in Springfield.

No individual—not a player, manager or executive—has lived a life more interwoven with baseball's local history than Brown, who is still going strong at The Republican in Springfield.

Technically, he is retired. That has not stopped the 82-year-old from continuing to offer features, retrospectives, and live coverage of the Springfield Falcons.

He is still serving up ''Hitting to All Fields,'' which has survived 40 years of seismic change in newspapers.

Achievements? Let's run down a few, sticking to baseball because the overall list is too long.

Brown was a high school beat writer from 1952–66, which he calls his favorite time. He covered Pittsfield's run to the 1960 state title and that summer's American Legion World Series, with a 15-year-old shortstop named Mark Belanger leading the way.

How about Chicopee High's three straight state titles from 1961–63? When fellow Hall of Fame inductee Al Stanek struck out 25 and Amherst's Cliff Allen whiffed 16 in Chicopee's 1–0 tourney win in 1960, Brown was there.

He was the Red Sox beat writer from 1986 to June 2009, but also covered the World Series in 1967 and 1975. That was Brown, writing on deadline when Carlton Fisk's home run and Bill Buckner's error changed history.

Awards? A story on Carl Yastrzemski's final weekend made ''Best Sports Stories of 1983.'' The American Legion's national award saluted his coverage in 1963.

In 2002, Brown was in his 52nd year of writing when he earned a New England award for columns. In 2003, the Boston Chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America honored him with the prestigious Dave O'Hara Award, a prized honor that signifies recognition by one's peers.

The night was memorable. So was the acceptance speech by a man whose humility is rare for his field.

''I do get tired of people asking me if Cy Young was a nice guy,'' said Brown, who paused for effect.

''He was,'' the honoree said, drawing warm laughter and applause from the crowd. He won the Kid Gore Award for high school coverage in 1998. That's associated with basketball, but it's still a biggie.

When the Springfield Public Schools Sports Hall of Fame selected its inaugural class, the committee wanted badly to elect Brown as a contributor. He respectfully declined, saying the first year should be reserved for the athletes.

He was elected in the second.

He campaigned tirelessly for a return of minor league baseball to Springfield. Had it materialized, a popular public choice for the new ballpark's name over his objections was Garry Brown Stadium.

For the Western Mass. Baseball Hall of Fame, Brown was elected unanimously before he could say no.

Now in his seventh decade of service, Brown was asked about the attributes that made him a success.

''Not knowing when to quit,'' he said with typical self-effacing humor.

That knowledge, or lack of it, has been a blessing to his readers and made this region a much better place. The Western Mass. Baseball Hall of Fame would be incomplete without him, even if an ageless writer for all ages would never say so himself.

HONORING HAROLD PAYNE, A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding American and veteran of the Second World War, Harold Payne of Caddo Mills, TX, who passed away December 8, 2013 at the age of 92.

Harold was an extraordinary man in many ways. Born and raised in Caddo Mills, Harold was voted class president of Caddo Mills High School where he also captained several athletic teams. Harold attended college at East Texas State University and then served his country as a pilot, flying B–17 bombing missions over France and Czechoslovakia. He later became a founding member of the 390th Bomb Group Memorial Museum in Tucson, Arizona.

Harold was a successful businessman, owning and operating his own business, Payne's Famous Furniture Village, in Caddo Mills for 35 years. He was active in his community, serving on the board of the Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum, the hospital board, the school board, Hunt County Fair Board, and bank board. He also served on the City Council for many years. He was a founding member of the Faith Bible Church, where he served on the board of elders.

Harold is a true American hero whose outstanding service to his country and community will be long remembered. I am proud to have known him as a personal friend, and he will be missed by his family and many friends. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this great American, Harold Payne.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2642, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I voted against the farm bill conference report because it represented a missed opportunity to enact necessary and long-overdue reforms. Supporters of this legislation claim $23 billion in savings, but by setting commodity target prices at today's high prices, independent experts expect that as prices drop, this legislation would cost us more in the long run.

The bill does have some bright spots. The removal of the King amendment and the inclusion of language cracking down on animal fighting are victories for animal welfare. The SNAP cuts are not as draconian as the version that passed the House last year. I am thrilled that the amendment I worked on with Representatives POLIS and MASSIE easing restrictions on the cultivations of industrial hemp was included, which shows we are ready to look at hemp as an agricultural commodity, and not a drug. There are welcome investments in renewable energy and organics in this bill as well.

On the whole, however, the bill falls short of enacting necessary reforms, and maintains the pattern of cutting SNAP benefits for our most vulnerable while spending taxpayer dollars on wasteful agriculture subsidies. In Oregon alone, 78,000 households will face cuts to their nutrition assistance as a result of this bill, while simultaneously the bill adds to the already-bloated crop insurance program and creates even more subsidies that benefit large agribusinesses and encourage farmers to farm the system, not the land. It continues loopholes that allow one farm to claim multiple subsidy payments despite the fact that both the House and Senate passed farm bills eliminating these loopholes.

I am also disappointed that this legislation cuts overall funding for conservation programs, and fails to enact many important reforms that I have put forward in my legislation—the Balancing Food, Farm and the Environment Act of 2013—that would strengthen the conservation title. I was pleased to see the inclusion of language establishing conservation compliance, as well as enactment of a

Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which will help encourage farmers to work together to protect water quality, water supplies or wildlife habitat at watershed or regional scales. Overall, however, conservation language could and should have gone much further to provide adequate funding while optimizing results and making it easier for farmers to apply their conservation knowledge to their land.

On balance this bill represents the minimum effort that enabled its passage. It is fiscally irresponsible and continues the alarming trend of subsidizing large agribusiness while cutting benefits for our most vulnerable Americans. We can and should do better, and I will continue working to reform our federal agricultural policies to that end.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION AND ABORTION INSURANCE FULL DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 28, 2014

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 7, a Republican bill intended only to exacerbate divisions between Americans and to undermine the rights of American women to access health care.

H.R. 7 would effectively deny women access to health insurance coverage that includes abortion, by taking away important tax benefits such as certain tax deductions and premium tax credits used to help pay for the cost of health insurance coverage. This bill is so misguided and invasive that it does not even allow for coverage when a woman's health is in danger.

Despite the Republicans' ''pro-business'' stance, this bill would also limit small businesses' ability to claim existing health care deductions or claim the Small Business Health Tax Credit for those businesses that offer their employees comprehensive health insurance that includes abortion.

Limiting access to these tax deductions and tax credits not only adversely impacts the employees and the small businesses, but also harms the American economy. After all, both Democrats and Republicans agree that small businesses are the engines of our economy.

Quite simply, H.R. 7 intrudes upon the relationship between a woman and her doctor by limiting a woman's ability to access health insurance coverage that includes coverage of abortion and in doing threatens a woman's health. The notion that women are incapable of rational decision regarding their own bodies and their own health does not have any place in the Twenty-First Century.

So far this year, we have not even had an opportunity to vote on the extension of unemployment benefits, nor have we had the opportunity to vote on any meaningful jobs bill. Instead, I am ashamed to say that we waste our time on bills such as H.R. 7 that politicizes women's access to health care and takes our focus off what should be our primary goal—creating jobs! Jobs! Jobs!

I ask my colleagues to oppose this bill.

A RECORD OF SERVICE

HON. SCOTT H. PETERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Toni Atkins on her unanimous selection to be the next Speaker of the California State Assembly. Toni's career of public service in California is one marked by achievement, perseverance, and an ability to listen to all points of view.

From Toni's earliest days in San Diego, it was apparent that she was devoted to the public good. She worked as the Director of Client Services for the Womancare Health Center. This position reflected Toni's constant advocacy for women's health, including women's reproductive choices. These are issues that she has advanced in both her work as an elected official, and privately through her ''Toni Atkins Lesbian Health Fund.''

I first started working with Toni in 2000 when we were elected to San Diego's City Council. I remember Toni as being a consensus builder, a member who was willing to bring all interested parties to the table. Toni looks past partisan labels to come up with common sense solutions to some of the most challenging issues facing San Diego.

Toni had many great accomplishments while serving in the office; she helped pass a living wage ordinance that boosted pay for thousands of hard working San Diegans and also passed a bill that expanded the affordable housing in the city. It was Toni's hard work and fair-mindedness as a legislator which propelled her to the position of mayor pro-tem of San Diego, in which she became the first openly lesbian mayor of the city. Serving in this position Toni served as an inspiration to LGBT people, their families and allies everywhere.

Toni's commitment was again called to serve her state; she was elected in 2010 to the California State Assembly, where she fights for important issues such as ending homelessness, and veterans issues. Once again Toni's vision and judgment has been recognized by her colleagues and in a unanimous selection, Toni was chosen to lead the California State Assembly as its Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize my friend Toni Atkins for her record of achievement, and her continued commitment to serving the citizens of California. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Toni as she goes on to lead California's State Assembly.

LOUISE DREUTH'S RETIREMENT FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Ms. Louise Dreuth. Louise is retiring from the federal government this month after more than 26 years of public service in the national security arena. She currently works in the Department of Defense as a senior congressional analyst in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence's Congressional Activities office.

Although Louise originally hails from New York, she graduated from high school and college in Montgomery County, Maryland, and has been a longtime resident of Bethesda. Since she entered the work force, Louise has had a varied and distinguished career, having worked in both the legislative branch and executive branch at different times. Notably, Louise began her government service as a Professional Staff Member on The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence when the committee was first established in 1977. No doubt those were interesting and challenging times, as the new committee worked to establish ongoing oversight of the Intelligence Community. As a Professional Staff Member on the HPSCI, Louise played a significant role helping the committee develop its authorization bills, performing research, and contributing to the critical mission of thorough oversight.

Louise left the Committee in 1986 to work in the private sector for several years, but returned to the federal government in 1992 and joined the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), where she worked for 13 years in a number of increasingly challenging legislative and public affairs positions. Her work at MDA prepared her well to become the Chief of Communications for the Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA) when it was established in 2005. Shortly after CIFA was merged under the Defense Intelligence Agency in 2008, Louise joined the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSDI), where she is now. She has handled a busy, high-profile portfolio of counterintelligence and security legislative issues in OUSDI's Congressional Activities office for the past five years.

Most recently, Louise has led numerous congressional engagements related to the latest unauthorized disclosures of classified material. As so often was true during her career, Louise's role has been to advise intelligence professionals in the Department of Defense on how to communicate the impact of these leaks and what DoD and defense intelligence entities are doing to prevent future disclosures. Louise has also contributed to Congress's better understanding and oversight of these critical issues.

At the conclusion of her impressive career as a national security and legislative affairs professional, Louise is looking forward to spending more leisurely days with her husband Mike, their little grandson Ben, and their adult children Josh and Beth. I know Louise has been a very devoted daughter to her mother, and will now be able to see her more frequently.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Louise Dreuth for her dedicated public service. Over the course of more than 26 years in legislative and public affairs positions within the federal government, she has advised many national security and intelligence professionals on how to communicate important, complex issues to Congress and the American public. She has made direct and significant contributions toward positive relations between the legislative and executive branches of our government. Louise has consistently brought great credit upon herself and every office in which she has worked. I thank her for her service and wish her all the best in her retirement.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2642, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE REFORM AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 2642, a bill that will starve millions of families and children and further add to the economic instability of American families.

Cutting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, referred to as ''SNAP,'' by eight billion dollars ($8 billion) over the next ten years, H.R. 2642 will undermine access to healthy food for the many children, disabled people, and senior citizens who account for eighty-three percent of the beneficiaries of the program.

It is estimated that eight hundred and fifty thousand (850,000) households, of which three hundred thousand (300,000) are New Yorkers, will lose on average ninety ($90) dollars per month in SNAP benefits.

While I am glad that the far larger cuts were rejected by the Conference Committee, the loss of ninety ($90) dollars per month is deeply harmful to these households, which are already teetering on the brink of economic catastrophe.

What are we thinking? We are literally taking the food out of the mouths of babes, while continuing to provide generous subsidies to large agro-businesses.

It is for these reasons that I will vote no on this bill and I ask my colleagues to oppose this bill with me.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. FRANKLIN D. CHEATHAM ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM CAMPBELLSVILLE UNIVERSITY

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Franklin D. Cheatham. After 40½ years of educating Campbellsville University math and computer science students, Dr. Cheatham will retire on December 31, 2014.

Dr. Cheatham, senior vice president for academic affairs, attended Campbellsville College (before it became Campbellsville University) and graduated in 1965. He joined the university as a faculty member in 1973.

Named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2002, Dr. Cheatham received several awards for his dedication to academic excellence and the students at Campbellsville University. Among the awards are: Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award (1989) and the Campbellsville/Taylor County Chamber of Commerce ''Educator of the Year Award'' (1992 & 2000).

IN addition to teaching, Dr. Cheatham has also served as a faculty advisor for Sigma Zeta and the science and math honor societies. He also served as president of and on the board of directors of the Consortium for Computing in Small Colleges.

Dr. Cheatham has gone above and beyond his duties as professor and Campbellsville University and his many students have seen the benefits of those actions. Today I thank Dr. Cheatham for his four decades in education and wish him well in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I am writing to inform you that I was detained on December 5, 2013 and was unable to be on the House floor for votes related to H.R. 3309, the Innovation Act. Had I been there, I would have voted as follows: rollcall vote 623: Goodlatte Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''yes''; rollcall vote 624: Watt Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''no''; rollcall vote 625: Massie Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''no''; rollcall vote 626: Jackson Lee Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''no''; rollcall vote 627: Rohrabacher Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''no''; rollcall vote 628: Conyers Amendment for H.R. 3309: ''no''; rollcall vote 629: On Final Passage of H.R. 3309: ''yes.''

IN HONOR OF PLANTRONICS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Plantronics, a pioneer in audio communications and wearable technology based in my district in Santa Cruz, California. Plantronics just received the prestigious Secretary of State's 2013 Award for Corporate Excellence and with good reason. Over the past half century, Plantronics has excelled in both products and people. This innovative company was founded in a garage by Courtney Graham and Keith Larkin, two airline pilots looking to make a smaller, lighter headset for use in airplane cockpits. Their headsets were adopted by the Federal Aviation Administration, employed in the first Apollo mission, and used to transmit Neil Armstrong's legendary first words from the moon: ''That's one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.'' Today, Plantronics products are used by 911 emergency workers, airline pilots, astronauts, and all Fortune 100 companies.

While Plantronics emphasizes high-quality products, it is their equal emphasis on people and the environment that has further distinguished this company. The Plantronics manufacturing facility has advanced best practices in environmental stewardship, corporate citizenship, and employment. The company offers their workforce educational support programs, enabling employees to attain over 2,300 degrees; professional development programs have supported more than 1,000 employees' promotion into new roles; and they have a new 800,000 square foot facility that generates 70% of its own power. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

As CEO Kenneth Kannappan said, ''Our focus on our people, giving back to our communities and being responsible stewards of the environment are central to our identity, our culture and our position as a leader in audio communications.'' I congratulate Ken and Plantronics for receiving the Award for Corporate Excellence, a well-deserved recognition of their impressive work.

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM A. GARY

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. William A. Gary, who passed away on January 12. Mr. Gary was a longtime resident of Prescott, Arizona. He was also a husband, a father, a rancher, and a philanthropist.

Mr. Gary was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He left his studies at Texas A&M University to serve our country as a Marine Corps captain in World War II and returned to Texas A&M after the war to finish his animal husbandry degree. He met his wife, Marion, when he was stationed at Camp Pendleton, where she served as a nurse in the Navy.

Mr. Gary was born into a long line of ranchers going back to 17th century Virginia. Ranching was in his blood. In 1958, he and his wife, as well as their two children, moved to Arizona, where they bought a ranch and subsequently began other businesses. Like most entrepreneurs, Mr. Gary and his family did not find immediate riches, but through their hard work they eventually found success.

After retiring from ranching, Mr. Gary began his philanthropic ventures in earnest. He had honed his fundraising skills when he helped found the Marine Military Academy in 1965. After retirement, he put those skills to use again, raising millions of dollars for important Prescott institutions. Not only did he raise millions for the Phippen Museum in Prescott, allowing the museum to double its size and improve its grounds, he also donated several pieces to the museum. The museum's Bill and Marion Gary Western Heritage Gallery is named in recognition of his and his wife's contributions. Mr. Gary also raised funds for the Yavapai College Foundation, helping to build the college's performance hall and other facilities.

HONORING THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and honored to rise today and join in the Centennial Celebration of one of the most committed, hard-working and influential groups in San Diego County, the San Diego County Farm Bureau. 2014 marks 100 years of leadership for this non-profit membership organization, founded with the objective to promote and protect local agriculture.

Since 1914, the San Diego County Farm Bureau has served as the leading advocate

for the farming community and works with elected officials, government agencies, educators, the media and the public to create an environment that allows for the continued growth and sustainability of local agriculture. The first formal meeting of the San Diego County Farm Bureau was held on February 20, 1914, at the Speckles Theater in San Diego where 383 family farmers paid $1 in dues to be eligible to vote on creating the organization. It was here that the San Diego County Farm Bureau became the third of 53 county farm bureaus formed in California. Judge W.R. Andrews of Spring Valley was elected as its first president and the Bureau's longevity can be directly attributed to a proud lineage of 51 presidents and legion of volunteers who have given unselfishly of their time in support of our local farming community.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that America's agriculture industry is steeped in tradition and was an integral industry upon which the economy and self-sufficiency of our young nation was built. America's ''agrarian republic'' represented the hope of new beginnings and many of our founding fathers believed the character of leadership and necessary virtue would be found in those who worked the soil, in those who invested their time and effort into the production of their crops both for their own existence and that of their community. James Madison extolled the value of connecting with one's land and it was Thomas Jefferson who said, ''Agriculture. . . is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness.''

While there was an initial debate on the long-term viability of agriculture's role in developing America's manufacturing base, our nation's productivity in this industry proved to be an immediate return on investment and indicative of the ability of the American people to thrive in any circumstance. As our nation grew, so did the importance of agriculture, particularly in California. Today, California leads all other states in farm income. With 73 percent of the state's agricultural revenues derived from over 200 different crops and 27 percent of revenues generated by livestock commodities, California is our nation's leader in agriculture production. San Diego County has one of the country's largest farm economies and has more small and organic farms than any other county in California. San Diego County leads the nation in production of its two major crops, ornamentals and avocados, and is successfully invested in the areas of nurseries, cut flowers, fruits, vegetables, nuts, field crops, vineyards, livestock, and poultry.

This production and success is not by chance, it is a direct result of the hard work of San Diego County's agriculture community and the tireless advocacy of the San Diego County Farm Bureau on their behalf. While our nation and my home state of California continue to face many economic challenges, particularly in the agriculture industry, we move forward with full confidence knowing that groups like the San Diego County Farm Bureau are leading by example and utilizing a wealth of experience that will continue to allow us to take advantage of our full potential. Congratulations again to the San Diego County Farm Bureau on 100 years of service and I look forward to their continued success well into the future.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,293,019,654,983.61. We've added $6,666,142,606,070.53 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN McCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mrs. McCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent during the week of January 27, 2014. If I were present, I would have voted on the following:

Rollcall No. 24: H.R. 2166—''yea.''

Rollcall No. 25: H.R. 3008—''yea.''

Rollcall No. 26: Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule—''nay.''

Rollcall No. 27: H. Res. 465—''nay.''

Rollcall No. 28: Approving the Journal—''yea.''

Rollcall No. 29: Motion to Recommit with Instructions on H.R. 7—''yea.''

Rollcall No. 30: Final passage of H.R. 7—''nay.''

Rollcall No. 31: Final passage of H.R. 2642, Farm Bill Conference Report—''yea.''

TRIBUTE TO SPORTING KANSAS CITY

HON. KEVIN YODER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the major league soccer team from my home, the Kansas 3rd Congressional District—Sporting Kansas City. In early December, 2013, Sporting KC squared off against Real Salt Lake in the MLS Cup final match at Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kansas. The victory gave Sporting KC their first Major League Soccer title in thirteen years, and was only decided after 10 rounds of penalty kicks. When all was final, Sporting KC was victorious 7–6 in a shoot-out win, bringing the Philip Anschutz Trophy to Kansas City.

Sporting KC head coach Peter Vermes and the entire roster of players, including MVP defender Aurelien Collin, brought so much excitement to our community throughout the 2013 season. To have the Championship match played out in Sporting Park, in front of more than 21,000 loyal fans, only maximized the energy and atmosphere that night in December and it was simply amazing.

We greatly appreciate the investment and leadership of Robb Heineman, Cliff Illig, Neal Patterson, Pat Curran and Greg Maday. Bringing Sporting KC to Kansas has been great for the team and the entire community.

Mr. Speaker, the Sporting Kansas City soccer team is the first major league sports team to win a league championship at home in Kansas City since 1985. The pride and excitement the entire Kansas City community has with the club is great, and we all congratulate Sporting KC, the players and coaches, the organization staff, and everyone with a role at the park on their 2013 Major League Soccer Cup Championship. You make us proud.

TRIBUTE TO THE BENEDICT COLLEGE HARAMBEE FESTIVAL

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 3, 2014

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Benedict College Harambee Festival, in Columbia, South Carolina, in my Congressional District. One of the largest college-sponsored festivals in the nation, the Benedict College Harambee Festival will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary on February 22nd. As we observe Black History Month, I believe it is important to highlight this special event for its expression of multiculturalism, inclusion and advocacy of African American Southern history and culture.

In 1988 Benedict College led by Dr. George A. Devlin, Chair of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, revived its efforts to create a series of events to celebrate and study Black History Month. Originally called the African American Bazaar, the free event was designed to unite the community. The Harambee Festival weathered much adversity in its first few years. Initial attempts in 1989 were ''snowed out.'' Extreme cold and rain in 1991, and again in 1992 greatly affected Festival attendance records.

Organizers have likened lessons of African American history to the Harambee Festival because it teaches that after struggle, success is possible. The Festival has prospered and is today one of the biggest college-sponsored festivals in the United States of America with an average attendance of over 6,000 people. A success story of Benedict College, the Harambee Festival now includes a bake contest, fashion show and a number of live performances alongside historical presentations, as well as community-oriented service activities.

Since 2010, the Harambee Festival Community Choir has performed annually at the Festival, preserving the rich musical tradition of gospel music. The Choir is composed of members of the Benedict College Gospel Choir as well as great singers from choirs in the Midlands, the Pee Dee, and other regions of South Carolina. A number of performers have showcased their talents over the Harambee Festival's twenty-five year history, including national recording star Ms. Angie Stone, Mr. Dwayne Johnson, Jr. from Soul-food Jazz and (former) world champions Double Dutch Forces.

Since its inception, the Harambee Festival has been inclusive in its efforts to bring the community together. A testament of its success, the Harambee Festival sees people and

organizations coming back again and again, year after year. The hard work and dedication of Benedict College and all participating organizations, exhibitors and vendors continues to sustain a long-lasting legacy of commemoration and celebration of Black History Month through the Harambee Festival.

An integral annual event, the Harambee Festival unifies the community and provides an opportunity not only to celebrate but also contribute to a wealth of African American history in our Nation. I sincerely thank the Benedict College Harambee Festival for its commitment to remembering the past while looking to South Carolina's future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in paying tribute to all who have contributed to the success of the Benedict College Harambee Festival over the past twenty-five years. It has been a great asset to South Carolina and the broader African American community.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's record.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 6

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine S. 1784, to improve timber management on Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road grant land, and S. 1966, to provide for the restoration of the economic and ecological health of National Forest System land and rural communities.
SD–366

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Business meeting to consider the nominations of Wanda Felton, of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, Katherine M. O'Regan, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Arun Madhavan Kumar, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine financial stability and data security.
SD–538

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine supporting children and families through investments in high-quality early education.
SD–430

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Business meeting to resume consideration of S. 1486, to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service.
SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary
Business meeting to consider S. 1675, to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, S. 149, to provide effective criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts, and the nominations of Indira Talwani, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, James D. Peterson, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin, Nancy J. Rosenstengel, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, and Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, and John P. Carlin, of New York, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.
SD–226

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Business meeting to consider H.R. 1206, to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, S. 741, to extend the authorization of appropriations to carry out approved wetlands conservation projects under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through fiscal year 2017, S. 212, to approve the transfer of Yellow Creek Port properties in Iuka, Mississippi, S. 864, to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, H.R. 724, to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles, S. 51, to reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, S. 970, to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize grants for and require applied water supply research regarding the water resources research and technology institutes established under the Act, S. 898, to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the Amy Biehl High School Foundation, S. 969, to amend the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to reauthorize the Act, S. 1077, to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to provide for the reauthorization of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, S. 1865, to amend the prices set for Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps and make limited waivers of stamp requirements for certain users, S. 1451, to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the importation or shipment of quagga mussels, S. 1080, to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship, and the nominations of Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of Illinois, to be Chief Financial Officer, Thomas A. Burke, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator, and Kenneth J. Kopocis, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator, all of the Environmental Protection Agency, Roy K. J. Williams, of Ohio, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife, Richard J. Engler, of New Jersey, to be a Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, and proposed resolutions relating to the General Services Administration.
SD–406

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Luis G. Moreno, of Texas, to be Ambassador to Jamaica, John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic, all of the Department of State.
SD–419

Select Committee on Intelligence
Committee on Armed Services
To hold a closed joint hearing to examine counterterrorism policy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SVC–217

FEBRUARY 11

9 a.m.
Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine certain nominations.
SD–226

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.
SD–G50

FEBRUARY 12

10 a.m.
Committee on the Judiciary
To hold an oversight to examine the report of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board on Reforms to the Section 215 telephone records program and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.
SD–226

Special Committee on Aging
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
To hold a joint hearing to examine the challenges and advantages of senior entrepreneurship.
SD–562

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S665–S705

Measures Introduced: Seven bills were introduced, as follows: S. 1980–1986. **Page S702**

Measures Passed:

Drought Information Act: Senate passed S. 376, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the following amendment proposed thereto:

Pages S703–04

Warren (for Pryor) Amendment No. 2713, to reduce the authorization of appropriations amount.

Page S704

Human Trafficking in the United States: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 340, expressing the sense of the Senate that all necessary measures should be taken to protect children in the United States from human trafficking, especially during the upcoming Super Bowl, an event around which many children are trafficked for sex, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S704**

100th Birthday of Daisy Bates: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 341, observing the 100th birthday of civil rights leader Daisy Bates and honoring her legacy as an American heroine, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Pages S704–05**

Measures Considered:

Veterans Medical Services and Benefits: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1950, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans.

Pages S665–66

Conference Reports:

Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018.

Pages S666–99

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 72 yeas to 22 nays (Vote No. 20), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the conference report to accompany the bill. **Page S690**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill at approximately 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, with the time until 12:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two Leaders or their designees. **Page S705**

Messages from the House: **Page S700**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S665, S700**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S700, S705**

Executive Communications: **Pages S700–02**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S702–03**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions

Additional Statements

Amendments Submitted: **Page S703**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S703**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S703**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S703**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—20) **Page S690**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 7:56 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S705.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

SAFEGUARDING CONSUMERS' FINANCIAL DATA

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance concluded a hearing to examine safeguarding consumers' financial data, including S. 1927, to protect information relating to consumers, to require notice of security breaches, after receiving testimony from William Noonan, Deputy Special Agent in Charge, Secret Service, Criminal Investigative Division, Cyber Operations Branch; Jessica Rich, Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission; James A. Reuter, FirstBank, Lakewood, Colorado, on behalf of the American Bankers Association; Mallory Duncan, National Retail Federation, Washington, D.C.; Edmund Mierzwinski, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Falls Church, Virginia; and Troy Leach, Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council, Phoenix, Arizona.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 4 public bills, H.R. 3982–3985; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 471 were introduced. **Page H1544**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H1545**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 470, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3590) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 113–339). **Page H1544**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Petri to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1517**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:01 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H1517**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:03 p.m. and reconvened at 5 p.m. **Page H1517**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act: H.R. 1791, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 391 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 32 and **Pages H1518–20, H1526–27**

GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act: H.R. 357, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 390 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 33. **Pages H1520–26, H1527–28**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require courses of education provided by public institutions of higher education that are approved for purposes of the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to charge veterans tuition and fees at the in-State tuition rate, to make other improvements in the laws relating to benefits administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.". **Page H1528**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:48 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H1526**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, their families, and all who serve in our armed forces and their families. **Page H1527**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1526–27 and H1527–28. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Committee Meetings

SPORTSMEN'S HERITAGE AND RECREATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2013

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 3590, the "Sportsmen's Heritage And Recreational Enhancement Act of 2013". The Committee granted, by record vote of 9–2, a structured rule for H.R. 3590. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Chairman Hastings (WA); and Representatives Latta and Holt.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities". This was a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to receive a closed briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, 10 a.m., SVC–217.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine moving from constant crises to broad-based growth, focusing on the 2014 outlook, 10:30 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Janice Marion Schneider, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management, both of the Department of the Interior, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife, to hold hearings to examine the safety and security of drinking water supplies following the Central West Virginia drinking water crisis, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to consider the nominations of L. Paige Marvel, of Maryland, and Tamara Wenda Ashford, of Virginia, both to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Committee on Foreign Relations: business meeting to consider S. Res. 333, strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq, S. Res. 270, supporting the goals and ideals of World Polio Day and commending the international community and others for their efforts to prevent and eradicate polio, and the nominations of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Frank A. Rose, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance, Puneet Talwar, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, Robert C. Barber, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland, George James Tsunis, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway, Colleen Bradley Bell, of California, to be Ambassador to Hungary, Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the UN Human Rights Council, Max Sieben Baucus, of Montana, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, and Arnold A. Chacon, of Virginia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, all of the Department of State; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine negotiations on Iran's nuclear program, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, Michael Anderson Lawson, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and Robert A. Wood, of New York, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, all of the Department of State, 3 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, 10:30 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, to hold hearings to examine fraud and abuse in army recruiting contracts, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine privacy in the digital age, focusing on preventing data breaches and combating cybercrime, 10:15 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing on State of Al Qaeda, its Affiliates, and Associated Groups: View From Outside Experts, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing entitled "OSHA's Regulatory Agenda: Changing Long-Standing Polices Outside the Public Rulemaking Process", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, hearing entitled "Testing of Chemicals and Reporting and Retention of Information under TSCA Sections 4 and 8", 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, hearing entitled "The Federal Insurance Office's Report on Modernizing Insurance Regulation", 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, hearing entitled "Terrorist Groups in Latin America: The Changing Landscape", 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, hearing entitled "Future of the Homeland Security Missions of the Coast Guard", 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Examining Recommendations to Reform FISA Authorities", 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, hearing on legislation regarding Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled "Mixed Signals: The Administration's Policy on Marijuana", 1:30 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 3964, the "Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Emergency Water Delivery Act"; and H.R. 2954, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance, 2 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled "Necessary Updates to the Commercial Space Launch Act", 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled "Finding Your Way: The Future of Federal Aids to Navigation", 10 a.m., 2253 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2575, the "Save American Workers Act of 2013"; and H.R. 3979, the "Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act", 10:15 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled "World Wide Threats", 10 a.m., 210–HVC.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of February 4 through February 7, 2014

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday,* at approximately 10 a.m., Senate will continue consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act, with a vote on adoption of the conference report at approximately 2:35 p.m.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Armed Services: February 4, to receive a closed briefing on the situation in Afghanistan, 10 a.m., SVC–217.

February 6, Full Committee, with the Select Committee on Intelligence, to hold a closed joint hearing to examine counterterrorism policy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: February 6, business meeting to consider the nominations of Wanda Felton, of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, Katherine M. O'Regan, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Arun Madhavan Kumar, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine financial stability and data security, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on the Budget: February 4, to hold hearings to examine moving from constant crises to broad-based growth, focusing on the 2014 outlook, 10:30 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: February 4, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Janice Marion Schneider, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management, both of the Department of the Interior, 10 a.m., SD–366.

February 6, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine S. 1784, to improve timber management on Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road grant land, and S. 1966, to provide for the restoration of the economic and ecological health of National Forest System land and rural communities, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: February 4, Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife, to hold hearings to examine the safety and security of drinking water supplies following the Central West Virginia drinking water crisis, 10 a.m., SD–406.

February 6, Full Committee, business meeting to consider H.R. 1206, to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, S. 741, to extend the authorization of appropriations to carry out approved wetlands conservation

projects under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through fiscal year 2017, S. 212, to approve the transfer of Yellow Creek Port properties in Iuka, Mississippi, S. 864, to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize technical assistance to small public water systems, H.R. 724, to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles, S. 51, to reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act, S. 970, to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize grants for and require applied water supply research regarding the water resources research and technology institutes established under the Act, S. 898, to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the Amy Biehl High School Foundation, S. 969, to amend the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to reauthorize the Act, S. 1077, to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to provide for the reauthorization of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, S. 1865, to amend the prices set for Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps and make limited waivers of stamp requirements for certain users, S. 1451, to provide for environmental restoration activities and forest management activities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the importation or shipment of quagga mussels, S. 1080, to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship, and the nominations of Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, of Illinois, to be Chief Financial Officer, Thomas A. Burke, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator, and Kenneth J. Kopocis, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator, all of the Environmental Protection Agency, Roy K. J. Williams, of Ohio, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife, Richard J. Engler, of New Jersey, to be an Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, and proposed resolutions relating to the General Services Administration, 10:30 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: February 4, business meeting to consider the nominations of R. Gil Kerlikowske, of the District of Columbia, to be Commissioner of Customs, Department of Homeland Security, Richard G. Frank, of Massachusetts, to be Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Paige Marvel, of Maryland, and Tamara Wenda Ashford, of Virginia, both to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court, Time to be announced, S–219, Capitol.

Committee on Foreign Relations: February 4, business meeting to consider S. Res. 333, strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq, S. Res. 270, supporting the goals and ideals of World Polio Day and commending the international community and others for their efforts to prevent and eradicate polio, and the nominations of Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Frank A. Rose, of Massachusetts, to be a Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance, Puneet Talwar, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, Robert C. Barber, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland, George James Tsunis, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway, Colleen Bradley Bell, of California, to be Ambassador to Hungary, Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the UN Human Rights Council, Max Sieben Baucus, of Montana, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, and Arnold A. Chacon, of Virginia, to be Director General of the Foreign Service, all of the Department of State; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine negotiations on Iran's nuclear program, 10 a.m., SD–419.

February 4, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, Michael Anderson Lawson, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and Robert A. Wood, of New York, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, all of the Department of State, 3 p.m., SD–419.

February 6, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Luis G. Moreno, of Texas, to be Ambassador to Jamaica, John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador to the Argentine Republic, all of the Department of State, 2:30 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: February 4, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, 10:30 a.m., SD–430.

February 6, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine supporting children and families through investments in high-quality early education, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: February 4, Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, to hold hearings to examine fraud and abuse in army recruiting contracts, 10 a.m., SD–342.

February 6, Full Committee, business meeting to resume consideration of S. 1486, to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: February 4, to hold hearings to examine privacy in the digital age, focusing on preventing data breaches and combating cybercrime, 10:15 a.m., SD–226.

February 6, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 1675, to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, S. 149, to provide effective criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts, and the nominations of Indira Talwani, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, James D. Peterson, to be United

States District Judge for the Western District of Wisconsin, Nancy J. Rosenstengel, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, and Debo P. Adegbile, of New York, and John P. Carlin, of New York, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: February 4, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

February 6, Full Committee, with the Committee on Armed Services, to hold a closed joint hearing to examine counterterrorism policy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

House Committees

Committee on the Budget, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Congressional Budget Office's Budget and Economic Outlook'', 10 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Foundation for Success: Discussing Early Childhood Education and Care in America'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, February 5, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, hearing entitled ''Protecting Consumer Information: Can Data Breaches Be Prevented?'', 9:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining the Implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act'', 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Impact of the Volcker Rule on Job Creators, Part II'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''The Annual Report of the Office of Financial Research'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Al-Qaeda's Resurgence in Iraq: A Threat to U.S. Interests'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''U.S. Counternarcotics Operations in Afghanistan'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled ''America's Future in Asia: From Rebalancing to Managing Sovereignty Disputes'', 2 p.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, February 5, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 3696, the ''National Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2013'', 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

February 6, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, hearing entitled ''Examining Challenges and Wasted Taxpayer Dollars in Modernizing Border Security IT Systems'', 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, February 5, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2919, the ''Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act''; resolution on reauthorization of the Over-Criminalization Task Force; and ratification of subcommittee memberships, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, February 5, Subcommittee on Water and Power, hearing on legislation regarding the Accelerated Revenue, Repayment, and Surface Water Storage Enhancement Act; and legislation regarding Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act; and draft discussion to Amend the Secure Water Act of 2009 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to implement a surface water storage enhancement program, and for other purposes, 10 a.m., 1324 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing on the following measures: H.R. 3110, the ''Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act'', and H.R. 3605, the ''Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

February 5, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, oversight hearing on Energy in America: BLM's Red-Tape Run Around and its Impact on American Energy Production'', 2 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''ObamaCare: Why the Need for an Insurance Company Bailout?'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

February 5, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation and Regulatory Affairs; and Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care and Entitlement hearing entitled ''Health Insurance Co-ops: Examining ObamaCare's Billion Loan Gamble, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

February 6, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation and Regulatory Affairs, hearing entitled ''The IRS Targeting Investigation: What is the Administration Doing?'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining the Science of EPA Overreach: A Case Study in Texas'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, February 5, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The FAA's Impact on Small Businesses in the General Aviation Industry'', 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

February 6, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade, hearing entitled ''Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation in Federal Financial Assistance Programs'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, February 5, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled ''The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012: Two Years Later'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, February 5, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing entitled ''Beyond Transformation: Reviewing Current Status and Secondary Effects of VBA Technology'', 3:30 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, February 5, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing on issues before the IRS that affect American taxpayers, 9:30 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, February 6, Full Committee, meeting on member access requests, 9 a.m., HVC–304. This is a closed meeting.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

SECOND SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 3 through January 31, 2014

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in Session	16	15	..
Time in session	83 hrs, 56′	56 hrs, 28′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	664	1,515	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	150	..
Public bills enacted into law	2	4	6
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	3	3	..
Measures passed, total	28	31	59
Senate bills	6	2	..
House bills	3	16	..
Senate joint resolutions	2	..	..
House joint resolutions	1	1	..
Senate concurrent	1	..	..
House concurrent	2	2	..
Simple resolutions	13	10	..
Measures reported, total	6	17	23
Senate bills	6	..	..
House bills	..	14	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	..	..
Senate concurrent	..	..	..
House concurrent	..	..	..
Simple resolutions	..	3	..
Special reports	1	..	..
Conference reports	..	1	..
Measures pending on calendar	207	8	..
Measures introduced, total	102	204	306
Bills	85	172	..
Joint resolutions	1	3	..
Concurrent resolutions	1	8	..
Simple resolutions	15	21	..
Quorum calls	..	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	..	24	..
Recorded votes	19	6	..
Bills vetoed	..	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

* These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 5 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 18 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 3 through January 31, 2014

Civilian nominations, totaling 382 (including 2 nominations carried over from the First Session), disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	2
Unconfirmed	378
Withdrawn	2
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 1,791, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	1,791
Air Force nominations, totaling 1,143, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	1,143
Army nominations, totaling 462, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	462
Navy nominations, totaling 2, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	2
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 749, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	749

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	2
Total nominations received this Session	4,527
Total confirmed	2
Total unconfirmed	4,525
Total withdrawn	2
Total returned to the White House	0

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

10 a.m., Tuesday, February 4

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act, and vote on adoption of the conference report to accompany the bill at approximately 2:35 p.m.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

10 a.m., Tuesday, February 4

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.R. 3590—Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (Subject to a Rule).

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