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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, the center of our joy, as the Senate ends its 35th all-night session, thank You for the faithful work of the members of each Senator's staff. Remind these staff members that You see their diligence and will reward their patriotism.

Today, give our lawmakers confidence that You are in control of our world. May their trust in Your providence deliver them from hindrances that prevent them from serving You and this land we love. Empower them to be workers who need not be ashamed, striving to please You in all that they do. As the Sun sets on this day, may they be nearer to You than when this day began.

We pray in Your great 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 assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 11, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m., with the majority controlling the first hour and the Republicans controlling the next hour.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that Senator FEINSTEIN be allotted a full hour. I have taken some of her time.

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

Mr. REID. At 11:30 this morning, the Senate will proceed to executive session and there will be four rollcall votes on the motions to invoke cloture on four nominees to be United States district judges.

Following the votes, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first hour and the Republicans controlling the second hour.

The Senator from California is recognized.

CIA DETENTION AND INTERROGATION REPORT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Good morning.

Mr. President, over the past week there have been numerous press articles written about the intelligence committee's oversight review of the detention and interrogation program of the CIA.

Specifically, press attention has focused on the CIA's intrusion and search of the Senate select committee's computers, as well as the committee's acquisition of a certain internal CIA document known as the Panetta review.

I rise today to set the record straight and to provide a full accounting of the facts and history.

Let me say up front that I come to the Senate floor reluctantly. Since January 15, 2014, when I was informed of the CIA's search of this committee's network, I have been trying to resolve this dispute in a discreet and respectful way. I have not commented in response to media requests for additional information on this matter. However, the increasing amount of inaccurate information circulating now cannot be allowed to stand unanswered.

The origin of this study.

The CIA's detention and interrogation program began operations in 2002, though it was not until September 2006 that members of the intelligence committee, other than the chairman and the vice chairman, were briefed. In fact, we were briefed by then-CIA Director Hayden only hours before President Bush disclosed the program to the public.

A little more than a year later, on December 6, 2007, a New York Times article revealed the troubling fact that the CIA had destroyed videotapes of some of the CIA's first interrogations using so-called enhanced techniques. We learned that this destruction was over the objections of President Bush's White House counsel and the Director of National Intelligence.

After we read about the destruction of the tapes in the newspapers, Director Hayden briefed the Senate intelligence committee. He assured us that this was not destruction of evidence, as detailed records of the interrogations existed on paper—in the form of CIA operational cables describing the detention conditions and the day-to-day CIA interrogations.

The CIA Director stated that these cables were ''a more than adequate representation'' of what would have been on the destroyed tapes. Director Hayden offered at that time, during Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER's chairmanship of the committee, to allow members or staff to review these sensitive CIA operational cables, given that the videotapes had been destroyed.

Chairman ROCKEFELLER sent two of his committee staffers out to the CIA on nights and weekends to review thousands of these cables, which took many months. By the time the two staffers completed their review into the CIA's early interrogations in early 2009, I had become chairman of the committee and President Obama had been sworn into office.

The resulting staff report was chilling. The interrogations and the conditions of confinement at the CIA detention sites were far different and far more harsh than the way the CIA had described them to us. As a result of the staff's initial report, I proposed and then Vice Chairman Bond agreed, and the committee overwhelmingly approved, that the committee conduct an expansive and full review of the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

On March 5, 2009, the committee voted 14 to 1 to initiate a comprehensive review of the CIA detention and interrogation program. Immediately, we sent a request for documents to all relevant executive branch agencies, chiefly among them the CIA.

The committee's preference was for the CIA to turn over all responsive documents to the committee's office, as had been done in previous committee investigations.

Director Panetta proposed an alternative arrangement: to provide, literally, millions of pages of operational cables, internal emails, memos, and other documents, pursuant to the committee's document requests at a secure location in northern Virginia. We agreed but insisted on several conditions and protections to ensure the integrity of this congressional investigation.

Per an exchange of letters in 2009, then-Vice Chairman Bond, then-Director Panetta, and I agreed—in an exchange of letters—that the CIA was to provide a ''stand-alone computer system'' with a ''network drive . . . segregated from CIA networks'' for the committee that would only be accessed by information technology personnel at the CIA, who would ''not be permitted to'' ''share information from the system with other [CIA] personnel, except as otherwise authorized by the committee.''

It was this computer network, notwithstanding our agreement with Director Panetta, that was searched by the CIA this past January, and once before, which I will later describe.

In addition to demanding that the documents produced for the committee be reviewed at a CIA facility, the CIA also insisted on conducting a multi-layered review of every responsive document before providing the document to the committee. This was to ensure the CIA did not mistakenly provide documents unrelated to the CIA's detention and interrogation program—or provide documents that the President could potentially claim to be covered by executive privilege.

While we viewed this as unnecessary, and raised concerns that it would delay our investigation, the CIA hired a team of outside contractors—who otherwise would not have had access to these sensitive documents—to read, multiple times, each of the 6.2 million pages of documents produced, before providing them to fully cleared committee staff conducting the committee's oversight work. This proved to be a slow and very expensive process.

The CIA started making documents available electronically to the committee staff at the CIA-leased facility in mid-2009. The number of pages ran quickly to the thousands, the tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands, and then into the millions. The documents that were provided came without any index, without any organizational structure. It was a true ''document dump'' that our committee staff had to go through and make sense of.

In order to piece together the story of the CIA's detention and interrogation program, the committee staff did two things that will be important as I go on.

First, they asked the CIA to provide an electronic search tool so they could locate specific relevant documents for their search among the CIA-produced documents—just like you would use a search tool on the Internet to locate information.

Second, when the staff found a document that was particularly important or that might be referenced in our final report, they would often print it or make a copy of the file on their computer so they could easily find it again. There are thousands of such documents in the committee's secure spaces at the CIA facility.

Now, prior removal of documents by the CIA.

In early 2010, the CIA was continuing to provide documents, and the committee staff was gaining familiarity with the information it had already received.

In May of 2010, the committee staff noticed that the documents that had been provided for the committee's review were no longer accessible. Staff approached the CIA personnel at the off-site location, who initially denied the documents had been removed. CIA personnel then blamed information technology personnel, who were almost all contractors, for removing the documents themselves without direction or authority. Then the CIA stated that the removal of the documents was ordered by the White House. When the committee approached the White House, the White House denied giving the CIA any such order.

After a series of meetings, I learned that on two occasions, CIA personnel electronically removed committee access to CIA documents after providing them to the committee. This included roughly 870 documents—or pages of documents—that were removed in February 2010 and, secondly, roughly another 50 that were removed in mid-May 2010. This was done without the knowledge or approval of committee members or staff and in violation of our written agreements.

Further, this type of behavior would not have been possible had the CIA allowed the committee to conduct the review of documents here in the Senate. In short, this was the exact sort of CIA interference in our investigation that we sought to avoid at the outset.

I went to the White House to raise the issue with the then-White House counsel. In May 2010 he recognized the severity of the situation and the grave implications of executive branch personnel interfering with an official congressional investigation. The matter was resolved with a renewed commitment from the White House counsel and the CIA that there would be no further unauthorized access to the committee's network or removal of access to CIA documents already provided to the committee.

On May 17, 2010, the CIA's then-Director of Congressional Affairs apologized on behalf of the CIA for removing the documents. And that, as far as I was concerned, put the incident aside. This event was separate from the documents provided that were part of the internal Panetta review which occurred later, and which I will describe next.

At some point in 2010, committee staff searching the documents that had been made available found draft versions of what is now called the internal Panetta review. We believe

these documents were written by CIA personnel to summarize and analyze the materials that had been provided to the committee for its review. The Panetta review documents were no more highly classified than other information we had received for our investigation. In fact, the documents appeared based on the same information already provided to the committee.

What was unique and interesting about the internal documents was not their classification level but, rather, their analysis and acknowledgment of significant CIA wrongdoing. To be clear, the committee staff did not hack into CIA computers to obtain these documents, as has been suggested in the press. The documents were identified using the search tool provided by the CIA to search the documents provided to the committee. We have no way to determine who made the internal Panetta review documents available to the committee.

Further, we do not know whether the documents were provided intentionally by the CIA, unintentionally by the CIA, or intentionally by a whistleblower. In fact, we know that over the years on multiple occasions the staff have asked the CIA about documents made available for our investigation. At times the CIA has simply been unaware that these specific documents were provided to the committee. And while this is alarming, it is also important to note that more than 6.2 million pages of documents have been provided. This is simply a massive amount of records. As I described earlier, as part of its standard process for reviewing records, the committee staff printed copies of the internal Panetta review and made electronic copies of the committee's computers at the facility. The staff did not rely on these internal Panetta review documents when drafting the final 6,300-page committee study. But it was significant that the internal Panetta review had documented at least some of the very same troubling matters already uncovered by the committee staff, which is not surprising in that they were looking at the same information.

There is a claim in the press and elsewhere that the marks on these documents should have caused the staff to stop reading them and turn them over to the CIA. I reject that claim completely. As with many other documents provided to the committee at the CIA facility, some of the internal Panetta review documents—some—contained markings indicating that they were ''deliberative'' and/or ''privileged.'' This was not especially noteworthy to staff. In fact, CIA has provided thousands of internal documents to include CIA legal guidance and talking points prepared for the CIA Director, some of which were marked as being ''deliberative'' or ''privileged.''

Moreover, the CIA has officially provided such documents to the committee here in the Senate. In fact, the CIA's official June 27, 2013 response to the committee study which Director Brennan delivered to me personally is labeled ''deliberative process, privileged document.''

We have discussed this with the Senate legal counsel who has confirmed that Congress does not recognize these claims of privilege when it comes to documents provided to Congress for our oversight duties. These were documents provided by the executive branch pursuant to an authorized congressional oversight investigation, so we believe we had every right to review and keep the documents.

There are also claims in the press that the Panetta internal review documents, having been created in 2009 and 2010, were outside the date range of the committee's document request or the terms of the committee study. This, too, is inaccurate. The committee's document requests were not limited in time. In fact, as I have previously announced, the committee study includes significant information on the May 2011 Osama bin Laden operation, which obviously postdated the detention and interrogation program.

At some time after the committee staff identified and reviewed the internal Panetta review documents, access to the vast majority of them was removed by the CIA. We believe this happened in 2010, but we have no way of knowing the specifics, nor do we know why the documents were removed. The staff was focused on reviewing the tens of thousands of new documents that continue to arrive on a regular basis.

Our work continued until December 2012 when the Intelligence Committee approved a 6,300-page committee study of the CIA's detention and interrogation program and sent the executive report to the executive branch for comment. The CIA provided its response to the study on June 27, 2013.

As CIA Director Brennan has stated, the CIA officially agrees with some of our study, but, as has been reported, the CIA disagrees and disputes important parts of it. And this is important. Some of these important parts the CIA now disputes in our committee study are clearly acknowledged in the CIA's own internal Panetta review. To say the least, this is puzzling. How can the CIA's official response to our study stand factually in conflict with its own internal review?

Now after noting the disparity between the official CIA response to the committee study and the internal Panetta review, the committee staff securely transported a printed portion of the draft internal Panetta review from the committee's secure room at the CIA-leased facility to the secure committee spaces in the Hart Senate office building. And let me be clear about this. I mentioned earlier the exchange of letters that Senator Bond and I had with Director Panetta in 2009 over the handling of information for his review. The letters set out a process whereby the committee would provide specific CIA documents to CIA reviewers before bringing them back to our secure offices here on Capitol Hill.

The CIA review was designed specifically to make sure that committee documents available to all staff and members did not include certain kinds of information, most importantly the true names of nonsupervisory CIA personnel and the names of specific countries in which the CIA operated detention sites. We had agreed upfront that our report didn't need to include this information, and so we agreed to redact it from materials leaving the CIA's facility.

In keeping with the spirit of the agreements, the portion of the internal Panetta review at the Hart building in our safe has been redacted. It does not contain names of nonsupervisory CIA personnel or information identifying detention site locations. In other words, our staff did just what the CIA personnel would have done had they reviewed the documents.

There are several reasons why the draft summary of the Panetta review was brought to our secure spaces at the Hart building. Let me list them: No. 1, the significance of the internal review, given disparities between it and the June 2013 CIA response to the committee's study. The internal Panetta review summary, now at the secure committee office in Hart, is an especially significant document, as it corroborates critical information in the committee's 6,300-page study that the CIA's official response either objects to, denies, minimizes, or ignores.

Unlike the official response, these Panetta review documents were in agreement with the committee's findings. That is what makes them so significant and important to protect.

When the internal Panetta review documents disappeared from the committee's computer system, this suggested once again that the CIA had removed documents already provided to the committee in violation of CIA agreements and White House assurances that the CIA would cease such activities.

As I have detailed, the CIA has previously withheld and destroyed information about its detention and interrogation program, including its decision in 2005 to destroy interrogation videotapes over the objections of the Bush White House and the Director of National Intelligence. Based on the above, there was a need to preserve and protect the internal Panetta review in the committee's own secure spaces. The relocation of the internal Panetta review was lawful and handled in a manner consistent with its classification. No law prevents the relocation of a document in the committee's possession from a CIA facility to secure committee offices on Capitol Hill. As I mentioned before, the document was handled and transported in a manner consistent with its classification, redacted appropriately, and it remained secure with restricted access in committee spaces.

Now the January 15, 2014, meeting with Director John Brennan. In late 2013, I requested in writing that the CIA provide a final and complete version of the internal Panetta review to the committee, as opposed to the partial document the committee currently possesses.

In December, during an open committee hearing, Senator MARK UDALL echoed this request. In early January 2014, the CIA informed the committee it would not provide the internal Panetta review to the committee citing the deliberative nature of the document.

Shortly thereafter, on January 15, 2014, CIA Director Brennan requested an emergency meeting to inform me and Vice Chairman CHAMBLISS that without prior notification or approval, CIA personnel had conducted a ''search''—that was John Brennan's word—of the committee computers at the offsite facility. This search involved not only a search of documents provided by the committee to the CIA but also a search of the stand-alone and walled-off committee network drive containing the committee's own internal work product and communications.

According to Brennan, the computer search was conducted in response to indications that some members of the committee staff might already have had access to the internal Panetta review. The CIA did not ask the committee or its staff if the committee had access to the internal Panetta review or how we obtained it.

Instead, the CIA just went and searched the committee's computers. The CIA has still not asked the committee any questions about how the committee acquired the Panetta review. In place of asking any questions, the CIA's unauthorized search of the committee computers was followed by an allegation—which we have now seen repeated anonymously in the press—that the committee staff had somehow obtained the document through unauthorized or criminal means, perhaps to include hacking into the CIA's computer network.

As I have described, this is not true. The document was made available to the staff at the offsite facility and it was located using a CIA-provided search tool running a query of the information provided to the committee pursuant to its investigation.

Director Brennan stated that the CIA search had determined that the committee staff had copies of the internal Panetta review on the committee staff's shared drive and had accessed them numerous times. He indicated at the meeting that he was going to order further forensic investigation of the committee network to learn more about activities of the committee's oversight staff.

Two days after the meeting, on January 17, I wrote a letter to Director Brennan objecting to any further CIA investigation due to the separation of powers constitutional issues that the search raised. I followed this with a second letter on January 23 to the Director, asking 12 specific questions about the CIA's actions—questions that the CIA has refused to answer.

Some of the questions in my letter related to the full scope of the CIA's search of our computer network. Other questions related to who had authorized and conducted the search and what legal basis the CIA claimed gave it authority to conduct the search. Again, the CIA has not provided answers to any of my questions.

My letter also laid out my concern about the legal and constitutional implications of the CIA's actions. Based on what Director Brennan has informed us, I have grave concerns that the CIA's search may well have violated the separation of powers principles embodied in the U.S. Constitution, including the speech and debate clause. It may have undermined the constitutional framework essential to effective congressional oversight of intelligence activities or any other government function. I have asked for an apology and a recognition that this CIA search of computers used by its oversight committee was inappropriate. I have received neither. Besides the constitutional implication, the CIA's search may also have violated the Fourth Amendment, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, as well as Executive Order 12333, which prohibits the CIA from conducting domestic searches or surveillance.

Days after the meeting with Director Brennan, the CIA inspector general David Buckley learned of the CIA search and began an investigation into the CIA's activities. I have been informed that Mr. Buckley has referred the matter to the Department of Justice given the possibility of a criminal violation by CIA personnel.

Let me note, because the CIA has refused to answer the questions in my January 23 letter and the CIA inspector general is ongoing, I have limited information about exactly what the CIA did in conducting its search.

Weeks later, I was also told that after the inspector general referred the CIA's activities to the Department of Justice, the acting counsel general of the CIA filed a crimes report with the Department of Justice concerning the committee staff's actions.

I have not been provided the specifics of these allegations or been told whether the Department has initiated a criminal investigation based on the allegations of the CIA's acting general counsel.

As I mentioned before, our staff involved in this matter have the appropriate clearances, handled this sensitive material according to established procedures and practice to protect classified information, and were provided access to the Panetta review by the CIA itself. As a result there is no legitimate reason to allege to the Justice Department that the Senate staff may have committed a crime. I view the acting counsel general's referral as a potential effort to intimidate this staff, and I am not taking it lightly.

I should note that for most, if not all, of the CIA's detention and interrogation program, the now-acting general counsel was a lawyer in the CIA's Counterterrorism Center—the unit within which the CIA managed and carried out this program. From mid-2004 until the official termination of the detention and interrogation program in January of 2009, he was the unit's chief lawyer. He is mentioned by name more than 1,600 times in our study.

Now this individual is sending a crimes report to the Department of Justice on the actions of congressional staff—the same congressional staff who researched and drafted a report that details how CIA officers, including the acting general counsel himself, provided inaccurate information to the Department of Justice about the program.

Let me say this: All Senators rely on their staff to be their eyes and ears and to carry out our duties. The staff members of the intelligence committee are dedicated professionals who are motivated to do what is best for our Nation. The staff members who have been working on this study and this report have devoted years of their lives to it, wading through the horrible details of a CIA program that never, never, never should have existed.

They have worked long hours and produced a report unprecedented in its comprehensive attention to detail in the history of the Senate. They are now being threatened with legal jeopardy just as the final revisions to the report are being made so parts of it can be declassified and released to the American people.

I felt I needed to come to the floor to correct the public record and to give the American people the facts about what the dedicated committee staff have been working so hard on for the last several years as part of the committee's investigation.

I also want to reiterate to my colleagues my desire to have all updates to the committee report completed this month and approved for declassification. We are not going to stop. I intend to move to have the findings, conclusions, and the executive summary of the report sent to the President for declassification and release to the American people. The White House has indicated publicly—and to me personally—that it supports declassification and release. If the Senate can declassify this report, we will be able to ensure that an un-American, brutal program of detention and interrogation will never again be considered or permitted.

The recent actions I have just laid out make this a defining moment for the oversight of our intelligence committee. How this will be resolved will show whether the intelligence committee can be effective in monitoring

and investigating our Nation's intelligence activities or whether our work can be thwarted by those we oversee.

I believe it is critical that the committee and the Senate reaffirm our oversight role and our independence under the Constitution of the United States.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while the distinguished Senator from California is on the floor, I will tell her through the Chair that I have had the privilege of serving in this body for 40 years. I have heard thousands of speeches on this floor. I cannot think of any speech by any Member of either party as important as the one the Senator from California just gave.

What she is saying is that if we are going to protect the separation of powers and the concept of congressional oversight, then she has taken the right steps to do that.

The very first vote I cast in this body was for the Church Committee, which examined the excesses of the CIA and other agencies—everything from assassinations to spying on those who were protesting the war in Vietnam. There was a famous George Tames picture, where then-chairman of the Armed Services Committee John Stennis was berating Senator Frank Church for proposing this committee. He said that he, Senator Stennis, could find out what he wanted to find out but didn't really want to know everything.

I was standing behind George Tames when he took that picture in my first caucus. There is pressure on the junior Members—and I was the most junior Member of the Senate at that time—not to vote for the Church Committee.

Senator Mike Mansfield said to me—as did Senator Fritz Mondale and others—that the Senate is bigger than any one Senator. We come and go, but the Senate lasts. If we do not stand up for the protection of the separation of powers and our ability to do oversight—especially when conduct has happened that is, in all likelihood, criminal conduct on the part of a government agency—then what do we stand for? We are supposed to be the conscience of the Nation.

The Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, has spoken to our conscience—to every one of the 100 Senators, men and women, of both parties. She has spoken to our conscience. Now let's stand up for this country. Let's stand up as the Senate should and as the Senator from California has.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. 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.

COMMENDING SENATOR FEINSTEIN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to take a minute to commend Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN. There is not a more dignified, competent Senator in this body than DIANNE FEINSTEIN. She works tireless hours leading the Intelligence Committee. It is a very difficult job, always away from the press, one that is very important to our country.

Her statement outlined I believe one of most important principles we must maintain; that is, separation of powers. The Founding Fathers were visionary in creating this great government of ours, three separate but equal branches of government: executive, judicial, and legislative.

Her statement today pronounced, in a very firm fashion, that must continue, that separation of powers. The work the committee has done over the last many years dealing with what went on in the prior administration is imperative.

I do not know much of the details as to what they are working on, but I know what they have been working on generally. I admire what she has done and the committee has done, and especially her statement today was one of courage and conviction. We know, those of us who have worked with her over the years, that no one has more courage and conviction than DIANNE FEINSTEIN.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

BATTLING DISABLING DISORDERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. As a survivor of polio as a child, I have always empathized with children battling life-threatening or disabling disorders. I also have a special place in my heart for those who work day in and day out to help kids who are battling childhood diseases. That is especially true when these researchers and physicians are working with children in my home State of Kentucky at places such as the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky, and Kosair Children's Hospital. That is why I have long been a strong supporter of pediatric medical research.

I cosponsored and helped shepherd the Childhood Cancer Act of 2008 through the Senate. I also voted for the Combating Autism Act of 2006 and, as Republican leader, helped to secure its reauthorization in 2011. These were not partisan initiatives. They were areas where the two parties had generally worked together to advance the common good. Maybe that is why we don't hear that much about them, but I think we all agree there is more to be done.

Late last year the House passed bipartisan legislation, which I strongly support, to shift funding from lower priority programs to pediatric research, including childhood cancers, autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X, and countless other disorders and diseases that affect our children and don't yet have a cure. These efforts could be paid for by using taxpayer funding of the Republican and Democratic political conventions.

Frankly, it is hard to imagine that there would be any objection to moving these funds to do something we can all agree is a very high priority, and that is pediatric research.

Thanks to the leadership of House Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR, the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Savings Act, which was named in honor of a young girl from Virginia, passed the House on a wide bipartisan majority with nearly 300 votes. After it arrived in the Senate, I asked my colleagues on the Republican side to pass it and send it to the President for his signature, because I saw the positive impact these funds would have on pediatric research. All Republicans agreed to pass the bill on January 7, and today marks the 63rd day that Senate Democrats have failed to act—although I must say I understand it has now cleared and I think that is excellent. It is about time we passed this bill out of the Senate. I believe we are about to do that. This is the type of bipartisan legislation that should move easily through the Senate. We should be able to pass the measure today and it is my understanding we will be able to do that.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am pleased today the Senate will pass legislation I support, the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act. This bipartisan legislation honors the memory of Gabriella Miller, a young girl from Leesburg, VA who was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor at age 9.

In the face of her own diagnosis, Gabriella worked to help other children with pediatric diseases. She raised money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, spoke at local and national awareness events and authored a special writing in a children's book about cancer.

Gabriella and her family started the Smashing Walnuts Foundation, dedicated to finding a cure for childhood brain cancer. The organization was named for the walnut-sized tumor in her brain. Gabriella passed away last year, but her dedication to raising awareness and funding for pediatric disease research is part of her legacy.

The Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act will require the director of the National Institutes of Health to allocate $126 million—$12.6 million each year for 10 years—of appropriated funds for pediatric research. The money would be allocated into needed research grants for pediatric autism, cancer and other diseases.

The fight for funding pediatric research is far from over but this is a step in the right direction. As Gabriella said, ''You may have a bad day today, but there's always a bright shining star to look forward to tomorrow.'' It is my hope that this legislation will help fund research that leads to future treatments and cures.

I would like to thank Senator MARK WARNER and Senator ORRIN HATCH for supporting this legislation and Congressman CANTOR for championing the bill through the House of Representatives.

This bipartisan effort is about making sure pediatric disease research is a high priority. I am proud we were able to pass legislation that honors Gabriella Miller, her family, and her inspiring work as an advocate for pediatric disease research.

GABRIELLA MILLER KIDS FIRST RESEARCH SAVINGS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 289, H.R. 2019.

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

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

An act (H.R. 2019) to eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we on this side accept this measure, but I do have a few things I want to say before saying there is no objection.

Sequestration cut $1.6 billion from NIH last year—$1.6 billion. In the omnibus we passed, we gave them current level funding, but that hole for NIH is still there. NIH has lost huge amounts of money over the past few years in the way that we have struggled to get financing for our country. We in the past have been the guiding light for research on diseases and conditions. We are still there, but we are losing ground. Every country in the world looks at the NIH as a place they would like to be.

This is a small amount of money, but it will be extremely helpful to the NIH.

I would hope my Republican colleagues would join with us in increasing funding for the National Institutes of Health.

Senator DURBIN is going to introduce a bill today that will fund NIH at levels they need to be funded. It has to be paid for, but it is so very important that we not claim victory for the NIH because of this. It is a small victory and I accept that. I think it is extremely important that we understand the NIH is billions of dollars short of being able to maintain the place they have had in years past.

I repeat, they have been losing ground. The last 5 years have been extremely tough for them. We need to do better for the National Institutes of Health. We have scientists around our country who want to do good work. They want to devote their lives to medical research, but they are not applying for these grants. So many of them are turned down that they are basically—well, maybe I won't even bother trying.

I am pleased to hear the Republican leader move forward. It is something that is a small step forward to help children who badly need help in the ways of these diseases, which are so difficult for the kids, of course, for the parents and families and certainly our country.

Again, before we leave this issue, I would hope that the appropriations process we are going to go through this year will help us get money. What we have done today is only an authorization, and the public out there should understand it is only an authorization. Until we have appropriations going, there will be nothing going to pediatric research at the National Institutes of Health. We have to carry forward and not have all of these banner headlines that the kids are going to suddenly get help they deserve. That will not happen until we appropriate money for this.

I do not object.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 2019) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I wish to reiterate what we have done. H.R. 2019, which will now go to the President for signature—the original author is Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR in the House—will eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the NIH.

GLOBAL WARMING

Mr. President, our friends on the other side who run the Senate spent a lot of time talking last night. I am not sure what any of it accomplished. The reviews seem to be pretty terrible. The AP dubbed the talk-athon a lot of hot air about a lot of hot air and said the speeches were little more than theatrics.

Maybe, as some speculate, Senate Democrats were just trying to please the left-coast billionaire who plans to finance so many of their campaigns.

The talking Senators didn't really introduce any new legislation. I didn't hear the talking Senators announce votes on bills already pending before the Senate. They basically just talked and talked and tossed out political attacks at a party that doesn't even control the Democratic-run Senate.

No wonder the American people have such a low opinion of Congress.

The so-called talk-athon perfectly illustrated something else too—the emptiness of today's Washington Democratic majority.

I remember a time when Democrats could say with some legitimacy that they were the party for working people. Those days seem to be receding further and further into the rearview mirror. Because whether it is addressing the opportunity gap in the ObamaCare economy or building the Keystone Pipeline or last night's whatever that was, Washington Democrats keep opting for the empty political stunt over the reasonable, substantive solutions for the middle class.

Here is the thing: We need two serious political parties in this country debating serious ideas. When we see Washington Democrats throwing seriousness out the window like this, it is bad for everybody. If Washington Democrats are actually serious about all of the talk last night, they should follow it with action. The Democrats control the Senate. Bring up, bring up the cap-and-tax bill and let's have a debate, put it on the agenda, and let's debate it.

As the AP noted, despite all of the bravado, Democratic leaders made it clear they have no plan to bring a Democratic climate bill to the floor this year. So what was all the talking about?

Our friends on the other side set up the agenda. Call up the bill. The reason they won't isn't because of obstructionism or whatever else they might want to claim. It is because too many Members of their own party would vote against it.

Remember, Washington Democrats couldn't even pass that bill when they controlled the Senate with a filibuster-proof majority back in 2009 or 2010. More importantly, the American people don't want a national energy tax that would make their utility bills even higher than they already are.

Look. Americans have widely differing opinions about how Washington should be approaching environmental policy. That much is very clear. But one thing we should all be able to agree upon is this: Imposing massive restrictions upon our own economy, devastating the lives of our own mining

families, and imposing higher energy bills on our own seniors makes about zero sense, while huge carbon emitters such as China and India continue to ramp up energy consumption.

Global carbon emissions would hardly be affected anyway, but millions of lives here certainly would be. The American middle class would be deeply and adversely affected.

Left, right, and center, we should all be able to agree this is simply nonsensical. What we should all be working for is an ''all of the above'' energy strategy that will utilize more of our domestic resources to create jobs and meet America's energy needs. It is a smart and focused approach that accommodates both our economy and our environment, and it is one that Republicans strongly support and Democrats should as well.

Democrats should also work with us to pass the legislation that would allow Congress to actually vote on environmental regulation to ensure Washington's rules strike the right balance between protecting the environment and creating jobs. That legislation is so important to my home State of Kentucky.

Case in point. I spent this past weekend with hundreds of coal miners and their families at a rally in eastern Kentucky, and I heard from them how the administration's war on coal is hurting so many who struggle every day just to get by. It is a war that is taking away hope and destroying jobs.

Let's be honest. The most immediate crisis in the Obama era is the jobs crisis—the jobs crisis. It always has been. If only our friends on the other side were willing to talk a little less and work with us a little more. There is so much we could get done on that front. There is so much we could be doing to create jobs and grow the middle class today. We could build a Keystone Pipeline that would create thousands of American jobs right away. We could increase U.S. exports and expand American jobs with trade legislation. We could reform our tax and regulatory structures to free small businesses so they can grow and hire and enrich their communities. And we could pass the dozens of House-passed jobs bills just sitting on the majority leader's desk—so many that even House Democrats are starting to complain. These are the kinds of things we could get done once Washington Democrats show they are ready to work with us.

Talk is cheap. We know that. And America's middle class is tired of all the talk. They want action. Let's provide it on jobs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICAN ENERGY RENAISSANCE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, with the very unfortunate events in Ukraine in the headlines and the Ukrainian people close to our hearts, I rise today to speak to a topic that has significance not only for that European crisis and for our own well-being but also bearing a little bit on the longer term subject of climate change, which, of course, was a big discussion here last night.

This morning I am speaking to the American energy renaissance and its broader benefits to us all.

Today American technology and know-how are delivering energy abundance, keeping energy affordable, enabling energy to be cleaner than the next most likely alternative, permitting us to rely on ever more diverse energy sources, and, finally, improving energy security for our people here in this country and around the world.

America's overall production of nearly every type of energy is rising. The efficiency of just about everything—whether it is our vehicles or whether it is our buildings—is increasing. And in comparing our supply with our demand, we are rapidly approaching a self-sufficiency rate of 90 percent. The American energy revolution has generated a variety of welcome benefits. It is creating jobs. It has generated revenues. It has helped reduce both energy prices and price volatility. And as our Nation imports less, the simple fact is there is more energy available for others. That, in turn, is creating the kinds of supply conditions in the world oil market that allow all of us to deal with the bad actors from a position of relative strength.

There was a recent essay in Foreign Affairs which argued that energy has been viewed as a strategic liability in the United States since back in the 1970s. Now energy is becoming a strategic asset—a strategic asset—and one that can boost the U.S. economy and grant Washington newfound leverage around the world. It is really hard to disagree with that.

The question then becomes, What will we do with this strategic asset? How will we use our newfound position? There was a survey of responses to Russia's disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty, and of those prudent areas where the United States might go. Energy is clearly among the most major strategic assets we possess. How we use it to bring about geopolitical stability can really define our leadership in the world.

Our first real challenge as a nation is how to keep this American resurgence going. There are two specific areas where we have to make some decisions; that is, whether to grant access to new lands and new markets, and that will go a long way in determining whether we actually do that.

As I noted, America's total energy production has increased dramatically in recent years, but within those numbers there is a serious dichotomy. Nearly the entire oil and gas production resurgence here in the United States has occurred on State and private lands, not the millions of acres managed by the Federal Government. Despite the discussion of all of the above and no small amount of credit taken by the administration, combined carbon fuel production on Federal lands actually fell from 2008 to 2012. That is a disappointing trend which, in my view, needs to be reversed.

Consider, for example, the opportunity we are missing in my State of Alaska. Thirty years ago, in March 1984, Alaskan crude oil production stood at 1.6 million barrels per day. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System had been completed just a decade earlier. There were debates over opening new areas to production and even allowing exports of crude oil from the State, but the Federal Government did not act at that time. It did not seize Alaska's best and most obvious opportunities. Production peaked at 2.1 million barrels per day in March 1988. It has been on general decline ever since then. Alaska's production has dipped below the half million barrels per day marker several times since 2012. This is a fall of nearly 75 percent from its high.

Back home we keep talking about a pipeline that is less than half full. The difference is not only geography, it is also policy. Our Federal policies are not working as they should. State policies, combined with private sector inventiveness, powerful as they are, cannot overcome the Federal barriers. In North Dakota, where we see a booming energy market, only 4 percent of that State is federally held. In Texas, it is just 2 percent of Federal lands. In Alaska, 62 percent of our lands are Federal, and most of our untapped resources are within these Federal areas.

Alaska's falling production is a missed opportunity—a missed opportunity—to create jobs, to generate revenues, to stabilize world energy prices, to diversify world energy supplies. And it is not the only place in America where potential growth is going unrealized. We are passing up tremendous opportunities off of our Atlantic coast, in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, and in the Rocky Mountains West. We also have increasingly burdensome regulations that slow the pace of development in the Federal lands that are open.

All of this highlights the need to reexamine our Federal energy policies and really reorient them for a new century.

That leads us to the subject of exports.

Back in January I laid out the case for why we need to renovate the architecture of U.S. energy trade. We have substantial opportunities for exports of coal, petroleum products, natural gas, natural gas liquids, renewable technology, nuclear technology, and even crude oil. I have called for the lifting of the de facto prohibition on crude oil exports as a preemptive measure. I say what we need to do is lift it to prevent

future losses of production and jobs when our trade restrictions inevitably collide with this surge of light tight oil and condensate production that comes out. The conversation I hoped to frame last year in January when I submitted my ''Energy 20/20'' report is really very well underway.

My point is that we must increase the value of energy as an American strategic asset for global security and price stability.

I wish to say a couple of words—maybe more than a couple but a few words—about climate change. Many groups have formed to go on the offensive to ''wake Congress up'' on the issue of climate. They want to force the Nation to talk about this subject no matter what the issue of the day might be. Unfortunately, they also seem to want to blame Republican Members and somehow also to adopt policies that this body has rejected year after year. So much of the climate change conversation seems to be defined by old ideas that have been rejected. It seems that if one is not supportive of yet another regulatory edifice, either through cap and trade, a carbon tax, or letting the EPA expand its authority without any checks by the people's representatives in Congress, then somehow or other one is against the environment. I reject that.

I want to see greater balance. I know we can achieve it, and I think it is important that, again, we reframe the conversation. I think finding agreement on environmental policy is hard, but it is not impossible. I think what we need to do is kind of pull back and change the conversation we are having.

What I want to remind my colleagues of is that part of the opposition I have had to some of the ideas I have heard from folks is based on what those policies would mean for our affordability of energy. Here I mean not just for Americans who are energy insecure, including residents in my State and in some of our most remote areas who already face exorbitant energy costs, but also the 1.3 billion people across the globe with no reliable access to electricity. Worldwide—worldwide—families are struggling to attain the basic necessities of life. Although many portray climate change as our most pressing moral issue, I would suggest it is but one of many. Energy poverty and energy insecurity are others, and ones that we simply cannot ignore and we should certainly not make worse.

Another part of my opposition to cap and trade or a carbon tax is based on what we have seen in Europe as compared to what has actually happened here in the United States. Without climate legislation, but with the advent of increased domestic production here through shale gas production, our greenhouse gas emissions are now 11 percent below our rate of emissions in 2005. Yet our friends across the Atlantic, who actually did pass cap and trade several years ago, haven't exactly seen the expected results. In the face of weak growth, high unemployment, and high debt, some European nations are now dialing back the extremely expensive subsidies they have offered and, at the same time, many of our NATO allies are clamoring for the cheap and the abundant natural gas that we are now producing on our State and our private lands, and they are importing our abundant and affordable coal.

The unfolding situation in Ukraine also highlights the compelling importance of energy security—something that neither a carbon tax, cap and trade or any climate bill we have seen in the Senate has properly accounted for.

Then there is the approach the President seems to want to take. Earlier this year he threatened to use his regulatory authority to regulate greenhouse gases if Congress failed to act. It is really quite a choice here. He suggests either to pass legislation that we don't like or he will enact regulations that we don't like, either way to be carried out under the Clean Air Act, just not according to the Clean Air Act.

It is difficult to consider really whether this is a serious offer. What we can say, though, is this threat and the rulemakings that will follow is contrary—contrary—to what our forefathers envisioned. Executive authority foregoes the benefits and protections of a legislative process and it curbs the debate that is needed to ensure fair and balanced policy, and particularly in this area where we need to ensure they are fair and balanced policies.

To effectively combat climate change we have to safeguard our economy. Prosperity is key to the resources that we will need to make progress. The Nation has to pursue all forms of energy and stress energy security. We cannot exclusively count on renewables to achieve a low carbon environment. Emission free nuclear energy has to be part of the solution. Technology must play a role in reaching the goals that we set for our country.

Finally, as we discuss the issues and the approaches to these issues, we have to do so with humility, keenly aware of the unintended consequences that could be worse than no action at all. Climate change is a global issue that requires global acknowledgment of the issue and global action. But through it all we must be deeply concerned and always aware about the impacts of our actions on the individual family.

I spend a lot of time in the rural parts of my State. We don't even call them rural; we use the terminology ''bush'' because it is just so remote, and these are areas where the only way to access the communities is either by air or by boat, up the river by barge. Supplies are brought in two times a year, if you live on the river system. You look around and you may be able to see the impact of climate change, and that is an awareness the people in this region have, but first and foremost, these people need to be able to live. This is where they have lived for thousands of years.

When you appreciate the costs they are paying for their energy right here and right now, I can't support anything that is going to increase the energy cost for the people in my State who are already paying—some—close to 50 percent of their income for fuel to stay warm in the wintertime.

I have one letter here that I received just last week from a village by the name of Kwigillingok. This is an area out in the coastal villages region. In this letter from the tribal council they state:

> The current cost of heating fuel is 6.02 per gallon and gasoline at 6.52.

If I were to suggest to the fine people in Kwigillingok that in order to arrest what we may be seeing with increased emissions around the globe that their energy prices are going to double, that the cost of their heating fuel is going to go from $6.02 per gallon to $12, how will these people live?

We have to be aware of the energy insecurity, the energy poverty in far too many places in this country and truly around the world.

So as we discuss these very important issues about energy and how we do right by all, again let us do so with a level of humility and a level of respect for people all throughout our Nation.

I see that my colleague from Texas is here, another fine producing State. In fact, Texas is a State that is really doing quite well right now when it comes to our energy and our energy resources. Through the efforts of States such as Texas, North Dakota, and California we are seeing a true resurgence in our energy production, and I think an opportunity for us as a Nation to again not only provide for our energy security as a Nation but to provide for security and stability on the global scene as well.

With that, I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senator from Alaska for her wise words. I wasn't here for all of her remarks, but I was able to hear the percentage of her State that is owned by the Federal Government, which is extraordinary. I think she cited roughly 2 percent in Texas. That was a deal we cut in 1845, and it turned out it was a pretty good deal because Texas lands are overwhelmingly private lands rather than government lands.

I think part of the point she was making as well is that while we have seen a resurgence of activity on private land, particularly when it comes to the shale gas, and on oil plays on public lands we haven't seen that same sort of productivity. If the Federal Government would simply take the same approach that the private sector is taking when it comes to developing these God-given natural resources, it could really boost our economy further and lower unemployment.

So I thank my colleague for her wise words this morning.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to talk about a number of subjects starting, of course, with the fact that millions of Americans have lost their health insurances because of the unintended consequences of the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare.

We also know that in addition to losing the coverage they had, which they were told they could keep, many have now been forced to pay higher premiums. The sticker shock from that has been something we have been reading a lot about. But whether there is sticker shock because of the higher premiums, many people have been finding that their deductibles are huge, making them effectively self-insured up to $5,000 for their health care costs, definitely not something they were promised as a result of ObamaCare.

We also know that roughly 10 million people, about 10½ million people, remain unemployed in America and that 3.8 million of them have been unemployed for more than 6 months. Since the recession has ended—and, of course, a recession is, technically speaking, two consecutive quarters of negative growth—I think, if asked, most Americans today feel as though we are still in a recession because of what is happening to them personally. We know that since the recession ended, median household income—one measure of economic health in the country—has gone down by $2,500. So at the same time people are experiencing higher costs for health care, for groceries, for gasoline, and other necessities of life, they are seeing that their median household income has declined by $2,500—a double whammy.

According to a Joint Economic Committee analysis, if the Obama economic recovery had been as strong as an average post-1960 recovery, we would currently have millions more private sector jobs.

I had the pleasure this last weekend of hearing a fascinating debate with Larry Summers, economic adviser and former president of Harvard University—a brilliant economist—and another brilliant economist, Senator Phil Gramm, who taught at Texas A&M. Senator Gramm was making the point that if we had had a typical recovery after a recession, it would have been a V-shaped recovery. We did not get that. The economy continues to grow slowly, unusually slowly, and they were both exploring the reasons for that. A lot has to do with uncertainty about the role of the Federal Government when it comes to taxes, when it comes to regulation, and when it comes to our escalating national debt—now over $17 trillion—and what that might mean in the future.

But add all this up and Americans are continuing to feel increasingly pessimistic about the state of our economy, the state of their personal health care relationships with their doctors and hospitals, and the future of the country. That is something all of us ought to be profoundly concerned about.

Yet rather than promote real health care reform that actually deals with the unaffordability of health coverage or something that will get the economy growing again, my friends across the aisle, many of them, spent last night—all night—talking about climate change. That is right, climate change.

So the message to millions of people out of work or who have lost their health coverage or to people who are living from paycheck to paycheck because median household income has actually declined is that what America really needs right now is more taxes and more regulation and the big government that goes along with it.

It is easy to see why many people think Washington is just out of touch with the concerns of average hardworking American families, and last night was an example. It is hard to square the message with the genuine concern for the middle class and middle-class prosperity. I mean, if we are really concerned about hardworking American families working from paycheck to paycheck just to make ends meet, I doubt we would have an all-night debate on climate change.

If my friends across the aisle really did believe that job creation should be our top priority, they wouldn't have wasted precious time with last night's political stunt. For that matter, they wouldn't be opposing the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would single-handedly create thousands of well-paying American jobs.

I realize that many people have good-faith concerns about the long-term implications of rising greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next three decades worldwide emissions are indeed projected to surge. But that has almost nothing to do with the United States and almost everything to do with developing countries such as China. As a matter of fact, the ranking member of the energy committee, the Senator from Alaska, and certainly the Senator from Wyoming know this very well. One of the reasons why carbon emissions in the United States are going down is because of the natural gas renaissance we have seen—because of unconventional shale gas exploration in places such as Texas and all around the country. So we are finding ways to reduce carbon emissions for those who are worried about those, as a result of taking advantage of the resources we have here in the United States, together with the innovative technology that is used to develop it.

Those of us who oppose bigger, more intrusive government in the form of cap and trade legislation or higher taxes such as carbon taxes or other job-killing greenhouse gas regulations are not denialists. I prefer to say we are realists.

We understand America's contributions to global emissions over the coming decades will be relatively minuscule. We understand the economic costs of President Obama's regulations through the Environmental Protection Agency would vastly outweigh the environmental benefit.

So why do they want to put a big wet blanket on the economy and on the aspirations and dreams of hard-working families in order to pursue policies in which the negative will vastly outweigh the positive benefit to American families?

In fact, the Obama EPA itself has admitted its proposed greenhouse gas rule would not have a notable impact on U.S. carbon dioxide emissions until the year 2022.

I would also note, despite having Members of his party talk about climate change all night—which is all it was, talk—there is no legislation they are offering, nor will the majority leader, who controls the agenda of the Senate, bring legislation to the floor to actually vote on it. So it is just talk or, perhaps I can say, it was just a lot of hot air.

Our colleagues across the aisle—including the majority leader who controls the agenda of the floor in the Senate—seem to be content letting the President use his pen and phone, skirting the legislative process, not engaging with Congress to try to do things which actually are the priorities of the American people but instead to rely on unelected EPA bureaucrats. I could be surprised, but I would be surprised to learn if the consensus in America wouldn't be that we should be focusing on policies which create jobs, rather than destroy jobs and punish families in return for meager or nonexistent benefits.

Speaking of destroying jobs and punishing families, the Congressional Budget Office—which is the official budgetary scorekeeper for Congress—recently estimated the President's proposal to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour would actually destroy up to 1 million jobs.

I believe sometimes here in Washington people think those who actually create jobs can absorb regulations, taxes, and other economic burdens, together with the uncertainty many of those policies cause, and it will have no impact on their ability to continue to create jobs, grow jobs or to grow the economy. But the Congressional Budget Office has stated what should perhaps be intuitive, which is, if you raise the cost of doing business on businesses, they are going to have to find someplace to cut.

What that means is they are going to have to cut more people from their jobs. They estimated up to 1 million people would lose their job if we raised

the minimum wage 40 percent to $10.10 an hour.

Remember, in the President's State of the Union Message he said a minimum wage hike like that would help low-income families. It is certainly a mystery to me how it would help a low-income family who is relying on a wage earner to provide income when they end up losing their job as a result of the policy.

So the President's definition of ''help'' is unique, to say the least, because any policy which destroys up to 1 million jobs would be an absolute disaster for low-income families.

The President also made his pitch for a higher minimum wage in the context of his concern about income inequality. He claims to be greatly concerned about income inequality. Yet his policies actually threaten to make it worse.

But don't take my word for it. A news report from a major labor union argues that in its current form, the President's health care law will ''heighten the inequality that the administration seeks to produce.''

These are not political adversaries of our President and his party. These are supporters of the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—who have now said in its current form, unless changed, the Affordable Care Act—or ObamaCare—will heighten the inequality the administration seeks to reduce.

The report also notes that ObamaCare ''threatens the middle class with higher premiums, loss of hours, and a shift from part-time work and less comprehensive coverage.''

I think those would be very troubling words to the President and his allies who passed the Affordable Care Act—or ObamaCare—but so far they have fallen on deaf ears.

Again, this report just in terms of its credibility was not issued by some Republican or conservative organization which was opposed to ObamaCare from the beginning. It was issued by a labor union which supported ObamaCare which has now found that what was promised has not actually been delivered in terms of its implication.

So what union members and their families are learning the hard way is the promise of ObamaCare is very different from the reality. We were promised ObamaCare would actually expand coverage, it would reduce costs, it would help our economy, all without disrupting existing health care arrangements.

In reality, the law has forced millions to lose their coverage and forced millions to pay higher premiums or higher deductibles, effectively being self-insured. Meanwhile, the Congressional Budget Office projects it will effectively shrink America's labor force by 2.5 million full-time workers over the next decade.

Remarkably, the administration now wants us to believe it is actually a good thing so many people are reducing their work hours in order to keep their government-mandated health care. For example, chief White House economist Jason Furman has said working less to keep ObamaCare benefits ''might be a better choice and a better option than what they had before.''

Of course, they don't have a choice to keep what they had before because they have been forced into ObamaCare. If you don't buy the government-mandated insurance, then you are going to be fined by your friendly Federal Government.

But think about it: The White House chief economist is celebrating the possibility of a dramatic decline in American work hours. I would remind Mr. Furman that America's labor force participation is already at historic lows. It is as low as it has been for 30 years. In other words, the percentage of people looking for work in America is at a 30-year low already, and Mr. Furman is celebrating the further depressing impact of ObamaCare on work in America.

All else being equal, a reduction in work hours means a reduction in economic growth. It certainly means a reduction in income for the people working. We know a further reduction of economic growth will make it harder to create new jobs, improve living standards, and achieve broad-based prosperity—something I know we all hope for in America.

This is a dangerous cycle, and it is definitely not something we should be celebrating. It is something we should be fixing.

A truly compassionate agenda—not one that focuses on things which are largely irrelevant to the lives of Americans working families, but a truly compassionate agenda would seek to improve opportunity rather than encourage dependency. A truly compassionate agenda would place a much higher value on the dignity and self-reliance of American workers by making sure they have jobs.

For that matter, a truly compassionate agenda would aim to dismantle ObamaCare and replace it with patient-centered alternatives which encourage work and encourage job creation.

The type of agenda I have described is pretty much the exact opposite of what we have seen over the last 5 years, and the results speak for themselves. There is absolutely no reason we have to accept the status quo. With the right mix of economic policies, America can turn this ship around and restore the strong growth rates and robust job creation we enjoyed in the 1980s and 1990s. We will on this side of the aisle continue to promote such policies, and we look forward to working with our colleagues across the aisle when they finally come around to the realization the path we are heading on now is not one the American people are happy with or that they have to settle for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE THREE ES

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague from Texas for his comments, and I agree with his concerns. These are the same concerns I hear at home in Wyoming.

I was in Buffalo, WY, at a health fair this past weekend. Hundreds of people from the community turned out. They have concerns about the health care law. They have concerns about their take-home pay. They have concerns about their jobs. And Wyoming is an energy State.

I am the only Republican Senator who is both on the energy committee as well as the Environment & Public Works Committee, and so I think about the three Es: energy security, economic growth, and environmental stewardship. We need energy security for our country, economic growth for our citizens, as well as to protect the environment and be good stewards of the land. I believe in Wyoming we continue to do all of those.

The American people have made it very clear that what they want from Washington is a focus on jobs and the economy. This is not what I have heard, though, over the last 24 hours from the Democrats on the other side of the aisle. The American people I talk to want us to make it easier for them to get back to work, to provide for their families, to get the kids back to school so they can go off to work. People's jobs are linked to their identity, to their dignity, to their self-worth. I think more of these regulations make it harder for people to have a job, to keep a job, and to provide for their families.

So we had an all-night talkathon, and what did it accomplish? To me, the only accomplishment was a waste of time and more hot air. It seemed to be a dog-and-pony show to satisfy their big liberal donors.

The majority leader spent part of the weekend in California with a big liberal donor who has promised $100 million to the Democrats on the issue they decided to hold an entire night talkathon on. They had five or six Democratic Senators at this man's home in California basically saying: We want your money. We want your money. This is what the Democrats did.

So they put on an entire dog-and-pony show, showing that Democrats and their leadership—including the majority leader—is beholden to that liberal money that wants to call the tune for this Senate.

It is astonishing this would happen in the United States; that the majority leader of the Senate would take a number of Democratic Senators to California specifically to go to the home of somebody who says: I want to give $100 million to promote what he said was his agenda—his agenda—and make the majority leader dance to that tune. This is what we saw for the last 24 hours.

The majority leader could call a vote tomorrow—he could call it today—on a

national energy tax. I think everybody on this side of the aisle is ready and prepared to vote on that. But for most of these folks, they wanted to just talk all night. They don't actually want to do anything. They just want to talk.

The Democrats control the agenda. They control the majority. They have changed the rules in terms of approving nominees. They have it all lined up.

It is astonishing that the most vulnerable Democrats who are running for office this year didn't show their faces last night. They wanted nothing at all to do with this.

So we hear about regulations which are going to crush jobs and make it harder for people to go to work. As a doctor having taken care of people who are out of work for a long time—and I am sure the Presiding Officer knows people like this as well—I know that being out of work impacts their identity, the way they view themselves, and their human dignity. In fact, it affects their health as well.

As a doctor, I have put together an entire report: ''Red Tape Making Americans Sick,'' a report on the health impacts of high unemployment. Studies show EPA rules—the rules, regulations, and redtape—cost Americans not just their jobs but also their health.

For people who are chronically unemployed, we know there are higher rates of cancer, higher rates of suicide, higher rates of heart disease, higher rates of stroke, and higher rates of abuse—whether it is substance abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse. All of these add to hospital visits, premature deaths, all in communities where there is high joblessness. It is because of regulations which continue to come out of the EPA which are burdensome, which are expensive, which are time consuming. The costs are real, the benefits are theoretical, but yet this is what the Democrats on the other side of the aisle were talking about all night last night.

So I would say, instead of spending 24 hours on extreme regulations which result in a national energy tax, Democrats ought to be listening to the American people and focus on jobs and on the economy.

It is too bad Democrats would rather talk about a national energy tax for 24 hours than vote on the President's budget, a budget which never balances. Then vote on the Keystone XL Pipeline, a pipeline proposal which would bring, according to the State Department, 42,000 more individuals in our country into the workforce or even discuss and vote on other job proposals.

They don't want to talk about job creation ideas. I will continue to do so in terms of the Keystone Pipeline and in terms of exporting liquefied natural gas. We have an abundance in the United States which would be helpful to our economy, helpful to jobs, as well as helpful in our foreign policy as we work toward not just energy security but global security as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from South Dakota.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I want to compliment my colleagues from Wyoming and Texas for talking about the issues that are important to the American people. People in this country care about jobs and the economy. I think one of the reasons there were not more Democratic Senators down here last night is because a lot of them, as some pointed out, hit the snooze button, didn't want to come down here and talk about an issue which they realize ranked very low in people's assessment of what is really important in their daily lives. I think that is probably why most Americans, by and large, tuned out the all-night session we had on the floor.

We did have a number of Senate Democrats who came down and engaged in what they referred to as a talkathon on climate change. I don't know who coined the term ''talkathon'' to describe the event, but it is a perfect term. It really fits, since the event was all talk and no action.

In fact, writing ahead of the talkathon, USA Today noted, and I quote:

> The Democratic effort is cause for some confusion, because these Senators are calling for action in a chamber they control, but without any specific legislation to offer up for a vote or any timetable for action this year.

Well, that is exactly right. Last night's filibuster was not designed to advance any legislation, nor was it a protest about the lack of legislation. After all, the Democrats control the Chamber and they can bring up a bill any time they want. Although last night's event may have had all the trappings of significant Senate action, it was nothing but talk.

If the Democrats really think government action on climate change is so important, one would assume last night they would have used it to debate a bill or try to persuade their leadership to bring one up on the floor. But they didn't, because it is an election year and Democrats are already deeply worried about their election prospects, and they know very well the American people do not like the climate change legislation they have offered up. The climate change bills Democrats have proposed almost invariably involve tax hikes that would drive the cost of energy sky high for ordinary families and kill jobs, all for extremely dubious environmental gains. The last time Congress debated the cap-and-trade bill was in 2009. That bill was estimated to destroy 2.5 million jobs. Perhaps that is why several Democrats who represent energy-producing States didn't make it to last night's talkathon. They must be tired of defending more job-destroying policies.

For families who are already struggling with reduced income and high health care costs that have characterized the Obama economy for the past 5 years, increased energy prices and more job losses are the last thing they want to face. Democrats know that climate change legislation is a nonstarter in an election year, but they still have their radical environmental base to worry about, the same base that is pushing the President not to approve the Keystone Pipeline despite five separate environmental reviews that found its impact on the environment would be negligible.

Last night's talkathon, designed for maximum media exposure, allowed Democrats to assure their donors that they are focused on climate change without actually having to do anything, anything that would be difficult or politically damaging, such as going on the record and actually voting for a specific bill.

Last month Gallup released a poll on America's top concerns. Climate change didn't even make the top 10. Jobs and the economy, on the other hand, came in at the very top, not surprisingly. The American people have a very good assessment of what is important. Gallup polling shows that those two issues have been among Americans' top five concerns for most of the past 6 years. Despite this, however, Democrats have shown very little inclination to take real action on the economy. In fact, most of their policies are making our economic situation worse.

The policy that is doing the most economic damage is ObamaCare. Any way you look at it, ObamaCare means bad economic news for just about everybody. Millions of Americans have had the plans they like canceled, and far too many of them have found their ObamaCare alternative will cost more and offer them less.

Families around the country have enrolled in exchange plans that have left them wondering how they are going to be able to afford the plan's $10,000 and $12,000 deductibles. Low-income seniors enrolled in Medicare Advantage are wondering how they will afford the premium hikes and the benefit reductions that will soon hit them, thanks to ObamaCare's Medicare cuts. Eleven million small business workers are not sure how a bill that promised more affordable health care is actually raising—raising—their health care costs.

Then there are the businesses that are changing their plans to hire new workers because ObamaCare's mandates and fees mean they cannot afford to expand. The workers who are having their hours cut because ObamaCare means their employer cannot afford to keep them on as full-time workers. The Congressional Budget Office recently estimated ObamaCare will mean 2.5 million fewer full-time workers and approximately $1 trillion in lower wages. That is a lot of lost economic opportunity.

But you do not have to take my word for it, because Republicans are not the only people who are worried about

ObamaCare's effects on the economy and on the middle class. A lot of the President's allies are worried too. Democrats who are running in red States are running scared and are starting to talk about the need to amend the law.

And then there are the unions. Unions are, of course, historically Democratic supporters and they were instrumental in getting ObamaCare passed in the first place and helping to get the President reelected. Now unions are rethinking their support. At the end of last week UNITE HERE, which is a huge union with over one-quarter of a million members from all over the hospitality industry, published a white paper on ObamaCare which they called ''The Irony of ObamaCare: Making Inequality Worse.''

What does the document say? Well, it says what Republicans have been saying all along, that ObamaCare is going to make things much worse for the middle class. I want to quote from the first page:

Ironically, the administration's own signature healthcare victory poses one of the most immediate challenges to redressing inequality. . . . without smart fixes, the Affordable Care Act threatens the middle class with higher premiums, loss of hours, and a shift to part-time work and less comprehensive coverage.

That is from a white paper put out by one of the Nation's major unions. In 12 pages that document demolishes the administration's claim that the bill will help the middle class. It takes aim at the administration's ridiculous assertion that the law will not discourage business expansion or result in employers cutting hours. Worker hours, the union points out, have already been cut at nearly a third of U.S. franchise businesses.

Other businesses have chosen to replace full-time workers with part time workers, and still others have announced their intention of staying below 50 employees to avoid being hit by the worst of the law's mandates. The union also points out the likelihood of employers dumping employee health plans thanks to the law's requirements, leaving employees to obtain health care in the exchanges.

Here is what the union has to say about dropped employees, and again I quote:

For dropped employees, being pushed onto the exchanges will mean a major loss of income for health benefits. Families moving to the exchanges may lose between 4 percent and 25 percent of income to maintain equivalent benefits.

Again, that is from the union white paper on ObamaCare. Major loss of income or health benefits, families within the exchanges may lose between 4 and 25 percent of income—between 4 percent and 25 percent of income.

We are not talking about rich families here. We are talking about families who are making $40,000 or $50,000 or $60,000 a year. Even a 4-percent income loss would make a huge dent in these families' budgets. A 25-percent income loss for a family making that amount of money would be devastating.

Finally, the union concludes by pointing out a study in the Brookings Institution—again, not exactly a bastion of conservatism—that shows that those making below $25,000 will get some benefit of the Affordable Care Act. But those right above them, families with incomes of $20,000 to $38,000, will lose income. ''Only in Washington,'' the report concludes, ''could asking the bottom of the middle class to finance health care for the poorest families be seen as reducing inequality.''

Again, that is a quote from that report by UNITE HERE labor union.

I want to remind everyone this is not a Republican document. It is a document produced by some of President Obama's biggest supporters. In fact, UNITE HERE was actually the first union to endorse then-Senator Obama in 2008. So this isn't an organization seeking to damage the President politically or to provide Republicans with talking points. But like so many Americans around the country, UNITE HERE has been forced to an inescapable conclusion, and that conclusion is that ObamaCare just isn't working. It is doing the opposite of what it was intended to do. It is making health care more expensive for families. It is discouraging employees from hiring. It is reducing Americans' health care choices.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

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

Mr. THUNE. It is reducing Americans' health care choices, and it is encouraging employers to cut hours and benefits. Our health care system may have needed reform, but this was not the way to do it. Even the President's strongest supporters are having buyers' remorse, and a lot of Americans are hurting right now thanks to the President's health care law.

As we hear from more Americans, South Dakotans, people all across this country, who are struggling under the law, I hope the Democrats here who I believe privately are rethinking their vote for this law will have the courage to publicly join us in calling for its repeal.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

ENERGY

Mr. HOEVEN. Thank you, Madam President.

Last night the majority party had an all-night session talking about energy, but there is no specific proposal coming forward. We are here ready to vote to do our job representing the American people and actually craft a plan, a comprehensive energy plan for this country that works.

Since we didn't hear one last night, I thought I would come today and propose one. I would like to propose a States-first all-of-the-above energy plan. This isn't new. This is a plan I proposed along with others, my good colleague from South Dakota, my good colleague from Wyoming who was just here, and others. This is a comprehensive approach, a bipartisan approach, and actually specific legislation, a number of bills that will create a comprehensive plan to not only produce more energy for our country but to create more jobs, to grow our economy, to help expand our tax base, so we can reduce the deficit and the debt without raising taxes and, maybe most importantly of all, actually providing national security so we do not have to import oil from the Middle East—a specific action plan with legislation drafted and introduced that, instead of talking about it here on the Senate floor, let's do it. Let's start voting. Let's pass it. Let's put solutions in place for the American people.

Now this is not one big monolithic one-size-fits-all Federal plan, Federal approach. Instead, it is a series of bills sponsored, as I say, by Members on both sides of the aisle that would truly create a States-first, all-of-the-above energy approach. It includes measures such as my good colleague from South Dakota just said. Let's approve the Keystone Pipeline. The administration has been working on it for 5 years. Maybe they are going to work on it for another 5 years. I don't know. Well, let's approve it here in Congress. Let's act.

Another bill, the Dominion Energy and Jobs Act, is a bill I introduced that has already been passed by the House. It is a series of 13 different pieces of legislation that would help us produce more energy in this country both onshore and off.

The Empower States Act is another piece of legislation I put forward that would address hydraulic fracturing which is unleashing new areas of energy production in our country, or the coal ash recycling bill, that not only would help us recycle coal ash, but provide better standards to make sure that we are storing ash that is recycled in environmentally sound ways, addressing a problem that EPA is working on, and has to come up with a solution by the end of the year. We work with the EPA to come up with a commonsense solution that also encourages recycling coal ash to use on highways and buildings and other construction, and for other construction purposes. There is the Domestic Fuels Act, which is another piece of legislation that not only helps us market traditional fuels at the pump, such as traditional oil and gas products, but also renewable fuels, such as biofuels, biodiesel, ethanol, hydrogen, other types of energy that we are working to develop—renewable fuels. Let's make it easier to give consumers choice at the pump and more competition that will help reduce their costs.

This is the same kind of comprehensive plan that we developed in North

Dakota when I was Governor. I was a Governor there for 10 years. We developed a plan that we called EmPower North Dakota, and of course the whole idea was to unleash the energy resources of our State—all of our resources. I am not just talking about oil and gas—traditional sources of energy—but all traditional and renewable energy that have truly made our State an energy powerhouse for the country. We did it at the State level, and we can do it at the national level.

So how does it work? Quite simply, it empowers States to build on their relative strengths. It does so by giving them the primary role, or the primary responsibility, in terms of regulating energy development and growth in their State. That may be oil, gas, nuclear, biofuels, hydro, wind, solar, biomass or whatever else may be an area of strength or expertise for their respective State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HOEVEN. I ask the Chair for 2 minutes.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

If you think about it, it builds on the very foundation and very concept of how our country works. The United States is the laboratory of democracy. The States are the laboratories of democracy. Let's make them the laboratories of energy development in this country. Why not? Let's make them the laboratories of energy development in this country, whether it is Wisconsin, Michigan, North Dakota, South Dakota or Wyoming. You name it. Different places have different strengths.

When it comes to producing energy, let's empower them to produce the type of energy that works best in their respective State. It is bipartisan, it is inclusive, and it includes not only the Federal Government, but it includes the Federal Government in a way where they are working with the States and building on the very strength of our country.

I know my time is limited. I will be back later today to talk about it some more.

I want to leave with this point: It is not just about energy. It is about better environmental stewardship because we unleash the very investment that drives and deploys the new technology that produces more energy and does so with a better environmental stewardship.

It is about a growing economy that creates revenues without raising taxes to help address the deficit and debt. It creates good-paying jobs that we need in this country.

It is also about national security. Think about what is going on in Europe right now. Is the European Union going to join with us and impose sanctions on Russia? Are they? Do they have the will or are they concerned that 30 percent of all of the natural gas that goes to Europe comes from Russia and half of it goes through the Ukraine?

Are they so concerned about their energy future that they are not willing to stand with us to do the things we need to do to make sure that an aggressor like Russia doesn't invade another sovereign country?

So energy is very much about national security, and we can be energy secure in this country in very short order with the right approach.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. STABENOW. There are currently 89 judicial vacancies in Federal courts across the country, including four on the eastern court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Two of these are considered emergency vacancies because they have been vacant for over 19 months. With so many vacancies the case backlog isn't getting any smaller. It is a real problem.

The good news is that today we have the opportunity to vote to move forward on four excellent nominees to fill vacancies in the courts.

Our Michigan nominees are highly qualified and represent some of the best legal minds we have. Two of the nominees are sitting judges, one nominee is a U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Michigan, and the other nominee is currently in private practice at one of Michigan's top law firms.

Throughout the confirmation process, they have all proven to be thoughtful and prudent stewards of the law. So not only are they excellent nominees, but they are ready to go to work.

The first nominee is Judith Levy. She has served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Michigan since 2000. She was a cum laude graduate at the University of Michigan Law School. She has received numerous awards for her legal work.

Ms. Levy clerked for the Honorable Bernard Friedman, the former chief judge on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. He was, in fact, a Reagan appointee.

She is nominated to fill a judicial emergency vacancy created more than 18 months ago.

Ms. Levy is an excellent nominee. The people of Michigan deserve to have her on the bench, and she will serve with great distinction for all of us.

Second, we have Judge Laurie Michelson. Judge Michelson has served as a U.S. magistrate judge in the Eastern District of Michigan since 2011.

Prior to her appointment to the bench, she spent nearly 18 years in private practice where she specialized in media law, intellectual property, and white collar criminal defense.

She earned her law degree from Northwestern University in 1992. She served as a law clerk for Judge Cornelia Kennedy on the U.S. court of appeals. Judge Kennedy, as you may recall, was selected by President Reagan for his short list of Supreme Court candidates to replace Justice Potter Stewart.

Judge Michelson is an excellent nominee, and again the people of Michigan deserve to have her on the bench, and she will serve with distinction.

Next we have Judge Linda Parker. Judge Linda Parker has served as a judge on the Third Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan since 2009. Judge Parker has served in State and for the Federal Government for over a decade. Before that, she worked in private practice as well.

She earned her law degree from George Washington University and began her career as a law clerk in the District of Columbia Superior Court.

She has been recognized for her commitment to the community through pro bono legal work and as a board member of an organization that provides assistance to underserved academically gifted children.

Judge Parker is also an excellent nominee, and the people of Michigan look forward to her service.

Next is Matthew Leitman. Mr. Leitman is a principal at the Law Firm of Miller Canfield in Troy, MI, where he handles complex commercial litigation, criminal defense, and appellate matters before both State and Federal courts.

Prior to joining Miller Canfield in 2004, he spent 10 years in private practice.

He earned his law degree magna cum laude in 1993 from Harvard Law School and began his career as a clerk to Justice Charles Levin on the Michigan Supreme Court.

Mr. Leitman's nomination will also fill a judicial emergency vacancy which has been open for nearly 2 years.

Mr. Leitman is also an excellent nominee, and the people of Michigan, again, deserve his service on the bench. We look forward to his service and to the service of all four of those nominees that we will be voting on today.

We have four excellent nominees for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. They are thoughtful, they are prudent, and they are ready to get to work.

I encourage and ask that all of my colleagues join together today in a strong bipartisan vote to be able to move these nominations forward and bring them to the floor tomorrow morning for the final vote.

We are very pleased with the President's nominees and with their qualifications. We are very confident of their service to the courts and to the people of Michigan.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session.

Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a cloture vote on the Leitman nomination.

Who yields time?

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back the time.

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

All time is yielded back.

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 nomination of Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Carl Levin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jeanne Shaheen, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Joe Donnelly, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Tom Harkin.

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 nomination of Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan 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 Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 63 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Landrieu	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Levin	Udall (CO)
Collins	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Coons	Markey	Walsh
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	
Hagan	Murray	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—2

McCaskill	Rockefeller

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 55, the nays are 43.

The motion to invoke cloture is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a cloture vote on the Levy nomination.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I want to assure our colleagues that these nominees from Michigan have been selected—obviously by us—following a very thorough screening committee with its broadly based recommendations. All four of these nominees are highly qualified, have judicial temperament, and Senator STABENOW and I can recommend them highly to the Senate.

I thank my colleagues who are voting for cloture and then hope that the next vote after cloture we will see them confirmed.

Again, we want to provide that assurance to our colleagues that this is a broadly based screening committee that we appoint which has recommended these nominees.

I ask that all time be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state:

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 nomination of Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Carl Levin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jeanne Shaheen, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Joe Donnelly, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Tom Harkin.

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 nomination of Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rules.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wisconsin, (Mr. JOHNSON).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 64 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—42

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Ayotte	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Chambliss	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Kirk	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Johnson (WI)	Rockefeller

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the

motion to invoke cloture on the Michelson nomination.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent all time be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, and pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill 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 nomination of Laurie J. Michelson, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Carl Levin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jeanne Shaheen, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Joe Donnelly, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Tom Harkin.

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 nomination of Laurie J. Michelson, of Michigan, to be United States District Court Judge, 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 West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Coats	Enzi
Ayotte	Coburn	Fischer
Barrasso	Cochran	Flake
Blunt	Corker	Graham
Boozman	Cornyn	Grassley
Burr	Crapo	Hatch
Chambliss	Cruz	Heller
Hoeven	McConnell	Sessions
Inhofe	Moran	Shelby
Isakson	Paul	Thune
Johanns	Portman	Toomey
Johnson (WI)	Risch	Vitter
Kirk	Roberts	Wicker
Lee	Rubio	
McCain	Scott	

NOT VOTING—1

Rockefeller

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56 and the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 today the Senate proceed to morning business until 6 p.m. tonight. Senators may speak for up to 10 minutes each.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to the cloture vote.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I yield back any time on the subsequent nomination on which we are about to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the time is yielded back.

Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

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 nomination of Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Carl Levin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jeanne Shaheen, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Joe Donnelly, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz, Tom Harkin.

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 nomination of Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, 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 West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 66 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—42

Alexander	Enzi	McCain
Ayotte	Fischer	McConnell
Barrasso	Flake	Moran
Blunt	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Chambliss	Heller	Roberts
Coats	Hoeven	Rubio
Coburn	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	Kirk	Vitter
Cruz	Lee	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Rockefeller Sessions

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I request permission to speak as if in morning business.

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

FORTY-SECOND IDITAROD

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am happy to be on the floor this afternoon to give the announcement and the update about the running of the 42nd Iditarod in my State of Alaska. It is an extraordinarily famous and fabulous sporting event where man and dog test the elements of a course of almost 1,100 miles beginning in Willow, AK, and going all the way to Nome.

This year there were 69 teams that started out, and the first team crossed the finish line at 4 a.m. Alaska standard time this morning. It was one of those races that truly came down to almost a photo finish, with the leaders trading off literally in the last several hours. This was a situation we honestly have not seen in quite some time with the Iditarod.

With that buildup, I am pleased to announce that this year Dallas Seavey has become the winner of the 42nd running of the Iditarod, beating out Aliy Zirkle by 2 minutes 22 seconds. He and Aliy Zirkle battled it out in the last hour of the race not even understanding that the frontrunner, who had been in place of Aliy and in place of Dallas, Jeff King, had to scratch because of a ground blizzard that forced him off the trail, losing his sled and effectively having to call and ask for assistance. It was a very dramatic ending to a pretty fascinating race.

The weather has been problematic throughout. We had warm weather conditions at the outset of the race, and then to have the weather really be the No. 1 opposition at the end made it something we are going to be talking about for years.

The Presiding Officer has had the opportunity to attend the ceremonial start of the Iditarod and is familiar with the excitement when there are 60 to 70 dog teams, mushers, and all their supporters around handling the dogs. There were literally 1,000 dogs in the downtown area of Anchorage. It is really quite exciting. It is a fabulous way to come to understand the history of the Iditarod but, more importantly, to understand the mindset of some of these mushers and the dedication they have to this sport and the passion they have for their dogs.

This year I was in the chute, and I like to visit with each of the mushers as they are coming down. Dallas Seavey was in the chute, and I was talking to him. He was really excited about the course because he said: This is going to be fast. This is going to be the quickest course we have seen. It is just perfect for someone like me who is young and fit and can stand up on his sled and literally be running next to his sled the whole way.

Three mushers later is Jeff King, and Jeff is telling me: This race is the perfect race for us older guys.

Jeff is my age.

He said: It is perfect because it takes the maturity and the wisdom and having been through a series of Iditarods to know exactly how to handle a course like this.

I think both of them were right. We saw the energy and determination of young Dallas Seavey 2 years ago. When he won for the first time, he was the youngest musher to win. He demonstrated a level of energy and determination that truly knocks your socks off. But what Jeff King was able to do with his methodical planning and strategy that goes into that race is certainly something to be embraced. And then, of course, Aliy Zirkle, a 44-year-old woman demonstrating once again that tough, independent female spirit—my gosh, she was in there all the way. This is the second year now that she has come in—actually, it is not the second year she has come in second. She has come in second more times than any other musher out there.

Dallas Seavey broke the Iditarod record this morning at 4 a.m. He came in at 8 days, 13 hours, 4 minutes, 19 seconds. He shaved off almost 5 hours from John Baker's previous win back in 2011.

There were a lot of firsts and a lot to be celebrated. There are still more mushers out on the trail.

When I talked to Dallas about an hour ago to congratulate him, I said: You must be pooped and ready to go to sleep after the last 8 days.

He said: Well, I am going to wait up for my dad.

His dad, Mitch Seavey, is in third place at this point in time. We expect him to come across the finish line.

I said: Isn't it nice to know that after all the years your dad waited up for you, you get to wait up for your dad before you take a break?

Alaskans are pleased with the outcome. We are happy to celebrate amazing athletes—both human and canine—doing amazing things in an amazing State. I am pleased to be able to announce today's results.

I thank the indulgence of the Chair.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 6 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I want to take a moment to recognize our Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives who last week cast the 50th vote in their effort to dismantle the Affordable Care Act—their 50th. I know it is a tradition to give gold in celebration of a 50th milestone. I instead would like to gift my colleagues on the other side of the aisle with a reality check.

More specifically, today I would like to talk about a certain group of people who arguably stand to lose if their antics continue. So I have come to the floor this afternoon to set the record straight on the Affordable Care Act and how it is working for women in America. It is not much of a stretch for me to say the Affordable Care Act is probably one of the most significant pieces of legislation for women in my lifetime. Not because of the battles we fought to get it to the President's desk, not necessarily because of the size or scope of the law, but because of the tangible and positive impact it has had and will continue to have on the health and well being of women in America.

Four years ago health insurance companies could deny women care due to so-called preexisting conditions such as pregnancy or being a victim of domestic violence. Four years ago women were permitted to be legally discriminated against when it came to insurance premiums and were often paying more for coverage than men. Four years ago women did not have access to the full range of recommended preventive care, such as mammograms and prenatal screenings and more. Four years ago the insurance companies had all the leverage. Four years ago too often women were the ones who were paying the price. That is why I am proud today to highlight just how far we have come for women in the past 4 years.

Since the Affordable Care Act became law, women have been treated fairly with increased access to affordable health insurance, benefits, and services. Deductibles and other expenses have been capped so a health care crisis does not cause a family to lose their home or their life savings.

Women can use the health care marketplaces to pick quality plans that work for them and their families. If they change jobs or have to move, they are able to keep their coverage. Starting in 2012, we saw these benefits for women expand even further. Additional types of maternity are now covered. Women are now armed with proper tools and resources in order to take the right steps to have a healthy pregnancy.

Women now have access to domestic partner violence screening and counseling, as well as screening for sexually transmitted infections. Now women finally have access to affordable birth control. As public servants here, it is our job to help our constituents access Federal benefits available to them, particularly when it comes to health care. Since 80 percent of women are not only making health care choices for themselves but also their families and loved ones, it is our responsibility to serve as a guide when it comes to understanding how to best access these benefits.

It might mean putting them in touch with a navigator to ensure they are getting the most affordable health insurance available or making them aware of an enrollment event where they can get information on available coverage options. But our responsibilities do not end there. It is our job to have an open, honest discussion about what the Affordable Care Act means for our constituents and to talk about ways to responsibly improve it.

Instead, as we saw in the House last week, others have spent the better part of the last 4 years trying to take away the critical benefits that I just talked about, trying to score cheap political points on an issue that can literally mean the difference between life and death. I can understand why some of our colleagues disagree with certain parts of this law or maybe how it was implemented, but what I cannot understand is why anyone elected to Congress would decide to simply ignore real life stories of their own constituents whose lives were changed the day this law took effect.

It is people like Susan Wellman. She lives in Bellingham in my home State of Washington. She is self employed. She has had to pay for individual insurance. Every year she has watched her health care costs rise higher and higher. It got to the point where she was

paying $300 monthly premiums with an $8,000 deductible, all for a plan she described as ''paying for nothing.''

So as soon as Susan could access health care through the Washington State health care exchange, she jumped at the chance. She spoke on the phone with a real live person. She was able to sign up for an affordable plan in a matter of minutes. Now Susan is on a plan that costs her $125 a month instead of $300. It is a plan that has a $2,000 deductible that actually pays for things. Guess what. She can afford to go to the doctor, not just in the case of an emergency but for a physical or a mammogram that could save her life, not to mention thousands and thousands of dollars in health care costs.

That kind of preventive care is good for women like Susan. It is good for her family, and it is good for this country because when more people have access to preventive care, it makes health care cheaper for every single one of us.

It is also good for women like Carrie Little. She is a certified organic farmer who lives in Orting, WA. A few weeks ago she was working outside when one of the rams on her farm attacked her, leaving her with bruises and a broken leg. Fortunately, because of her new health plan, her visit to the emergency room was painless. Well, as painless as it could be with a broken leg. But her hospital bills, her cast, and her visits to the orthopedic physician were paid in full.

Until last year, Carrie had been spending half of her income for a catastrophic-only health plan, forcing her to pay out of pocket for even the most basic of care. Carrie wrote an op-ed, and I want to quote from it. She said:

> What a welcome relief that my new health plan covers preventive care, like mammograms, immunizations, and yearly doctor visits. I can keep the primary care doctor I have been seeing for years. And I no longer worry about family members getting kicked around due to pre-existing conditions. Thank goodness. In agriculture, profits and losses shift like the weather, so for our community, it is crucial that health premiums stay affordable.

Or women like Ingrid Gordon. Ingrid is a small business owner from Seattle who immediately enrolled in coverage when it became available. After an hour on the Web site, she told us, with minimal technical difficulties, Ingrid was enrolled and received her insurance card in the mail a few days later. Since her coverage began on January 1, Ingrid had her first dental and physical exams in 14 years. She cured a skin disorder thanks to prescription medicine. She scheduled a colonoscopy now that she is 50, and finally had her bothersome knee x-rayed.

All of those exams, visits and prescriptions would have cost Ingrid thousands if not tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket just 1 year ago. But thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Ingrid paid a grand total of zero dollars in copays.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, women like Susan and Carrie and Ingrid are now fully in charge of their own health care, not their insurance company. That is why I feel so strongly that we cannot go back to the way things were. While we can never stop working to make improvements, of course, we owe it to the women of America to make progress and not allow the clock to be rolled back on their health care needs.

As we all know, unfortunately, there are efforts underway all across the country, including here in our Nation's capital, to severely undermine a woman's access to some of the most critical and life-saving services that are provided by the Affordable Care Act. No provision of this law has faced quite as much scrutiny as the idea of providing affordable, quality reproductive health services to the women of America.

We have seen attempt after attempt to eliminate access to abortion services and low-cost birth control all while restricting a woman's ability to make personal decisions about her own care. I guess we should not be surprised. The truth is that the tide of these politically driven, extreme efforts continues to rise.

In 2013 our Nation saw yet another record-breaking year of State legislatures passing restrictive legislation barring women's access to reproductive services. In fact, in the past 3 years the United States has enacted more of these restrictions than in the previous 10 years combined. That means that now more than ever, it is our job to protect these kinds of decisions for women, to fight for women's health, and to ensure that women's health does not become a political football.

For this reason I was very proud to lead members of my caucus in filing a brief with the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., where a secular corporation and its shareholders are trying to get in between a woman and her health.

Just like the many attempts before this case, there are those out there who would like the American public to believe that this conversation is anything but an attack on women's health care. To them it is a debate about freedom, except of course freedom for a woman to access her own care. It is no different than when we are told that a tax on abortion rights is not an infringement on a woman's right to choose; they are about religion or State's rights; or when we are told that restricting emergency contraception is not about limiting a woman's ability to make her own family planning decisions; it is about protecting pharmacists; or just like last week, when an Alaskan State Senator said he did not think there was a compelling reason for the government ''to finance other people's recreation.'' That was in reference, of course, to contraception coverage in health care. In fact, after doing some research, this State Senator concluded that since birth control costs about ''four or five lattes'' the government should really have no reason to cover this cost to women.

The truth is that this is about contraception. This is an attempt to limit a woman's ability to access her own health care. This is about women. Allowing a woman's boss to call the shots about her access to birth control should be inconceivable to all Americans in this day and age, and it would take us back to a place in history when women had no voice and no choice.

In fact, contraception was included as a required preventive service in the Affordable Care Act on the recommendation of an independent, nonprofit institute of medicine and other medical experts because it is essential to the health of women and families.

After many years of research, we know ensuring access to effective birth control has a direct impact on improving the lives of women and their families in America. We have been able to directly link it to declines in maternal and infant mortality, reduced risk of ovarian cancer, better overall health outcomes for women, and far fewer unintended pregnancies and abortions, which is a goal we all should share.

But what is at stake in this case now before the Supreme Court is whether a CEO's personal beliefs can trump a woman's right to access free or low-cost contraception under the Affordable Care Act.

Every American deserves to have access to high-quality health care coverage, regardless of where they work. Each of us should have the right to make our own medical and religious decisions without being dictated to or limited by our employers. Contraceptive coverage is supported by the vast majority of Americans who understand how important it is for women and their families.

In weighing this case, my hope is that the Court realizes women working for private companies should be afforded the same access to medical care regardless of who signs their paychecks. We can't allow for-profit secular corporations or their shareholders to deny female employees access to comprehensive women's health care under the guise of religious exemption. It is as if we are saying: Because you are a CEO or a shareholder in a corporation, your rights are more important than your employees', who happen to be women. That is a slippery slope that could lead to employers cutting off coverage for childhood immunizations if they object to that idea or prenatal care for children born to unmarried parents if they think it is wrong, or blocking an employee's ability to access HIV treatment.

I was proud to be joined in filing the brief by 18 other Senators who were here when Congress enacted the religious protections under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 and who were also here when Congress made access to women's health care available under the Affordable Care Act of 2010. They are Senators who

know Congress did not intend for a corporation or, furthermore, its shareholders to restrict a woman's access to preventive health care.

In the coming weeks, as the Supreme Court prepares to begin oral arguments in this case, these Senators and our colleagues who support these efforts will echo those sentiments, because we all know that improving access to birth control is good health policy and good economic policy. It means healthier women, healthier children, healthier families, and it will save monies for our businesses and consumers.

I know many of our colleagues here believe that repealing the Affordable Care Act and access to reproductive health services is a political winner for them. But the truth is this law and these provisions are a winner for women, for men, for our children, and our health care system overall.

I am very proud to stand with my colleagues who are committed to making sure the benefits of this law don't get taken away from the women of America, because politics and ideology should not matter when it comes to making sure women get the care they need at a cost they can afford.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

MEDICARE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I know others are waiting, so I will make some brief remarks about something that is very important to me.

I rise today to discuss S. 2087, the Medicare Protection Act.

Over the past few years one of the things we have witnessed in the Senate is, unfortunately, an irresponsible few who are trying to turn Medicare into a voucher system and raise the eligibility age for benefits. This would not only have a catastrophic effect on seniors' health but also on their financial security. It would force seniors to pay more for their doctor visits and for prescription drugs.

People in my State have figured this out. In fact, I recently got a little note from Philip of Jonesboro who said: ''Raising the Medicare eligibility age would shift thousands of dollars in costs to seniors and drive up premium costs.''

He got it exactly right. That is what it will do. That is what pretty much every study I have seen, at least, says it will do.

In Arkansas alone, we have well over 500,000 seniors who depend on Medicare. I encourage all of my colleagues to look at the numbers in their States. My guess is everyone has a large number of seniors in their State and the seniors understand how vitally important it is that we protect Medicare.

Turning Medicare into a voucher system or fundamentally changing it in any way by using some sort of voucher—they call it premium supplement, I don't know; they have a different word for it sometimes—or raising the eligibility age or cutting benefits would be very detrimental to the people in my State, and I am sure in all 50 States.

As Rebecca from Fayetteville said:

> Raising the Medicare age would simply force seniors such as my mother and me to pay more out-of-pocket. We need responsible, common-sense solutions to keep Medicare strong . . .

I agree with that. That is exactly what we need. We need these responsible commonsense solutions. Hopefully they are going to be bipartisan solutions. That is how we get things done in Washington, by working in a bipartisan way. I am hoping, over time, this Medicare Protection Act will become a great bipartisan vehicle for us to protect Medicare.

It does two things, in a nutshell. First, it amends the Congressional Budget Act to define any provision in reconciliation legislation that makes changes to Medicare to reduce or eliminate guaranteed benefits or restrict eligibility criteria as extraneous and an improper use of the reconciliation process.

I know that is technical and that is kind of getting down in the weeds, but that is a very smart way to do it, to use the Congressional Budget Act to protect Medicare.

Secondly, it expresses the sense of the Senate that the Medicare eligibility age should not increase and that the Medicare Program should not be privatized or turned into a voucher system.

Again, if we look back over the years, there have been attempts to do this, most of them originating in the House of Representatives, but we have had a few of those attempts here.

As Hubert Humphrey once said: ''The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.''

The Medicare Protection Act is the right thing to do. I hope my colleagues from both sides of the aisle will look at this legislation, give it serious consideration, and join me in supporting this critical piece of legislation. It is a great way to protect our Medicare system.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

MCHUGH NOMINATION

Mr. HATCH. I express my strong support for the nomination of Carolyn B. McHugh to the Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. Judge McHugh received her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Utah. She is exactly the kind of outstanding nominee of varied legal experience that I set out to find to fill this vacancy.

She has both practiced and taught law. She has practiced in both State and Federal court. She has extensive experience both before and behind the bench. She has served the county and State bars, as well the State judiciary on committees and on commissions. She has been widely recognized and awarded for her distinguished legal career.

Somehow, along the way, Judge McHugh has found time to serve her community with groups such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Voices for Utah Children, and Catholic Community Services of Utah.

Judge McHugh's 22 years of litigation experience were almost evenly split between State and Federal court. In nearly a decade on the Utah Court of Appeals, currently as the presiding judge, she has heard more than 1,100 appellate civil and criminal cases that ultimately reached judgment.

When she is confirmed to the 10th Circuit, I think Judge McHugh may have one of the shortest learning curves on record of any judge in any circuit court of appeals to this country.

When we have a judicial vacancy in Utah, I spend a lot of time talking to lawyers and judges throughout our State's legal community, and so does Senator LEE. We both work together on these nominations, and I appreciate the input that he has and what a great deal of legal expertise and understanding he brings to these matters.

Judge McHugh received much praise, but perhaps the most common description was simply that she works harder than anyone else. Her former law partner said it, judges said it. Over and over the same comment came up: She works incredibly hard.

I have been doing this a long time and have participated in the nomination or confirmation of more than half of the judges who have ever served on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. I know a first-rate nominee when I see one.

Judge McHugh's varied experience, her personal character, intelligence, and her work ethic make her one of the best. The Judiciary Committee approved her nomination without opposition, and I expect the same result in the Senate.

I do have to say that this nomination could have been confirmed months ago. Despite some controversy over a few nominees, the confirmation process was working well. In his first 5 years, President Obama appointed 24.6 percent of the Federal judiciary, compared to 25.8 percent in President George W. Bush's first 5 years.

The Congressional Research Service says the Senate confirmed a higher percentage of President Obama's appeals court nominees than it did so for President Clinton and did so faster than it did for President Bush.

In President Bush's first 5 years, Democrats conducted 20 filibusters of appeals court nominations, compared to only seven in President Obama's first 5 years. Filibusters were much

less of a factor in the confirmation process under President Obama than they had been in the past, but that was not good enough. Last November, Democrats abolished nomination filibusters altogether.

For more than 200 years the minority in the Senate, no matter what their political party, had a real role in the confirmation process. The possibility of a filibuster had two effects. First, it suggested to the President that he might want to send more moderate nominees to the Senate. Second, it prompted the minority to cooperate with the majority in confirming noncontroversial nominees.

The new confirmation process that Democrats created has no real role for the minority. As a result, neither of those positive effects exists anymore. The President has no incentive to choose more moderate nominees to consult with home State Senators or to look for a consensus, and the minority in the Senate no incentive to waive rules or to agree to shortcuts.

There used to be balance in this process. The minority could filibuster a few of the more extreme nominees and so the minority helped process the large majority of noncontroversial nominees. That balanced approach was apparently unacceptable to the current majority. Democrats took that approach away, leaving a process—it can be called that—that only the majority controls.

Democrats did not want the minority's cooperation. They did not want a process that has some give-and-take in it. Democrats wanted a process that is all take and no give, and so here we are.

Part of the process we used to have would have been confirming additional nominations before adjourning the first session of the Congress. The nomination before us would have been confirmed that way months ago—as well as a whole raft of other judges that we are now voting on ad seriatim. Instead, we are forced to do things in this new way.

Judge McHugh is the same highly qualified, noncontroversial nominee. There is no good reason why the majority will want to take months longer to confirm a nomination such as this. But this is the confirmation process the Democrats created. They got the control they wanted, and I believe this distortion of the process harms the Senate as an institution. By creating unnecessary controversy and delay, this new process also harms the other branches to which nominations have been made. It did not have to be this way. It should not have been this way.

I might add that I wrote a Law Review article a number of years ago that I did not believe we should filibuster judicial nominations at all. That is why I voted ''present'' on so many of the President's judges, but there is no reason for me to do that anymore because the Democrats have changed the rules. They have broken the rules to change the rules, and so I might as well vote no along with the rest of the Republicans on some of these nominees—just as an expression that we don't like the way the Democrats are handling this matter. I have been, in the last few days, changing from ''present'' to no or yes depending upon the person.

CLIMATE CHANGE

I will take a few minutes to talk about the Senate Democrats' latest effort to grab headlines and energize their base.

Although the business on the floor has officially been nominations, my friends on the other side of the aisle came in overnight to talk about climate change and the supposed need to change the way we produce and consume energy in this country.

We have heard a lot of talk about science and its supposed refusal on the part of Republicans to acknowledge the ''truth.'' What we haven't heard is a plan for lowering energy costs or for putting Americans back to work.

The fact is, when the Democrats talk about climate change, more often than not they are advocating policies that would do exactly the opposite. The funny thing is they have to know it by now. They have to know that is what they are doing. They are talking about proposals that would increase energy costs for American families and businesses. They have to know that, and they are pushing policies that will put even greater stress on our economy and make it more difficult for our citizens to find and even keep a job. That is why we have an underemployment rate of over 12 percent.

For example, last year, the President announced his Climate Action Plan, which directs the EPA to implement and impose new oppressive regulations on the energy industry that will have a significant impact on jobs and the pocketbooks of the American people. Increasing the cost of energy, which this plan would surely do, will not only make our struggling manufacturing sector less globally competitive, it will impose costs directly onto the American people in the form of higher prices on electricity and other costs as well.

Put simply, in order to create jobs and improve our global competitiveness, we need to find ways to help businesses reduce the amount of money they spend on energy. Unfortunately, this President is trying to do the exact opposite. At the same time, we should be exploring ways to make raising a family more affordable.

Unfortunately, the President's plan would increase the cost of living for every household in America. Talk about inequality. I was very interested that one of the leading unions—one of the first to support the President—said that he has caused more inequality than anybody. When I say ''he,'' they mean the President. Unfortunately, the President's plan would increase the cost of living for every household in America. This is the height of irresponsibility.

At a time when so many people are still feeling the impact of the great recession, the administration, not to mention its allies in Congress, wants to put in place regulations and mandates that will cripple American businesses and cause direct harm to American families trying to make ends meet.

I find it striking that throughout all the lectures we have seen on climate change science on the floor over the past 2 days, none of my colleagues appear to be willing to acknowledge the very real impact of their preferred policies. Thousands of communities across the country depend on the responsible development of our Nation's natural resources for a living. Access to abundant and affordable energy is attractive to domestic investment and provides high-paying jobs in our local economies. We can develop these resources in an environmentally friendly way. But my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't appear to be willing to have that conversation. Instead, they want to demagogue the use of fossil fuels and impose costly mandates and regulations on the harvesting of our resources and on the production of our energy. What is interesting is they are doing it to a lot of the people in a lot of the States that used to support them.

We need to be pushing an ''all of the above'' inclusive approach to the development of energy if we are going to improve our energy security and become a global leader in energy production. It is not the job of the government to pick winners and losers. Yet with all their talk about climate change and the need for Republicans to ''wake up,'' that is precisely what my friends in the other party want to do.

I would hope, given all the challenges facing our Nation—from sluggish economic growth to lackluster jobs creation, to jobs providing less than 30-hour work weeks and on and on and on—my colleagues would devote more of their time trying to find real solutions for the American people instead of trying to please their liberal base with alarmist rhetoric about climate change and false promises about the future of energy production in this country.

We all know that some of their preferred production of energy is not producing. We all know it never will produce enough to solve our problems. We all know people have lost jobs time and time again in this country because of the lack of energy. We all know it has made us a weaker country. Yet we have this blind faith that they are right and everybody else is wrong.

I think jobs are the conversation the American people want us to talk about. Yes, we would like to keep things clean and good and orderly. On the other hand, you can't do that without jobs. You can't do that without people being able to earn a living. You can't run our inner cities and towns without energy. We are giving in to some of the most radical theories I have ever seen in the whole time I have been here.

We ought to get rid of these false promises and we ought to do the very best we can to clean up our environment in every possible way we can without destroying the energy and the energy capacities we know we have and loosen all the jobs that would come with that. That is the conversation the American people want to hear, and I hope eventually that is a conversation we can have in the Senate.

This is an issue where my colleagues are very sincere. I don't want to disparage any of them. On the other hand, in many respects they are sincerely wrong and they are costing America its greatness.

One of the problems I have with our current President is that I don't believe he believes in American exceptionalism, and he is doing so many things that are destroying our exceptionalism. The rest of the world knows it, but our folks here in America are having a rough time grasping it. I think it is a desire to always treat everybody well, to try to support our Presidents, which certainly we ought to try to do, but there is a reason we are starting to slip.

There is a reason the average wage in this country has gone down $4,000 to $5,000. There is a reason why, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation of just a few years ago, 51 percent of the American people are not in the process of paying one dime of income taxes. I am the last one to want them to pay income taxes, those who shouldn't, but, my gosh, you can't run a country this way. We are going to have to start facing the music that the greatest country in the world is losing its nerve, it is losing its verve, and there is no excuse for it. No other country in the world can even compare with us. So why are we doing things that are making us less and less and less and less?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3521

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to again advocate that we move forward, we come together across the aisle as Democrats and Republicans to agree on what we do agree on and to do some things constructively—specifically, to help veterans across our country.

There are 27 community-based VA clinics that are on the books at the Veterans' Administration ready to go. The VA is ready to break ground, move forward, and build these expanded community-based clinics to serve areas around the country and veterans around the country in a much better way. I am particularly interested because 2 of those 27 clinics are in Louisiana, in Lafayette and in Lake Charles.

All of these clinics have gotten stuck in the mud through several rounds of bureaucratic delay at the VA—funding delays, authorization delays, and a dispute about whether moving forward with these clinics was kosher under the budget rules. We have solved all of those problems. We have figured out solutions to all of those problems that satisfies everyone. The House of Representatives has taken those solutions, put them together in a bill and passed it overwhelmingly out of the House with over 400 votes in support—virtually unanimous. Now we are on the Senate floor and all we have to do is take that bill, adopt a simple noncontroversial amendment and pass it through the Senate. No one in the Senate disagrees with the substance of this bill. No one disagrees with the substance of the amendment we would add to this bill. No one disagrees with the importance of moving forward with these 27 VA clinics. Yet we are still finding it difficult to move this simple noncontroversial matter through the Senate. Why? Because, quite frankly, some of our colleagues who have a much bigger, broader veterans package want to hold this hostage for their veterans package. While I applaud their sincerity, I applaud their passion, I think we should agree on what we can agree on and move forward with what we agree on. Let's not get bogged down and defeat 27 very important community-based veterans clinics because there are major and sincere disagreements about the much broader package.

I also think it will build good will to resolve some of those issues and come forward with a compromise version of a larger package if we do that. In that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3521, which was received from the House; that my amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I appreciate the interest of Senator VITTER in this very important issue. Senator LANDRIEU of Louisiana shares his concern, as do Senators from many States in this country because, as Senator VITTER indicated, this bill will authorize the VA to enter into 27 major medical facility leases in 18 States and Puerto Rico. So this is, in fact, a very big issue.

But as Senator VITTER knows very well, 2 weeks ago this very same provision was part of a comprehensive veterans bill supported by the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and virtually every veterans organization in this country because the veterans community is facing a host of problems.

Senator VITTER points out one problem. He is right. But there are many other problems. I say to my friend, we could have resolved this problem 2 weeks ago if I could have had four more Republican votes, including his, to pass this legislation.

What this bill does, and the reason it is supported by millions of veterans all over this country, is that it addresses the major problems facing our veterans community. I say to my friend from Louisiana, and any other Senator, if you are not prepared to stand with veterans in their time of need, don't send them off to war. If you don't want to pay for the care veterans need, don't send them off to war and then tell us it is too expensive to take care of them.

The legislation that again is supported by virtually every major veterans organization in this country, expands the caregivers program, improves and expands dental care, provides advanced appropriations for the VA—something many of us feel is terribly important—takes a major step to end the benefits backlog, deals with the very serious problem of instate tuition assistance for post-9/11 veterans, and addresses the horrible problem that women and men in the military face when they are sexually assaulted. We address that issue as well.

This legislation also addresses the issue of reproductive health. We have 2,300 men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and who were wounded in the war in such ways they are unable to have babies. They want families but can't have babies, and so we help address in this bill that issue; whether through in vitro fertilization, adoption or other ways to help them have families. That is what this legislation does.

So I look forward to working with my colleague and friend from Louisiana to get that legislation passed or to sit down and work on a compromise piece of legislation.

I would say to my friend from Louisiana, today you can be a hero. Today you can get your concern passed and the concerns of veterans all over America by supporting my unanimous consent request to pass the bill that came up 2 weeks ago.

Mr. President, I object to Senator VITTER's proposal.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. 1950; that a Sanders substitute amendment, the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act,

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 (Mr. MANCHIN). The first objection is heard to the request by the Senator from Louisiana.

Is there objection to the request by the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, on behalf of 43 Members of the Senate, I object based on substantive disagreements about this very broad-based bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, reclaiming the floor and my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. I think it is really regrettable. The Senator from Vermont and I can talk about the substance. I will be happy to talk about the substance of his big bill. But the bottom line is that 43 Members of the Senate disagree with him about serious substantive issues.

Because there is major disagreement—almost half of the Senate, 43 Members of the Senate—he is going to block moving forward with 27 clinics to serve veterans around the country, about which there is no disagreement. On my bill, as amended, there is zero disagreement on the substance of that bill. Because he can't get his way fully on a bigger package, he is going to take the bat and take the ball, and home plate, first base, second, and third, and go home. I don't think this is the approach and spirit in which the American people want us to work. I think the American people want us to agree when we can agree. I think we should bend over to agree in those instances where we can agree and actually accomplish substantive, concrete things. We would be doing that by moving forward separately with these 27 important community-based clinics. And by the way, I think we would be creating a much better environment to continue to work on a compromised broader package.

I commend this approach again to my friend from Vermont. I think we should come together where we agree. I think we should accomplish what we can and continue to work on a broader package. But taking these 27 clinics hostage is not doing that, is not creating an atmosphere which is conducive to progress on a broader package, and is not properly serving the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would remind my colleague from Louisiana that the vote on that bill was 56 to 41. This is a 15-vote plurality. There is another person who was not here who would have voted for us on that bill, so 57 votes. But because of a Republican request for a budget point of order, we need 60 votes. So a strong majority of the Members in the Senate support this comprehensive legislation. We are three votes shy of passing it. I intend to reach out to the Senator from Louisiana and every other Senator to see whether we get these three votes so we can pass the most comprehensive veterans legislation brought to the floor of the Senate in many decades.

This is not a complicated issue. On Veterans Day and on Memorial Day, every Member of the Senate and House goes back to his or her district and tells veterans just how much they respect them and love them and so forth and so on. That is all fine and well. Speeches are important. But at the end of the day, serving our veterans means a lot more than giving speeches. It means voting for programs that will improve their lives.

I will not disagree with anybody who says veterans programs are often expensive. They are expensive. When somebody goes off to war and comes back without any legs, without any arms, losing their eyesight or their hearing or dealing with TBI—traumatic brain injury—or PTSD—posttraumatic stress disorder—or suffering from sexual assault, it is an expensive proposition to make those folks as well as we possibly can. But, as I said earlier, if we are not prepared to support the men and women who come back from war, don't send them off to war in the first place.

So I very much hope I will be successful in working on an agreement with the Senator from Louisiana and some of my other Republican colleagues so we can do what the veterans community wants us to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I spoke last night in anticipation of this all-night session that was going to take place. I was not surprised at the general topics that were covered. There are probably five all together that they were stated over and over. I would like to clarify a couple of things that probably are worthwhile this afternoon.

One is my good friend from California—this is a quote, we took it down—said:

> When 97 to 98 percent of the scientists say something is real, they do not have anything pressing them to say that other than the truth. They do not have any other agenda. They don't work for oil companies. And I will tell you, as chairman of the environment committee, every time the Republicans chose a so-called expert on climate, we have tracked them down to special interest funding, those 3 percent. They know where their bread is buttered.

That is kind of an interesting and a timely statement to make because what they are not telling you—and I am talking about the Senator from California and the other Democrats—is that the hedge fund billionaire and climate activist Tom Steyer plans to spend $100 million through his NextGen PAC. The NextGen PAC is his political action committee. He has made the statement that he is going to be spending $100 million in the midterm elections of 2014 and is going to be looking very carefully to make sure that all of the Democrats go along with his activist agenda.

That was actually a statement that was made, that has been written up. It is all documented. I am going to submit for the RECORD at this point all of the newspaper articles, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, and others that talk about this climate activist Tom Steyer, who is going to be spending $100 million in the next election.

What I would like to do is cover the points that were made. As I say, they were made over and over, different people saying them, the same talking points. I am sure Tom Steyer's people had the talking points well prepared and moveon.org and George Soros and Michael Moore and the Hollywood elites and that crowd all had their talking points to sound real good. I noticed that so many of them were reading those points and were not familiar with the issues.

But last night many of my colleagues pointed to weather as the reason for manmade climate change. Yet they failed to quote meteorologists in the speeches. Let me read just what the meteorologists are saying about climate change.

A recent study by George Mason University reported—that was over 400 TV meteorologists—they reported that 63 percent of the weathercasters believe that any global warming that occurs is the result of natural variations and not human activity. That is a significant 2-to-1 majority.

Another study by the American Meteorological Society last year found that of their members, nearly half did not believe in manmade global warming. Furthermore, the survey found that scientists who professed liberal political views were more likely to proclaim manmade climate change than the rest of their colleagues.

I think we can name names here. Certainly one of the more prominent names is Heidi Cullen. She was with the Weather Channel. She spent most of her time with a background of very liberal thinking, liberal agenda, talking about this until she is no longer there anymore. She is now with one of the groups, the very liberal groups.

This is a good one, a lifelong liberal Democrat. His name is Dr. Martin

Hertzberg. He is a retired Navy meteorologist with a Ph.D. in physical chemistry who also declared his dissent of warming fears in 2008. This is a quote from Dr. Martin Hertzberg:

As a scientist and life-long liberal Democrat, I find the constant regurgitation of the anecdotal, fear mongering clap-trap about human-caused global warming to be a disservice to science. The global warming alarmists don't even bother with data! All they have are half-baked computer models that are totally out of touch with reality and have already been proven to be false.

CNN, not exactly a bastion of conservatism, had yet another of its meteorologists dissent from global warming fears. His name is Chad Myers, a meteorologist for 22 years and certified by the American Meteorological Society, spoke out against anthropogenic climate change on CNN in December of 2008.

He said, ''You know, to think that we could affect weather all that much is pretty arrogant.''

Since they are talking about the weather, here are a few facts that are not mentioned on drought and hurricanes. Several of the people came to the floor during the evening to talk about increase in drought, the increase in hurricanes and all of that. According to NOAA, hurricanes have been in decline in the United States since the beginning of records in the 19th century. The worst decade for major—category 3, 4, 5—hurricanes was in the 1940s. Severe drought in 1934 covered 80 percent of the country. The current one, the drought we went through a year and a half ago was 25 percent of the country.

Then they talked about, last night, the icecaps are melting and all of that. My colleague Senator FEINSTEIN from California pointed to melting icecaps as proof of climate change. Yet reports on what is not melting show a different story. This past December a research expedition of climate scientists got stuck in deep ice in Antarctica. We all remember that. I remember talking about that and showing pictures on the floor when that took place. That was a bunch of people who were going up there to try to solidify their case on global warming. They were stuck in ice for weeks on end. It took a couple of weeks and a couple more icebreakers getting stuck before the research vessel was finally freed.

A paper published in the October Journal of Climate examines the trend of sea ice extent along the east Antarctic coast from 2000 to 2008 and finds a significant increase, average of 1.43. That is 1.5 percent a year of increase of ice in the Antarctic.

Greenland, the IPCC—now, keep in mind, I talked yesterday about the IPCC. That is the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In a minute, I will show how it was discredited. But in Greenland they said—they admitted that in 2001, to melt Greenland the ice sheet would require temperatures to rise by 5.5 degrees Celsius and remain for 1,000 years. The ice sheet is actually growing by 2 percent a year. That is what is going on right now on this very ice sheet. Everyone is concerned about Greenland. Yet it is actually growing, not decreasing.

In January 2010, Time magazine: Himalayan Melting: How a Climate Panel Got it Wrong: ''Glaciergate'' is a black eye for the IPCC and the climate-science community as a whole.

In December of 2008, Al Gore said—this is good. Al Gore said, ''The entire—

That is a little over 5 years ago. Gore said, ''The entire North polar icecap will disappear in 5 years.'' It is now 5 years and 1 month past the deadline, December of 2013, and the Arctic ice is actually doing pretty well. Last month, BBC reported that the Arctic icecap coverage is close to 50 percent more than in the corresponding period in 2012. So contrary to what Al Gore predicted, that it would be gone by now, it did not disappear.

I had a good quote there by Richard Lindzen talking about Gore. This is Richard Lindzen, one of the foremost authorities, scientific authorities on climate anywhere in the world. He is MIT. He has been quoted extensively. He said, talking about Gore:

To treat all changes as something to fear is bad enough. To do it in order to exploit that fear is much worse.

I mentioned last night that the New York Times designated Al Gore as perhaps the first environmental billionaire in the United States. He said the entire North polar icecap would disappear in 5 years. It has actually increased substantially.

Last night they talked about the IPCC is the gold standard of climate science. Senator WHITEHOUSE defended the credibility of the IPCC despite climategate, saying last night:

So after all that, after six published reviews whose results confirmed that there was nothing wrong with the science as a result of these emails—

We are talking about climategate now.

—for people to continue to come to the floor and suggest that the email chains revealed some flaw in the data or some flaw in the science, it's untrue. It's as simple as that. It's just not true.

But we know this is not the case. The emails are very clear that the scientists were manipulating the data to generate a result they wanted. This is what some of the emails disclose: One of the scientists said, and the emails disclosed, that the IPCC was systematically distorting facts, cooking the science of global warming to either cover up data that did not tell the story they wanted everyone to hear and exaggerating the impacts of the changing climate to help drive people—out of fear—into action.

Here are two examples. We have about 12 examples. I have read them all in the past on the floor of the Senate. But here are a couple of examples of how the IPCC was cooking the science. The IPCC claimed the Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035. Of course it is not true. Yet it was put into the IPCC's fourth assessment report.

The assessment report is a report the IPCC has that the media picks up and the public consumes. According to the Sunday Times, that is in the UK, this claim was based off of a brochure that was used by the World Wildlife Fund to promote global warming activism. They put it on a brochure after finding a paper from a little-known scientist in India.

That scientist was wrong. According to the Times, Himalayan glaciers are so thick and at such a high altitude that most glaciologists believe it would take several hundred years to melt them at the present rate. More alarming, from the East Anglia University's Climatic Research Unit, the CRU, disturbing evidence was revealed that the climatologists had been increasingly cooking the books. One leaked email from 1999—keep in mind, these are the guys who are giving the science to the IPCC.

I've just completed Mike's Nature trick of adding the real temps to each series for the last 20 years, i.e., from 1981 onwards, and from 1961 for Keith's to hide the decline.

In other words, they were falsifying the increase in the temperature. What he is saying is that he changed the numbers to show the warming is happening when it has not happened.

Another e-mail that was revealed in 2009:

The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment, and it is a travesty that we can't. Our observing system is inadequate.

Despite this, the IPCC has continued to say global warming is continuing to happen.

The media outcry from these email leaks was surprising because we did not hear as much about it in the United States as we did in the UK and other places. It seemed to be the mainstream press organizations that have been strong partners with the global warming activists, alarmists, that began to question their confidence in the whole premise.

Here are some quotes. Keep in mind these are from legitimate organizations, publications, major publications that are credible.

Christopher Booker of the UK, the Telegraph—one of the largest papers in the United Kingdom—said that what has happened with climate change is they are talking about falsifying the information to make the public believe this is actually happening. They said it is the ''worst scientific scandal of our generation.'' That is very serious, I say to the Presiding Officer, the ''worst scientific scandal of our generation.''

Clive Crook of the Financial Times stated: ''The closed mindedness of these supposed men of science . . . is surprising, even to me. The stink of intellectual corruption is overpowering.'' That was from the Financial Times. We are all familiar with that publication.

A prominent IPCC physicist said: ''Climategate was a fraud on a scale I've never seen.''

U.N. scientist Dr. Philip Lloyd said: ''The result is NOT scientific.''

Newsweek magazine said: ''Once celebrated climate researchers feeling like the used-car salesman.''

''Some of the IPCC's most quoted data and recommendations were taken straight out of unchecked activist brochures.''

George Monbiot is a columnist for the Guardian. He was on the other side of this issue. He was upset because people were finding out the truth and said: ''It is no use pretending that this isn't a major blow. The emails extracted by a hacker from the climatic unit at the University of East Anglia could scarcely be more damaging . . . I'm dismayed and deeply shaken by them . . . I was too trusting of some of those who provided the evidence I championed. I would have been a better journalist if I had investigated their claims more closely.'' He is one of the strongest supporters of global warming.

Last night we heard more and more, and now we get to the rest of the story, and that would be what is most important. I say this is the most important because many years ago—this would have been about 2002, when almost everyone believed the world was coming to an end and it was global warming that was causing it—they all talked about how it must be true. Frankly, I thought it was true at that time until we did some checking to find out what would it cost to regulate greenhouse gases. I mean, even if it were a legitimate problem that was destroying this country, what would it cost?

The first reports we got were from Charles Rivers and from the Wharton School. Some of their economists came up with it. The range is between $300 to $400 billion a year. This is based off of a regulatory threshold of 25,000 tons. This is very tough.

I have a good friend, Senator ED MARKEY, who was in the House with me for quite some time. We disagree on this issue, but the last bill that came up, the last legislation to force us to have a type of cap-and-trade, was based on capping these people who emit 25,000 tons or more. That is based off of the regulatory threshold of 25,000 tons. Only the largest facilities, such as oil refineries and powerplants, would have been affected. But doing by regulation what they cannot do by legislation, they have to do it under the Clean Air Act.

This is kind of under the weeds, but it is very important. I thought the bill was too costly for the American people. It would regulate those who emitted 25,000 tons or more, but the Clean Air Act would regulate those at 250 tons or more. That is every church, every school, every small shop would be covered, apartment buildings in America.

So when you stop and think about it, we have never been able to calculate. No one disagrees with the fact that if we did it through regulation, it would cost between $300 to $400 billion a year. For those people who are listening right now, $300 to $400 billion a year may not mean too much. But every year I calculate, in my State of Oklahoma, how many people, families we have who file a federal tax return. Then I do the math. That would have meant $3,000 to each family in the State of Oklahoma. So it is a big deal. That is what it would cost them.

While they are extremely costly, the agency is busy doing other things that also include other types of regulations. The ozone, for example, their regulation—and it hasn't gone through yet—all 77 of my counties in Oklahoma would be out of attainment. That would be 7,000 jobs lost in my State.

Utility MACT is something that has already been implemented. That is what put coal out of business—$100 billion in cost, 1.65 million jobs.

Boiler MACT is already implemented also. Every manufacturing company has a boiler, and so they would regulate those boilers. The cost of that is $63 billion, costing 800,000 jobs that were lost. That is already implemented.

The BLM fracking regulations would be about $100,000 per well. On fracking, I can remember when hydraulic fracturing was something not many people knew much about. I did because the first hydraulic fracturing took place in my State of Oklahoma. It was 1948.

I remember when the last Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa Jackson, made the statement when I asked her the question live on TV—I said: Is it causing groundwater contamination? She is the one who said there has never been a documented case of groundwater contamination by using hydraulic fracturing.

President Obama, in his effort and his war on fossil fuels, is trying to stop them. We have heard him say several times: Well, we have good, cheap, abundant, plentiful natural gas to take care of our energy needs in America. That part was true, but then the next thing he said was: We have to stop hydraulic fracturing. Without hydraulic fracturing, we can't get 1 cubic foot of gas.

What I have tried to do is let the public know the cumulative impact of all of these regulations. A lot of people think of regulations as only affecting large corporations. If someone talks to Tom Buchanan of the State of Oklahoma—he was recently elected president of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. If we ask him what the most critical thing is for the farmers in the State of Oklahoma, he will say the overregulation by the EPA. He said: Overregulation by the EPA is much more significant to the ag community in Oklahoma and across the country than anything in the farm bill.

So the cumulative impact of all of these regulations so far is about $630 billion annually and about 9 million jobs lost.

I would only say that last night they had a good time talking about these things, and the same story was told over and over using a slightly different slant on it.

But in terms of the cost, this is the reason that they have tried ever since the Kyoto Convention. The first bill was introduced in 2002 and several of them since then. They were never able to pass a bill through the House and the Senate on regulating greenhouse gases because cap and trade is so costly.

But what people have to realize—I know right now as I speak that there are a lot of people out there who really believe global warming is happening, really believe the world is going to come to an end, really believe we are going to have to do something about it, and so we start in the United States. So knowing that these people are out there—and there are even people in my State of Oklahoma who have bought into this—when Lisa Jackson, who at that time—she is not there anymore. She was Obama's pick and was the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. I asked her the question on the record, live on TV in one of our committee hearings—I said: Let's assume that we pass legislation and that we impose the cost of $300 to $400 billion on the American taxpayer. If that is the case and if they did that, would that have the effect of reducing greenhouse gases worldwide? Her answer: No, it wouldn't, because the problem isn't in the United States; the problem is in China and India and Mexico and other places.

Now, you could carry out that argument even further and say that those people who want to do away with emissions and have cap and trade in the United States—that could cause it to have actually more, not less, emissions of CO_2 because we would be chasing our manufacturing base to countries that didn't have any requirements. So if you really believe it, then still it isn't true.

I would end with one more quote. Dr. Richard Lindzen of MIT, whom we talked about 1 minute ago, was asked this question: Why is it that so many of the bureaucrats, the very liberals who want government to be controlled from Washington, want our lives to be controlled from Washington, why is it that they are so concerned with carbon regulations? Richard Lindzen's answer was this: ''Controlling carbon is a bureaucrat's dream. If you control carbon, you control life.''

It is unfortunate. There are a lot of people even in this body who believe we should have much more power in the Senate. I can assure you that the problems we are facing now are problems because of too much power being concentrated in Washington, DC.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CHESAPEAKE BAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have taken to the floor many times to talk about the Chesapeake Bay—the largest estuary in the Northern Hemisphere, and declared a national treasure by not only President Obama but by several U.S. Presidents.

For the 17 million people who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, it is part of their life. From the residents of Smith Island, which is the last inhabitable island in the Maryland part of the Chesapeake Bay, to those who enjoy fishing for rockfish in the bay, to its oysters, its crabs, the over 11,000 miles of shoreline created by the Chesapeake Bay, the 150 major rivers that feed into the Chesapeake Bay, and the $1 trillion to the economy, the Chesapeake Bay is truly part of the life of those of us who are privileged to live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

I have spoken about this bay many times because it is being threatened. Over 30 years ago, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware, along with the EPA and other partners, entered into a Chesapeake Bay agreement.

This has grown to six States, including the Presiding Officer's State of West Virginia, and other governmental entities in the private sector. The Chesapeake Bay agreement has been revisited over time, and the most recent effort to update this agreement was the draft submitted by the Obama administration on January 29 of this year. This draft agreement is what I wish to speak about with my colleagues.

The development of sound policies to restore the Chesapeake Bay has been a top priority of mine over the course of my career in Congress. I have been fortunate to have great partners in Congress representing the Bay States. Together we have worked to develop effective conservation and ecosystem restoration programs in the farm bill, the Water Resources Development Act, the Clean Water Act, and elsewhere in law supporting a variety of conservation and ecosystem approaches across different sectors.

The Army Corps, USDA, and EPA are not the only Federal agencies doing important Chesapeake Bay work. NOAA, USGS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service are also important Federal partners in the broader effort to restore the Bay.

President Obama's May 2009 Chesapeake Bay Executive order recognized both the national interest in restoring the Chesapeake Bay and improving Federal coordination of restoration efforts because of a wide-ranging involvement of different departments and agencies of the Federal Government. The coordination of seven jurisdictions, hundreds of local communities, seven cabinet-level Federal departments, and stakeholders of all stripes have necessitated the development of the Chesapeake Bay agreement to affirm the conservation goals of everyone involved in this effort.

I wish to stress the importance of broad involvement of all stakeholders in the effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay. The populations living and working in the bay watershed must realize we are all in this together. The major stakeholders in regard to our conservation action include farmers. Farming is not only a way of life in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, it is a desirable activity within the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the future of the Chesapeake Bay. But there are certain challenges as a result of farming as it relates to nitrogen in the bay and in the sediments.

Developers. We are proud of the fact people want to live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We have seen a major increase in population. But with that comes the challenge of storm runoff, and we have to do a better job of preventing storm runoff dumping pollution into the bay, and the municipalities which are responsible for the growth of populations have to deal with how they treat wastewater, and the wastewater treatment plants need to be updated so we can have the maximum results in removing the pollution which otherwise would end up threatening the future of the bay.

The Chesapeake Bay agreement outlines a fairly comprehensive approach to continuing efforts to restore the bay which is dependent upon all stakeholders doing their part. The draft agreement is a good outline, but there is room for improvement in the draft agreement as well. I hope that while the agreement is in this period of public comment, the final will be approved.

The Chesapeake Bay program partnership was formed in 1983, when the Governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the EPA signed the first Chesapeake Bay agreement. For more than 30 years these entities have remained committed to the goal of restoring the Chesapeake Bay. As the science has determined and the interest in Bay stewardship has broadened, this partnership has since expanded to become a basin-wide effort where all six States of the basin are now party to the agreement.

Working together to achieve the various goals of the agreement is what will help ensure the Chesapeake Bay we will leave for our children is healthier tomorrow than it is today. The agreement does acknowledge the partnership cannot address every goal in the agreement instantaneously. Certainly some goals may take longer to realize than others, but all the goals are achievable, and some I think should be even more ambitious. They are based upon best science. We think science needs to judge what we can do as far as cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

The agreement wisely suggests action be taken in a strategic and cost-effective manner. We want to make sure this is doable. We understand the burdens which can be caused. We want to make sure this is layered in a way which achieves best science results but does it in the most cost-effective manner.

Of the principles laid out in the agreement, I wish to acknowledge the partnership's commitment to transparency and consensus building. We want all stakeholders involved in the process, and we want local involvement. We think local governments know how we can best achieve our results. The goals of the agreement deal with very sensitive issues such as natural land preservation, nutrient pollution reduction, and others.

The process must be fair and open. The strategic development process and achieving the agreement's conservation goals must be devised in an all-inclusive manner which is open to the public so that all are included in the process.

There is a great deal of skepticism in certain communities about the government's role and its actions to protect and restore the bay. I have heard that skepticism from certain constituencies. I have learned that having an open dialog with stakeholders, carefully explaining intentions, listening to concerns, and answering questions goes a long way toward building consensus and acceptance.

The agreement acknowledges the role the bay TMDL plays in achieving the water quality goals of the bay. A majority of the waters of the Chesapeake Bay are within the boundaries of the State of Maryland. Thousands of Maryland watermen make their living on the bay. The property value and tourism draw of communities up and down the Eastern and Western Shores of Maryland, not to mention the Marylanders who swim and fish in the bay, all depend upon a healthy bay.

But there is no degree of action Maryland can take on its own, no matter how drastic, which will improve the bay quality—not without the other five States and the District of Columbia in the watershed doing their part as well. The TMDL assures that all Bay States are coordinated in their efforts to improve bay water quality. The agreement acknowledges the importance of the TMDL.

The TMDL gives us a level playing field so we can make sure all stakeholders in all geographical areas are treated fairly in achieving the goals of reducing pollution in the bay. I support the fisheries goal of the agreement. Restoring the iconic Maryland blue crab in the bay is important for so many reasons. The agreement sets the goal of maintaining a population of 215 female adult crabs through 2025. Blue crabs are a vital part of the food chain throughout the bay's ecosystem and

they are at the heart of the Mid-Atlantic's multibillion dollar seafood industry.

Restoration of native oyster habitat and replenishing the bay's oyster population is critical from both an economic and water quality standpoint. The agreement sets the goals of restoring native oyster habitat and populations to the ten tributaries of the bay by 2025.

As I am sure the Presiding Officer is aware, our oyster population is a fraction of historic levels. The oyster is not only an important cash crop in the bay; it also acts as a filter to the pollution in the bay, restoring bay water quality. Bay oysters are another important seafood commodity for watermen making their living on the bay. Oysters are also important to improving water quality. Oysters are bivalve mollusks which play an important role in reducing nitrogen pollution in the bay.

Oyster populations had been in sharp decline due to the destruction of oyster beds along the seafloor of the bay. Habitat restoration efforts led by the Army Corps, the growth of oyster farming operations, and Virginia and Maryland's efforts are helping oysters rebound across the bay, which is good for the economy and water quality of the bay.

The agreement's wildlife habitat and wetlands restoration goals are, in my opinion, too low. I would encourage the partnership to consider setting more ambitious goals. Wetland restoration is critical to flood protection and water quality improvement as well as providing important duck habitat and fish spawning habitat.

Reauthorizing the North American Wetland Conservation Act, which I am a cosponsor of and was happy to see the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee recently report with unanimous support, will provide additional financial and technical assistance to help achieve improved wetlands conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Programs such as the North American Wetland Conservation Act, the Corps' Chesapeake Bay Ecosystem Restoration Program, and the farm bill's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, along with numerous State efforts to restore wetlands and habitats across the six-State region, are why I believe the agreement can do better.

I also believe the agreement's goals to improve fish passage along the bay's rivers and tributaries could be more ambitious. The agreement aims to open an additional 1,000 stream miles to fish passage. The revisions to the Continuing Authorities Program in WRDA will help fund critical dam removal projects around the watershed which will improve fish passage. If the decisions to remove dams and other barriers to fish passage are strategically made, this goal could be far exceeded, which is why I think the goal should be revised and be based upon the execution of strategic fish passage projects. This would include improving eel passage on the Conowingo Dam. I am pleased to know that the dam's operators are aware of and interested in helping us devise practical solutions.

With respect to the agreement's goals on forest buffer and tree canopy, I believe there is room for improvement in the goals the draft agreement sets. The agreement sets the goal of restoring 900 miles of riparian forest per year and expands the urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025. This seems to be low given the opportunity which exists to grow more trees in urban areas because of how desirable trees are to improving the quality of life and character of urban communities and importance of trees to reducing storm water runoff in urban areas.

The agreement sets the goal of protecting an additional 2 million acres of land throughout the watershed. This is critically important to stem poor land-use planning and sprawl while also establishing lands which serve as critical water quality improvement mechanisms.

One omission from this land conservation goal I think is important is to ensure public access to lands conserved by the State, local, and Federal Government. Public-preserved for the purpose of protecting habitat and improving the ecosystem within the watershed is important, but so is providing outdoor recreational access to the public. After all, ensuring public access to conservation lands and encouraging people to experience these lands is critical to building the public's understanding of the environment and developing an appreciation for all conservation efforts happening around the watershed.

In Maryland, my colleague in the House, Congressman SARBANES, has been very instrumental in the leadership of No Child Left Inside. By this we mean the education of our children including getting outdoors to understand the importance of the Chesapeake Bay and understanding what they can do to help the bay. Access to these restoration projects—by the public, by our students, by all—helps build the support base we need to get these programs moving forward and also understanding what we do here in the watershed and the importance it has on the future of the Chesapeake Bay.

Lastly, I wish to speak about a couple issues the agreement does not address. Reducing the presence or improving the secure storage of toxic chemicals in use around the watershed is a growing problem. As the Presiding Officer knows, while the recent chemical spill in West Virginia was not in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the incident does highlight the risk facilities such as the one which failed in Charleston pose to our great water bodies. In the Chesapeake Bay watershed there are dozens of chemical storage facilities and industrial activities which use toxic chemicals on a regular basis. Improving the security and reducing the contamination risks from these facilities should be a part of the Chesapeake Bay agreement.

The agreement also makes no mention of the single greatest threat to the bay and the world over. Adapting to the effects of climate change should also be part of the bay restoration plan. I talked about this earlier today, as many of the Senators who came to the floor to talk about climate change: Rising sea levels pose threats to the hundreds of Chesapeake Bay communities and millions of people who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Aquatic acidification poses a long-term threat to all aquatic species, including blue crabs, oysters, rockfish, sturgeon, menhaden, and other hallmark species of the bay. If the fish and shellfish go, so does a way of life for many thousands of families around the bay.

Let's deal with these problems. We have a chance in the Chesapeake Bay agreement to be more ambitious in dealing with acidification in our ocean and in the bay. And we must adapt our water infrastructure to handle the effects of more intense weather events in the bay region to reduce the water quality impacts of these events and to protect individuals' property.

The agreement is an important step toward the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Billions have been spent and progress has been made. And I wish to stress that we have made progress. We have done a lot of good things in the Chesapeake Bay. But our resources are large and fragile and face unprecedented pressure, and it is going to continue to take increased resources to restore and protect for future generations. So the good news is we have made progress.

We can do much more. We can preserve the iconic Chesapeake Bay for future generations, so people, our children and grandchildren, can enjoy the fishing, crabbing, swimming, and the sheer beauty of the Chesapeake Bay, and can benefit from its economic importance to our region. We can do this for future generations.

Let's be more ambitious in the Chesapeake Bay agreement. Let's work together, use best science, and be practical. But let's be on a constant path of improving the Chesapeake Bay.

Mr. President, I would suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DOMESTIC FUEL TAX

Mr. HOEVEN. This morning I spoke on the floor and I talked about energy. I talked about the need for a States

first, all-of-the-above approach to a comprehensive energy plan that will not only produce more energy for our country but will get us to energy independence or energy security within a very short period of time and will also help with environmental stewardship and will help us deploy the technology that will not only produce more energy—and do it in a dependable, cost effective way—but at the same time the same technology as we deploy it will help us produce that energy with better environmental stewardship.

That is the right kind of plan for America. We have legislation that I introduced along with my colleagues both on the Republican side of the aisle and the Democratic side of the aisle to accomplish that plan, including a good friend of mine, a Senator from West Virginia, a Democrat. I am a Republican, but we have been able to work together on legislation that will empower hundreds of billions in private investment into the energy sector to produce more energy more cost-effectively, more independently, more efficiently, more reliably, and with better environmental stewardship because it deploys the new technologies that not only will make a difference in this country, but will be adopted by other countries around the globe.

That means lower-cost energy. That means more energy, and at the same time better environmental stewardship. That is the right approach. That is the right approach to a comprehensive energy policy.

The fact is, we do not just have one bill to do what I am talking about—not just one big, monolithic Federal approach—but rather we have a whole series of bills that would create a step-by-step approach to a comprehensive energy plan for this Nation that would truly create a States first, all-of-the-above approach. That would create more jobs and economic growth. It would create tax revenue to help address our deficit and our debt without raising taxes through economic growth.

It would create more domestic energy, and more domestic energy means national security, not being dependent on oil from the Middle East. This country does not want to be dependent on oil from the Middle East and there is no reason that we should be. Together with our closest friend and ally Canada, we can produce more than enough energy for our needs. That means national security, and as I said, with the new technologies and better environmental stewardship.

As I said, I put forward legislation with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to accomplish just that. Again, this isn't one big, comprehensive 1,000-page bill that you have to pass to understand what is in it. These are individual bills that are very understandable, that are common sense—legislation that includes approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline. As I said this morning, the administration has been reviewing the Keystone XL Pipeline for more than 5 years. This Congress can approve it, and it should.

It includes items such as the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act, which has already been passed by the House. It includes a whole series of bills that would help us to develop a strategic, comprehensive plan and goals to make sure we are producing more energy in this country on public lands both onshore and off.

The Empower States Act makes sure that States have a primary responsibility for regulating hydraulic fracture. Hydraulic fracturing is enabling us to tap new areas of energy that we never thought we would be able to develop.

Coal ash recycling legislation. Together with my good friend from the great State of West Virginia, we have a coal ash recycling bill. This bill not only will help us recycle coal ash for building materials, for building roads, but it will also help make sure that when we landfill coal ash, it is done with good environmental stewardship. That is a win-win.

This is something the EPA is working on. They have to have a solution in place by the end of the year, and we have worked with the EPA to actually come up with something that is clear and understandable and works, not only to make the landfill safer but to make sure we can recycle coal ash in a way that reduces the cost of our roads and our buildings. Again, just another commonsense example of what is in the Domestic Fuels Act.

The Domestic Fuels Act allows marketers, gas stations, to not only sell oil and gas products but actually makes it easier for them to sell renewable fuel as well—ethanol, biofuels, hopefully hydrogen and other fuels of the future. It makes it easier for them to get permitted and to use the same equipment to sell a whole variety of different types of fuels. What does that mean? That means consumer choice. That means more competition to help bring down the price at the pump. Now this is the same kind of comprehensive plan that we developed in my State of North Dakota. We called our energy plan EmPower ND—EmPower North Dakota.

The idea was to unleash all of our energy resources, both traditional and renewable. Our State is now an energy powerhouse for the Nation. The only State that produces more oil for this country now is Texas. We are closing in on a million barrels a day of oil, and producing it in new ways with new techniques that people thought were not possible a few years ago, and with a smaller footprint and better stewardship. That is what the technology does.

When you create an environment where you empower the investment, that technology unleashes the energy and does it with better environmental stewardship. We did that as a State, and we can do it as a country. It builds on the very foundation of how our government works.

The States in our great country are the laboratories of democracy. What I am proposing is that we also make the States the laboratories of energy development. We do that by giving them the primary role in how they develop energy, how they develop their energy resources and how those energy resources are regulated.

So whether it is oil or gas or nuclear or biofuels, hydro, wind, solar, biomass or whatever else may be an area of strength for that State, they decide and they figure out how to develop it. Who will be more concerned about good environmental stewardship than the people who live right there and deal with it every single day?

It is a States first, all-of-the-above comprehensive plan for energy development for this country instead of the current approach, an approach where there is too much regulation, taxation, and restriction by big Federal policies. This one-size-fits-all approach is, in fact, preventing investment in energy development in this country.

I will give you the Keystone XL Pipeline as a great case in point. There is $5.3 billion in investment and not one penny of Federal spending, but $5.3 billion that has been held on the sideline now for more than 5 years. In 2011 the Chamber of Commerce put forward a study. They cited hundreds of projects across the country totaling hundreds of billions of dollars that were being held up that would create energy and jobs and economic activity for our country. If you think about it, you cannot regulate it. The Federal Government cannot regulate our way to a solution—think about it—even if you put out regulations. If the Obama administration could say, OK, only these kind of energies can be produced and they have to be produced this way—even if that worked in this country, what about the rest of the globe?

This is a global issue. So instead of holding up the development and deployment of these new technologies with regulatory barriers, we need to empower that investment. As you empower investment and you produce energy and you deploy new technologies, you get better environmental stewardship.

It doesn't happen in just this country. It will happen in other countries too. Why? Because they will adopt the technology we develop. That is how it works. When somebody develops a better technology, then other companies, other countries adopt it.

So let me contrast what is going on right now. One of the things I worked on both as a Governor and now here in the Senate is getting the Keystone XL Pipeline approved. It has been more than 5 years—more than 5 years—and the administration still refuses to make a decision. That is defeat by delay, sidelining $5.3 billion of private investment that the administration's own studies show will create jobs. The final environmental impact study produced by the Department of State said

that the Keystone XL Pipeline project will create 42,000 jobs without spending a penny of Federal money. The $5.3 billion in private investment would create 42,000 jobs at a time when we need to get the economy growing and creating jobs. It also will create hundreds of millions in revenue that will address the deficit and the debt at the local, State, and Federal level. It will also create hundreds of millions in revenue over many years at a time when we have deficit and debt without raising taxes. It also strengthens national security.

There is no question when you go to the public and say: Do we want to get our oil from the Middle East or would we rather get our oil from right here in the United States and Canada, if we can produce it ourselves and get it from Canada, is that what we want or do we want to continue to rely on the Middle East, obviously that is a pretty easy answer, isn't it?

In a recent public poll performed last week, March 7, by the Washington Post and ABC, two-thirds of Americans support building the Keystone XL Pipeline and 22 percent oppose. After 5 years and study after study, the administration still can't make a decision. Yet two-thirds of Americans know what we need to do. Two-thirds of the American people say: Build the pipeline. What are you waiting for? Only 22 percent oppose it.

The final environmental impact—I believe it is either the fourth or fifth environmental impact study—done by the Obama administration came out and again it showed there was no significant environmental impact. That was released at the end of January.

The inspector general's report that was released at the end of February said there was no conflict of interest by the company hired to do the environmental impact statement. Yet still we wait. There is still no decision. So you wonder why. You look at our economy and you say: Why isn't our economy growing faster? Why isn't our economy stronger? Why isn't unemployment going down? Why is there so much investment capital sidelined? Why aren't businesses growing? Why aren't small businesses growing? Why aren't small businesses across the country hiring people? Then we see regulations which are holding up approvals for more than 5 years. Maybe that is the answer.

America has always been the place where everybody came to do business because it was easier to do business. As a result our economy has always been the greatest economy in the world. When we have a government that can't even make a decision on a regulatory approval to approve a project billions of dollars after its own agency has come out time and time and time again and said there is no reason not to go forward, maybe that is the problem.

Obviously the people of this country know that. That is why when you go out and ask them a commonsense question, they give you a commonsense answer: Build the pipeline. We listened to the arguments about how we can't build the pipeline because of CO_2 emissions because using oil from the oil sands in Alberta, Canada, will create CO_2.

The reality is—and as the environmental impact study done by the State Department clearly shows—you have more CO_2 emissions without the pipeline than you do building it. How does that make sense? How does it make sense to hold it up on the basis of CO_2 emissions when you have more CO_2 emissions without the pipeline than with it?

Of course the net result is instead of having the energy come to the United States, it goes to China. And what do we do? We keep importing oil from the Middle East.

What I am talking about is commonsense legislation. That was just one example. I can give you others.

Earlier this year we passed a bill I put forward with other Members. It is the BLM bill, Bureau of Land Management streamlining bill. It is a simple, commonsense bill. It simply says BLM offices can work across State lines. For example, the BLM office in Miles City, MT, can work across the State line in North Dakota. That just makes sense because we have so much oil activity in our State. Not only can they work in our State, they can also work on the reservation.

We have the three affiliated tribes reservations: Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara. It is a very large reservation in our State with incredible oil activity, but they have to get all these regulatory permits to drill wells too, and the Bureau of Land Management could not keep up in our State or on the reservation. Now they can bring their people from other offices in to help.

When we look at this, it is not just about producing more energy, is it? That is a simple, commonsense act which we passed in both this Chamber and the House. It is now law. It not only helps us produce more energy in our States, such as North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and other places, but it also helps our reservations.

We now have activity on the three affiliated tribes' reservations. They have tremendous employment and tremendous growth. They are getting revenue from their oil wells that they can use for social programs to help needy families, to pay for education, and to use for roads and vital infrastructure.

Tomorrow—along with Senator BARRASSO and Senator ENZI of Wyoming—we will introduce another similar bill that makes it easier to build gas-gathering systems both on reservations and off. Instead of flaring off gas at the wellhead site, you are able to build gathering systems and get that gas to pipelines and get it to market and use it. Again, that is not just about producing more energy; that is an example of better environmental stewardship.

By putting these commonsense measures into place, we create economic activity and more energy, but as I said from the outset, we get better environmental stewardship. I mentioned that the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act is part of that comprehensive plan to have the States first all-of-the-above energy approach for our country; that legislation will help us produce more energy both onshore and offshore on our public lands.

Again, that is good for all the reasons I have identified but think about it in this context too: By producing more energy on public lands, we will also create more revenue for the Federal Government. Without raising taxes, we create more revenue for the Federal Government. That is important to address our deficit and our debt.

We have something else coming up that we are going to have to find a revenue source for; that is, a highway bill. In September the highway bill expires, and we are going to have to have a highway bill. We want a 5-year highway bill that is a very strong, well-funded highway bill to address the infrastructure needs in this country. Whether you talk to Republicans or Democrats in this Chamber, they will tell you we need to address infrastructure across this country.

In order to address infrastructure, we have to have a way to pay for it. How are we going to pay for it? How are we going to pay for that next highway bill? Right now the trust fund doesn't have the money to do it, so we are going to have to find a source. How about we tap into more energy on our Federal lands onshore and offshore? Without raising taxes, we have a revenue source so we can actually pass a 5-year highway bill. That is a long-term revenue source that we can actually use to fund the highway bill and address the infrastructure in this country.

It is about more than energy. This commonsense approach to building an energy plan for our country—and again it is not that big 1,000-page, one-size-fits-all Federal approach where everybody has to do the same thing. It is a step-by-step process to build a comprehensive plan that empowers the States to build on their strengths and make things happen. We can do it. It has all of those benefits. As I mentioned earlier, it even comes down to our national security.

I will close on this point: Think about what is happening in Western Europe. We have a situation where Russia—President Putin has decided he is going to invade Ukraine and he is going to take Crimea and put it under Russian rule and maybe more. We will see. So what do we do? What does the European Union do?

One of the decisions the European Union has to address is the energy situation. They are asking: What is the energy situation in Europe? Right now 30 percent of the natural gas the European Union utilizes comes from Russia and half of that goes through Ukraine.

It is a particularly acute issue for West Germany.

What do they do? Are they going to be willing to get tough with Putin when they are dependent on Russia for their natural gas for their energy? What decision do they make?

The same thing for our country: What decisions do we make when we continue to get our oil from places such as the Middle East and Venezuela? We say no to getting oil from Canada and force our closest friend and ally to turn to exporting that oil to China.

How do we deal with China? How are we dealing in that situation with our allies, such as Canada, that want to work with us, and how are we dealing with countries that have different interests than we do?

All of these things tie together to a good energy plan and a good energy policy. We all want better environmental stewardship, but we want solutions. The American people want solutions. They want commonsense, real solutions to address these problems. We put forward an approach that can make a big difference for our country, and I call on my colleagues to join with me and to work to put that in place for the good of our country today and for future generations.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SHAUN CAREY

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to honor and thank Shaun Carey, who is retiring from his position as Sparks city manager on April 4, 2014.

After serving the city of Sparks for over 20 years, Sparks native Shaun Carey leaves behind an impressive legacy of accomplishments. He played a major role in streamlining city services, in building Golden Eagle Regional Park—one of the largest artificial turf sports complexes in the United States—and in turning an abandoned hole in the ground into the Sparks Marina, a community gathering point and anchor for further development. Mr. Carey has also helped lead city staff in rebranding Sparks as a premier event destination, hosting events in ''downtown'' Victorian Square and throughout the city.

Shaun Carey grew up in Nevada, graduating from Sparks High School in 1975 and receiving his civil engineering degree from the University of Nevada, Reno shortly thereafter. Mr. Carey began his career in public service in 1982 and worked as a civil engineer, traffic engineer, and city engineer throughout the West before he returned to Sparks in 1992 to assume the position of public works director. He held this position for 7 years, becoming assistant city manager in 1999. Just 1 year later, in 2000, he was named City Manager.

Mr. Carey's training as an engineer reflected his desire to create systems designed to improve citizens' lives. This background also explains his longevity and success as a public servant; as he told the Sparks Tribune, ''I got to do things I enjoyed. I got to be a part of building communities and producing things that I found very rewarding.''

Geno Martini, the mayor of Sparks, spoke eloquently of Mr. Carey's contributions to the Silver State, saying, ''I can't find a big-enough word to tell you how I feel about Shaun and the professionalism, dedication, and commitment he has shown for more than two decades . . . [He] has gotten things done, and is largely why so many residents are proud to call Sparks home.''

We thank Mr. Carey for proudly serving his hometown of Sparks and wish him, his wife Jane, and his sons Scott and Pat all the best.

VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, had I been here yesterday, I would have voted for S. 1917, the Victims Protection Act of 2014. This important bill would increase protections for victims of sexual assault in the Armed Forces, while retaining commanders' authority to convene courts martial.

Every allegation, every anecdote, and every instance of sexual assault in our military is unacceptable. An important debate has been taking place in Congress and among our Armed Forces, and I am grateful that we aren't sitting idly by while this problem claims more victims and threatens the integrity and effectiveness of our Nation's military.

We have heard from the victims, and we have recognized that change was needed to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable. With that knowledge, Congress included over 30 reforms in last year's national defense authorization Act, NDAA, including removing the ability of commanders to overturn jury convictions; requiring review of decisions not to refer charges; criminalizing retaliation against victims; and providing special victims' counsel to victims of sexual assault to support and assist them through all proceedings.

The Armed Forces have also instituted major reforms and worked hard to improve the reporting climate for victims. As a result, the Marine Corps, for example, has seen a large increase in sexual assault reporting since initiating a sexual assault prevention and response campaign last year.

I supported the NDAA reforms as well as the measure the Senate passed yesterday. We should give these reforms the opportunity to work before enacting any change that would take the matter out of the chain of command. Some very strong voices agree.

First, according to a congressionally mandated independent panel that examined the role of the commander reported definitively that it would be a mistake to remove the chain of command's authority to convene courts martial. That panel, called the Response Systems to Adult Sexual Assault Crimes Panel, also found that removing courts-martial authority would not reduce the incidence of sexual assault, increase reporting of sexual assaults, improve the quality of prosecutions, increase the conviction rate, increase confidence among victims about the fairness of the military justice system, or reduce concerns about potential retaliation.

The independent panel also examined our allies' military justice systems in Israel, the UK, Australia, and Canada for comparison and concluded that none of the improvements they witnessed in the reporting of sexual assault in their militaries were connected to the role of the commander. The panel also found that there was no evidence that removing the commander from the decisionmaking process increased reporting of incidences of sexual assault.

Second, Vice Admiral DeRenzi, Judge Advocate General in the U.S. Navy, has spoken eloquently about the issue and underscored the essential role of the commander in solving the problem in testimony before SASC and before the Response Systems Panel. I encourage everyone to read her full testimony before these panels. In addition to urging Congress to retain commanders' authority, it details major reforms implemented in the Navy in the past 3 years and demonstrates the Navy's commitment to eradicating sexual assault from their ranks. I would like to highlight some of her statements for the record.

In her testimony, Admiral DeRenzi said:

''Beyond the immeasurable toll on individual victims, sexual assault is an existential threat to our core values and directly impacts operational readiness and unit cohesion. This is rightfully recognized as a leadership issue, not merely a legal issue. Exemplifying this commitment, the Navy implemented a multi-faceted, commander driven approach to address awareness and training, prevention, victim response, and accountability.''

''Permanent, effective change must be implemented through our commanders.''

''Additionally, any legislation must retain the commander's authority over

his or her Sailors. Commanders are responsible and accountable for the safety, health and welfare of their people; commanders must have authority commensurate with this responsibility, and that includes the authority to maintain good order and discipline.''

My commitment to taking decisive action when necessary to ensure the security and success of our men and women in uniform had me support the reforms in the most recent NDAA and support Senator MCCASKILL's bill. Taken together, these reforms meaningfully will change how our Armed Forces address the scourge of military sexual assaults, but they do so in a way that recognizes the unique purpose of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and ensures that our commanders have the tools they need to facilitate that much needed, long-overdue change.

REMEMBERING THOMAS EDWARD

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I was saddened to learn of the passing of Thomas Edward ''Ed'' Braswell, Jr., and I offer my sincerest condolences to his family. Two former chairmen of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn and John Warner, joined in expressing their gratitude for Mr. Braswell's exemplary service at a recent committee hearing.

Mr. Braswell joined the Armed Services Committee staff in 1953 and served as staff director and chief counsel to the committee under the leadership of two of the titans of the Senate—Richard Russell and John Stennis—for 23 years. Mr. Braswell served the committee from the beginning of the Eisenhower Presidency to the end of Gerald Ford's, helping see the committee through most of the Cold War and all of the Vietnam war and its aftermath. As chief counsel to the committee, Mr. Braswell helped to write the first of our annual National Defense Authorization Acts in 1962, and stayed on long enough to play a key role in the next 14 NDAAs, helping start a tradition of legislative accomplishment that continues to this day.

The Armed Services Committee has been blessed over the years with a number of staff members who have served the committee for a period of decades, dedicating their careers to the committee, the Congress, our national security, and our men and women in uniform and their families. Our staffers work behind the scenes, providing us with the informed advice that we need as we consider the myriad of national security issues facing the Department of Defense and the Congress. The long hours and large workloads required for such a career often require significant sacrifices by both our staffers and their families. Without the advice and assistance of these committed public servants, the business of the Senate could not be carried out.

Ed Braswell began his career by serving in the old Army Air Corps during World War II. He went on to go to Harvard Law School and worked briefly for the Department of Justice before joining the committee staff. In addition to his hefty commitments in the U.S. Senate, Mr. Braswell also made time to give back to his community. He served as the chairman of the Alexandria Planning Commission for more than 30 years and was instrumental in many of the commission's historic preservation efforts.

I know my Senate colleagues join me in recognizing the mighty contributions of our staff members, both past and present. It is the hard work and dedication of individuals like Ed Braswell who make our work possible, and for that we are very grateful.

2014 PARALYMPIANS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I wish to recognize the impressive accomplishments of the New Hampshire athletes who will be representing the United States this month in the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi, Russia.

These athletes are an inspiration to all of New Hampshire and athletes around the country. They have exhibited incredible dedication to their respective sports and have proven their remarkable abilities in competitions nationally and internationally. A selection to the U.S. Paralympic team is a great honor and a fitting reward for their years of hard work and training.

With access to the unparalleled beauty and terrain of the White Mountains, thousands of miles of trails, and nearly 1,000 lakes, Granite Staters are at home on the snow, on the ice and in the air.

New Hampshire is proud to acknowledge our State's Paralympians and is excited to show the world their talents during the Sochi games.

Taylor Chace of Hampton Falls, NH will be competing in sled hockey. A 3-time Paralympian, a member of the defending Paralympic gold medal sled hockey team and reigning top defenseman from the 2010 Paralympic Games, Taylor will hopefully help Team USA win the gold medal again.

Chris Devlin-Young of Bethlehem, NH will be competing in alpine skiing. As a five-time member of Team USA and 4-time Paralympic medalist, we are excited to see Chris compete again on the Paralympic stage and hope that he can regain the podium in Sochi.

Tyler Walker of Franconia, NH will be competing in alpine skiing. We are rooting for Tyler who is representing Team USA for the third time, and are hopeful that his previous Paralympic experience and recent successes at the World Cup and U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing National Championships will translate into victory this year in Sochi.

Each member of the U.S. Paralympics team has overcome incredible challenges and with their resolve, hard work and courage, they represent the best of our Nation.

It is my honor to congratulate these New Hampshire athletes. I wish each of them, and all of Team USA, the best of luck as they seek to bring home the gold at the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympics.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIE DAVIS, JR.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I wish to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the distinguished public servant and deacon, Mayor Willie Davis, Jr. Mayor Davis began his tenure as Mayor in 1992, though evidence of his service begins much sooner. During the Korean Conflict, Mayor Davis served the country he loved as a member of the United States Army. He also happily served Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church as a diligent and hard-working deacon, treasurer, and Sunday school teacher for over 20 years.

Mayor Willie Davis, Jr. devoted his career to building up his city of Farmerville and continuing to expedite its economic development. During his four terms as Mayor of Farmerville, Mayor Davis was instrumental in constructing the Farmerville Recreation Center which now bears his name. He also helped to build new police and fire complexes and led the expansion of ConAgra Poultry facilities into Farmerville.

Perhaps Mayor Davis' most memorable impression came from his relationships with the constituents that he served, and even those that he did not. Mayor Davis met no strangers; he was a mentor to many, an example to others, and a friend to all. Mayor Davis' motto and the words that he lived by, ''May the work I've done, speak for me,'' became more than just his campaign slogan. Let us remember his words as we reflect on his life, the great works that filled it, and his impact on Farmerville and the entire State of Louisiana.

Mayor Davis has been and continues to be an inspiration to all those who have benefitted from his 16 year career as Mayor of Farmerville and his decades of service to his church and community. It is with my heartfelt and greatest sincerity that I ask my colleagues to join me along with Mayor Willie Davis Jr.'s family in recognizing the life and many accomplishments of this incredible Mayor, mentor, and deacon, as well as his lasting impact throughout the Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

KCAM RADIO

• Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, 50 years ago KCAM AM Radio 790 in Glennallen, AK, began airing its signal. Today I commend this remarkable achievement.

KCAM signed on the air March 27, 1964, the day of the magnitude 9.2 Good Friday Earthquake that devastated Anchorage and caused a tsunami that wiped out Valdez and other coastal communities. The community of

Glennallen also felt the effects of the quake.

KCAM had not yet received Federal Communications Commission permission to broadcast, but since their tower was undamaged, the Civil Defense Authority asked the station to go live under Emergency Orders. They signed on and kept residents, emergency workers, and those fleeing the damaged areas up-to-date.

It was quite a beginning for a shoestring station that was founded five decades ago by the late Vince Joy. In 2014, the station is still going strong with a state-of-the-art studio, reaching listeners throughout the Copper River Valley via the airwaves and online streaming.

Along the way, KCAM has earned awards from the Associated Press and was named Inspirational Station of the Year by Skylight Network and Small Market Station of the Year by Focus on the Family.

I want to extend my congratulations to the current crew at the station, including president and manager Scott Yahr, program director Michelle Eastty, special projects manager Roger Bovee, and countless other staff and interns over the years who helped keep it going.

As part of their celebration, a newly released book commemorates 50 years of uninterrupted operation by chronicling stories from listeners who have been affected by the broadcasting and reprinting their photos. Anyone who has lived in a small town knows that a radio station is often at the center of the fabric of the community. Such is the case with KCAM, which not only provides music, news, weather, sports, talk shows, and entertainment, but also sends personal messages and makes community announcements.

I send my best wishes to my friends at KCAM Radio, the ''Voice of the Copper River Valley,'' as they observe their anniversary in April 2014.●

REMEMBERING JEFF BAYLESS

● Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Jeff Bayless. Jeff was a senior captain in the Anchorage Fire Department. He was born and raised Alaskan, and lived his entire life bettering our great State. Jeff began his road to serve in 1986 when he became a certified State of Alaska EMT. He then went on to complete paramedic training, and began serving with the Mat-Su Borough EMS and the Central Mat-Su Fire Department.

In 1991, Jeff was hired by the Anchorage Fire Department. And in 1995 when the Fire Department Emergency Medical Services and Fire Operations merged, Jeff made the move from paramedic to firefighter. In May of 2005, Jeff's steadfast dedication was recognized when he was promoted to senior fire captain. He served at Fire Station 9 in South Anchorage and Fire Station 11 in Eagle River.

Although a hero in is chosen occupation, Jeff was also a champion in his community. As a North Star Bible Camp board member, a youth instructor, and with his involvement in the Alaska Fallen Firefighters Memorial Committee, he was a pillar of leadership and a stalwart example of selfless service.

Jeff died after participating in a training activity on Friday March 7, 2014. He will be sorely missed. His commitment to God, family, and community will be felt for generations to come. Jeff Bayless is truly an Alaskan hero, and we mourn with his wife, Gail, his entire family, and his brothers and sisters in the Fire Department.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:43 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2019. An act to eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

H.R. 4152. An act to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

S. 2110. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, 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–4860. A communication from the Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4861. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Consumer Product and Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4862. A communication from the Director, Mississippi River Commission, Department of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Report for calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4863. A communication from the Chairman, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the requirements of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and the Inspector General Act of 1978; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4864. A communication from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's annual report concerning its compliance with the Sunshine Act for calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4865. A communication from the Administrator of the General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administrator's Semiannual Management Report to Congress; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4866. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to financial integrity for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4867. A communication from the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4868. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–281, ''Annie's Way Designation Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4869. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–280, ''Closing of a Public Alley in Square 150, S.O. 13–10218, Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4870. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–279, ''Expedited Partner Therapy Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4871. A communication from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013 and a report entitled ''Compendium of Unimplemented Recommendations''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4872. A communication from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4873. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law,

the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4874. A communication from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2013 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4875. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4876. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4877. A communication from the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States, transmitting, a report of three recommendations and one statement adopted by the Administrative Conference of the United States at its 59th Plenary Session; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4878. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pay for Senior-Level and Scientific or Professional Positions'' (RIN3206–AL88) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4879. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–288, ''LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4880. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–289, ''Public Service Commission and People's Counsel Terms of Service Harmonization Amendment Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4881. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–290, ''Electric Company Infrastructure Improvement Financing Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4882. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''United States and Area Median Gross Income Figures'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4883. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Method Changes for Tangible Property Disposition'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4884. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Withholding of Tax on Certain U.S. Source Income Paid to Foreign Persons and Revision of Information Reporting and Backup Withholding Regulations'' ((TD 9658) (RIN1545–BL18)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 361. A resolution recognizing the threats to freedom of the press and expression in the People's Republic of China and urging the Government of the People's Republic of China to take meaningful steps to improve freedom of expression as fitting of a responsible international stakeholder.

S. Res. 365. A resolution deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy.

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 375. A resolution concerning the crisis in the Central African Republic and supporting United States and international efforts to end the violence, protect civilians, and address root causes of the conflict.

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 376. A resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

S. Res. 377. A resolution recognizing the 193rd anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1410. A bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 1675. A bill to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Nominee: Joseph W. Westphal.

Post: Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the Pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: None.

3. Children and Spouses: James Westphal: None; Candice Westphal: None; Heather Miele: None; Anthony Miele: None; Amy Stewart: None; Tavis Stewart: None; Lindsay Westphal: None; Xavier Keutgen.

4. Parents: James W. Westphal: Deceased: Margaret Westphal: Deceased.

5. Grandparents: Guillermo Westphal: Deceased; Lidia Westphal: Deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Arthur Westphal; $560.00, 2012, Act Blue; $1120.00, 2013, Act Blue; Laura Westphal: N/A.

7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Douglas Alan Silliman, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait.

Nominee: Douglas Alan Silliman.

Post: Kuwait:

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.

2. Spouse: Catherine Raia Silliman, none.

3. Children and Spouses: Benjamin Douglas Silliman unmarried; none; Zachary John Silliman unmarried, none.

4. Parents: Robert Harvey Silliman, none; Elsie Pearl Silliman, deceased.

5. Grandparents: Chauncy Henry Silliman—deceased; Mildred Silliman—deceased; Roy Homer Skidmore—deceased; Pearl Bieneman Skidmore—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Gregory Scott Silliman, none; Mary Adelsberger, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: none.

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*Luis G. Moreno, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

Nominee: Luis G Moreno.

Post: Jamaica.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, donee:

1. Self: $200/$100, 2008/2012, Obama.

2. Spouse: N/A.

3. Children and Spouses: N/A.

4. Parents: N/A.

5. Grandparents: N/A.

6. Brothers and Spouses: N/A.

7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

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*Mark Gilbert, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Independent State of Samoa.

Nominee: Mark D. Gilbert.

Post: New Zealand and the Independent State of Samoa.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report if complete and accurate.)

Contributions, donee, date, and amount:

Mark Gilbert: DWS PAC, 04/22/09, $2500; ACTBLUE, 04/26/09, $4800; Evan Bayh Committee, 04/26/09, $2400; Evan Bayh Committee, 04/26/09, $2400; Evan Bayh Committee, 3/10/

2010, −$2400; Paul Hodes for Senate, 12/29/09, $2400; Robert Wexler for Congress Cmte, 03/21/09, $2400; Kendrick Meek for Florida INC, 12/31/09, $1000; DNC 03/31/09, $7600; DNC, 06/23/09, $7600; DNC, 10/01/09, $15200; Ted Deutch for Congress, 12/29/09, $2400; Klein for Congress, 03/21/09, $2400; Michael Bennet, 09/30/10, $500; Allen Boyd for Congress, 04/22/10, $2400; Jack Conway for Senate, 09/30/10, $1000; DCCC, 03/31/10, $2500; DNC, 02/25/10, $7600; DNC, 03/24/10, $7600; DNC, 04/01/10, $15200; Lori Edwards Campaign Cmte, 08/11/10, $500; Joe Garcia for Congress, 10/13/10, $1000; Paul Hodes for Senate, 09/21/10, $2400; Patrick J Murphy for Congress, 03/30/10, $1000; Patrick J Murphy for Congress, 09/23/10, $1000; Friends of Schumer, 03/31/10, $1000; Kendrick Meek for Florida INC, 03/31/10, $500; Kendrick Meek for Florida INC, 06/24/10, $541; Kendrick Meek for Florida INC, 09/21/10, $2400; Kosmas for Congress, 03/30/10, $1000; Suzanne Kosmas, 04/14/10, $1400; Martha Coakley for Senate, 01/15/10, $1000; Friends of Harry Reid, 10/15/10, $2400; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 02/08/10, $2400; Klein for Congress, 06/23/2010, $2400; Berkley for Senate, 12/30/11, $2500; McCaskill for Missouri, 04/26/11, $2500; McCaskill for Missouri, 11/25/11, $2500; Bill Nelson for U.S. Senate, 06/21/11, $2500; Bill Nelson for U.S. Senate, 06/21/11, $2500; Ben Cardin for Senate, 03/29/11, $1000; Obama Victory Fund, 04/04/11, $5000; Kaine for Virginia, 04/05/11, $2500; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 06/21/11, $2500; DNC, 02/03/11, $30800; Swing State Victory Fund, 12/21/11, $9200; Berkley for Senate, 05/23/12, $2500; Keith Fitzgerald for Congress, 09/25/12, $250; Joe Garcia for Congress, 09/25/12, $250; Joe Kennedy for Congress, 03/19/12, $1000; Klobuchar for Minnesota 2018, 02/21/12, $1000; Elizabeth for MA inc, 02/09/12, $2500; Hillary Clinton for President, 06/07/12, $1050; Gillibrand for Senate, 02/29/12, $500; Friends of Sherrod Brown, 09/25/12, $250; Montanans for Tester, 09/25/12, $250; Obama Victory Fund, 09/12/12, $1000; Tammy Baldwin for Senate, 03/28/12, $1000; Democratic Party of Wisconsin, 09/30/12, $1848; Lois Frankel for Congress, 05/29/12, $2500; Friends of Patrick Murphy, 05/29/12, $2500; Ted Deutch for Congress, 03/28/12, $500; Swing State Victory Fund, 01/23/12, $6600; Swing State Victory Fund, 02/18/12, $10000; Swing State Victory Fund, 02/29/12, $14200.

Nancy Gilbert: Kosmas for Congress, 05/23/09, $500; Patrick Murphy for Congress, 05/23/09, $2400; DNC, 10/28/09, $5000; Ted Deutch for Congress Cmte, 12/29/09, $2400; Kosmas for Congress, 08/06/10, $1900; FL Victory Fund, 09/26/10, $2400; Ron Klein, 08/04/10, $2400; Kendrick Meek for Florida INC, 08/14/10, $1800; DNC, 04/30/10, $15200; DNC, 11/21/10, $15200; DNC, 12/6/10, −$25; Ron Klein for Congress, 09/26/10, $2400; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 11/25/11, $2500; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 12/13/11, $2500; Friends of Patrick Murphy, 12/30/11, $2500; Kaine for Virginia, 11/08/11, $2500; Nelson for U.S. Senate, 10/21/11, $2500; Nelson for U.S. Senate, 10/21/11, $2500; Obama for America, 05/10/11, $5000; Obama Victory Fund, 05/10/11, $30800; Swing State Victory Fund, 12/21/11, $9200; Shelly Berkley for Senate, 08/13/12, $1000; McCaskill for Missouri, 05/23/12, $2500; Lois Frankel for Congress, 09/21/12, $2500; Swing State Victory Fund, 03/21/12, $30800; Dollars for Democrats, 06/04/12, $250; Democratic Party of Wisconsin, 09/30/12, $1848.

Danielle Gilbert (daughter): Barack Obama, 05/15/11, $250.

Karen Gilbert (sister): Barack Obama, 10/10/12, $200; Barack Obama, 10/28/12, $200; DNC, 5/23/13, $500.

Jeffrey Gilbert (brother): Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 09/26/11, $200; Barack Obama, 07/25/11, $250.

Doris Brooks (mother-in-law): DNC, 04/21/10, $1500; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, 11/29/11, $250; Barack Obama, 05/06/11, $2000; Barack Obama, 09/13/12, $2200.

*John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Nominee: John Learie Estrada.

Post: Trinidad & Tobago.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $250.00, 5/12/2012, John L. Estrada; $400.00, 10/16/208, John L. Estrada; $400.00, 01/29/2013, John L. Estrada.

2. Spouse: None.

3. Children and Spouses: None.

4. Parents: None.

5. Grandparents: None.

6. Brothers and Spouses: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*Maureen Elizabeth Cormack, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nominee: Maureen E. Cormack.

Post: Bosnia and Herzogovina.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: William E. Cormack (None).

3. Children and Spouses: Elizabeth J. Cormack (None); Margaret K. Cormack (None); William G. Cormack (None).

4. Parents: Girard Lynch (deceased); Elizabeth Lynch (deceased).

5. Grandparents: Robert and Elizabeth DiVall (deceased); Jerald and Molly Lynch (deceased).

6. Brothers and Spouses (none).

7. Sisters and Spouses (none).

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*Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

Nominee: Matthew H. Tueller.

Post: Sanaa.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.

2. Spouse: DeNeece G. Tueller: none.

3. Children and Spouses: Marie Amara Tueller: none. Kyle Newkirk: none. Margaret Tueller Proffitt: none. Clark Proffitt: none. David G. Tueller: none. Ayae T. Tueller: none. Daniel B. Tueller: none. Christian M. Tueller: none.

4. Parents: Blaine C. Tueller: $100, 8/4/2010, Democratic Party of Utah County; Jean Marie Tueller: none.

5. Grandparents: Lamont Tueller—deceased, none; Elva C. Tueller—deceased, none; Leland Heywood—deceased, none; Marie E. Heywood—deceased, none.

6. Brothers and Spouses: James B. Tueller, none. Beth D. Tueller, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Jan T. Lowman, none. Winfield N. Lowman, none. Anna T. Stone, $185, 10/2008, Barack Obama. Bernell Stone, $200, 8/2008, Claralyn Hill, UT; $200, 06/2008, Common Dream. Marie T. Emmett: none. Chad Emmett: none. Diane T. Pritchett: $1000, 10/2008, Barack Obama. Lant H. Pritchett: $4514, 2008, Barack Obama; $1000, 2008, Obama Victory; $1000, 2008, DNC. Martha T. Barrett: none. Jeff Barrett: none. Elisabeth T. Dearden: none. Kirk Dearden: $100, 2008, Barack Obama. Rachel Tueller: none. Jeanne T. Krumperman: none. Paul Krumperman: none.

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*Suzan G. LeVine, of Washington, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Nominee: Suzan Gail LeVine.

Post: Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

Nominated: January 30, 2014.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions (timeframe): January 2010–February 2014).

Self & Spouse

Donor, recipient, date, amount:

Suzan LeVine: Patty Murray, 7/17/2010, $1,875; Murray Victory 2010, 10/15/2010, $500; Obama Victory Fund 2012, 4/27/2011, $1,000; Gabrielle Giffords, 6/22/2011, $250; Obama Victory Fund 2012, 9/13/2011, $35,800; Obama Victory Fund 2012, 9/17/2011, $(1,000); Cantwell-Warren 2012, 11/28/2011, $1,250; Swing State Victory Fund, 12/15/2011, $9,200; Obama Victory Fund 2012, 1/20/2012, $30,800; Maria Cantwell, 1/28/2012, $2,500; Maria Cantwell, 1/28/2012, $875; Tim Kaine, 3/23/2012, $500; Tim Kaine, 3/23/2012, $3,000; Tammy Baldwin, 5/29/2012, $125; Suzan DelBene, 6/13/2012, $1,000; Obama Victory Fund 2012, 7/27/2012, $500; Jon Tester, 8/21/2012, $2,500; Dennis Heck, 9/11/2012, $1,000; Derek Kilmer, 9/17/2012, $2,500; Tim Kaine, 9/30/2012, $2,000; Americans United for Change, 10/18/2012, $3,200; Lon Johnson, 11/4/2012, $500; Jeanne Shaheen, 2/12/2013, $2,000; Mark Begich, 2/20/2013, $2,000; Ed Markey, 3/6/2013, $2,000; Patty Murray, 3/5/2013, $1,000; Democratic National Committee, 3/29/2013, $32,400; Patty Murray, 4/12/2013, $500; Patty Murray, 4/12/2013, $500; Suzan DelBene, 6/1/2013, $2,000; Mark Warner, 6/18/2013, $1,500; Bruce Braley, 5/31/2013, $2,000; Maria Cantwell, 5/31/2013, $1,000.

Eric LeVine: Obama Victory Fund, 11/29/2011, $35,800; Swing State Victory Fund, 12/17/2011, $9,200; Obama Victory Fund, 1/24/2012, $30,800; Jay Inslee, 1/25/2012, $3,600; Maria Cantwell, 1/30/2012, $2,500; Maria Cantwell, 1/30/2012, $2,500; Derek Kilmer, 7/28/2012, $500; Derek Kilmer, 9/24/2012, $2,000; Tim Kaine, 10/1/2012, $1,500; Suzan DelBene, 10/1/2012, $2,500; Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, 11/1/2013, $32,400.

Remainder of the family:

Name, amount, date, donee:

Children—Sidney LeVine: None (he's 11 yrs old).

Children—Talia LeVine: None (she's 8 yrs old).

Parent—Phyllis Davidson: $200, 8/27/2012, Obama Victory Fund; $150, 10/17/2012, Obama Victory Fund.

Parent—Maurice Davidson: Deceased.

Grandparent—Louis Davidson: Deceased.

Grandparent—Tillye Davidson: Deceased.

Grandparent—Phillip Fox: Deceased.

Grandparent—Helen Fox: Deceased.

Brother—Phillip Davidson: None.

Sister-in-Law—Ruth Davidson: $1,000, 7/22/2011, Obama Victory Fund.

Sister—Hanna Fox: None.
Brother-in-Law—Edward Gormley: None.
Brother—Samuel Davidson: None.
Sister-in-Law—Margaret Klopf Garet White: None.

*Bathsheba Nell Crocker, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs).

*Peter A. Selfridge, of Minnesota, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service.

*Robert A. Wood, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

*Deborah L. Birx, of Maryland, to be Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 2103. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue or revise regulations with respect to the medical certification of certain small aircraft pilots, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LEE, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. CORKER):

S. 2104. A bill to require the Director of the National Park Service to refund to States all State funds that were used to reopen and temporarily operate a unit of the National Park System during the October 2013 shutdown; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BURR, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ENZI, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 2105. A bill to prohibit the Federal funding of a State firearms ownership database; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin):

S. 2106. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the individual health insurance mandate not apply until the employer health insurance mandate is enforced without exceptions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2107. A bill to increase students' and borrowers' access to student loan information within the National Student Loan Data System, and to encourage improved outreach to and communication with borrowers; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2108. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage teachers to pursue teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects at elementary and secondary schools; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 2109. A bill to eliminate duplicative, outdated, or unnecessary Congressionally mandated Federal agency reporting; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2110. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. COATS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CORKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. RISCH):

S. Res. 378. A resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. Res. 379. A resolution congratulating the Pennsylvania State University IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (" THON") on its continued success in support of the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. Res. 380. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 381. A resolution congratulating the athletes from the United States who participated in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games as members of the United States Olympic Team; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 192

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 192, a bill to enhance the energy security of United States allies, and for other purposes.

S. 257

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 257, 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, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 409

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 409, a bill to add Vietnam Veterans Day as a patriotic and national observance.

S. 452

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 452, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the incidence of diabetes among Medicare beneficiaries.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) 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. 775

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 775, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax incentive for the installation and maintenance of mechanical insulation property.

S. 862

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 862, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate.

S. 907

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 907, a bill to provide grants to better understand and reduce gestational diabetes, and for other purposes.

S. 933

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 933, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2018.

S. 1064

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1064, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for treatment of clinical psychologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing clinical psychologist services under the Medicare program.

S. 1091

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1091, a bill to provide for the issuance of an Alzheimer's Disease Research Semipostal Stamp.

S. 1156

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1156, a bill to amend the Higher Education Opportunity Act to add disclosure requirements to the institution financial aid offer form and to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make such form mandatory.

S. 1318

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1318, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care, to amend title XVIII of such Act to modify the requirements for diabetic shoes to be included under Medicare, and for other purposes.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 regarding proprietary institutions of higher education in order to protect students and taxpayers.

S. 1694

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1694, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids.

S. 1704

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1704, a bill to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students.

S. 1737

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1737, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

S. 1803

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1803, a bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes.

S. 1808

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1808, a bill to prevent adverse treatment of any person on the basis of views held with respect to marriage.

S. 1811

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1811, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit voice communications through mobile communication devices on commercial passenger flights.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1893

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1893, a bill to require the Transportation Security Administration to implement best practices and improve transparency with regard to technology acquisition programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1908

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1908, a bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

S. 2024

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2024, a bill to amend chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, with regard to the definition of ''marriage'' and ''spouse'' for Federal purposes and to ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2024, supra.

S. 2046

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2046, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiaries coordinated care and greater choice with regard to accessing hearing health services and benefits.

S. 2062

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2062, a bill to authorize Members of Congress to bring an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in response to a written statement by the President or any other official in the executive branch directing officials of the executive branch to not enforce a provision of law.

S. 2069

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2069, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand and modify the credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers.

S. RES. 348

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 348, a resolution expressing support for the internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

S. RES. 365

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 365, a resolution deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 378—CONDEMNING ILLEGAL RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. COATS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CORKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 378

Whereas the recent unprovoked Russian military occupation of the Crimea region of Ukraine, and further military threats against additional Ukrainian territory, are an affront to international norms and agreements and a threat to global peace and security;

Whereas, under President Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation has a history of bullying neighboring countries in an attempt to rebuild Russian dominance on its borders—often under the guise of protecting Russian

citizens—including forcibly seizing the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of the independent Republic of Georgia in 2008;

Whereas the Russian Federation continues to illegally occupy South Ossetia and Abkhazia and has erected fences along administrative boundary lines and permanent military bases in violation of the cease fire agreement negotiated with the European Union;

Whereas, during 2013, then-President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych faced similar Russian coercion to not sign a long-negotiated Association Agreement with the European Union, including threats to gas contracts, the supply of which the Russian Federation turned off in 2006 and 2009;

Whereas, in November 2013, President Yanukovych abruptly canceled plans to sign the Association Agreement, saying Ukraine could not afford to sacrifice trade with the Russian Federation as a result;

Whereas, for three ensuing months, hundreds of thousands of protesters in Ukraine endured cold and government harassment and violence to protest the decision and demand closer ties to the West;

Whereas, on February 20, 2014, Ukrainian security forces, including heavily armed snipers, fired on demonstrators in Kyiv, leaving dozens dead and the people of Ukraine reeling from the most lethal day of violence since the Soviet era, and many of Yanukovych's political allies, including the mayor of the Kyiv, resigned from his governing Party of Regions to protest the bloodshed;

Whereas, on February 22, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament found then-President Yanukovych unable to fulfill his duties, exercised its constitutional powers to remove him from office, and set an election for May 25, 2014, to select his replacement;

Whereas, amid Ukraine's economic hardships, President Yanukovych amassed a lavish secret estate that included a private zoo, exotic gardens, numerous automobiles, and a tall ship;

Whereas, on February 27, 2014, heavily armed soldiers without identification or insignia began securing key facilities in the Crimea, including its regional parliament and two airports, and in the ensuing days encircled Ukrainian military facilities and gained effective control of the region;

Whereas the military forces are clearly Russian troops, and on March 1, 2014, President Putin sought and received rubber stamp parliamentary approval to use military force against greater Ukraine, having argued that the Government of the Russian Federation acted because of the ''threat of violence from ultranationalists'';

Whereas there has been no credible evidence of serious threats to Russian citizens in Crimea or elsewhere in Ukraine, and the Russian Federation's military invasion has been widely condemned internationally;

Whereas the Russian Federation, as a signatory to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, reaffirmed its commitment to Ukraine, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, to refrain from economic coercion to subordinate Ukraine to Russia's interests, and to consult in the event a situation arises that raises a question concerning these commitments;

Whereas, in 1997, the Russian Federation and Ukraine signed a friendship treaty, during which time Russian President Boris Yeltsin said in Kyiv, ''We respect and honor the territorial integrity of Ukraine.'';

Whereas the Russian Federation, as a participating state in the Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975 (Helsinki Final Act), committed to respect the sovereign equality and individuality of other participating states, including the right of every state to territorial integrity and to freedom and political independence, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, to regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all states in Europe, and to refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation;

Whereas, under United Nations Charter Article 2, all members shall settle international disputes by peaceful means in a manner that international peace and security are not endangered and refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state;

Whereas President Putin himself wrote in 2013, ''Under current international law, force is permitted only in self-defense or by the decision of the Security Council. Anything else is unacceptable under the United Nations Charter and would constitute an act of aggression.'';

Whereas the North Atlantic Council stated that Russian military action against Ukraine is a breach of international law and contravenes the principles of the NATO-Russia Council and the Partnership for Peace and that Russia must respect its obligations under the United Nations Charter and principles of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), on which peace and stability in Europe rest;

Whereas leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States and the presidents of the European Council and the European Commission condemned the Russian Federation's clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, in contravention of the Russian Federation's obligations under the United Nations Charter and its 1997 basing agreement with Ukraine;

Whereas, on February 28, 2014, President Barack Obama stated that the United States is ''deeply concerned by reports of military movements taken by the Russian Federation inside of Ukraine'' and that it ''would be a clear violation of Russia's commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and borders of Ukraine, and of international law''; and

Whereas President Obama pledged that ''the United States will stand with the international community in affirming that there will be costs for any military intervention in Ukraine'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the unprovoked and illegal Russian military seizure of the Ukrainian Crimea and demands the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces except as specifically allowed for by treaty;

(2) demands the immediate release of besieged Ukrainian security forces in Crimea, who have shown remarkable restraint under threat;

(3) warns that failure to do so or any additional military action against other areas of Ukraine will lead to swift and significant consequences in the Russian Federation's relations with the United States and those nations who share our views;

(4) urges the President to use all appropriate economic elements of United States national power, in coordination with United States allies, including loan guarantees matched with requirements of international financial institutions regarding Ukrainian economic reforms and transparency, to strengthen the Ukrainian economy and protect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial and economic integrity of Ukraine;

(5) urges the President to use appropriate economic and diplomatic measures, including calibrated sanctions, against those responsible for the illegal seizure of Crimea;

(6) urges the President to propose to G–8 nations to suspend the Russian Federation, and to propose to our NATO allies to suspend operation of the NATO-Russia Council and suspend the Russian Federation's military and diplomatic representation at NATO;

(7) condemns the economic coercion pursued by the Russian Federation beginning in July 2013 against Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, and other countries in the region in order to obstruct closer ties between the European Union and the countries of the Eastern Partnership and supports the people of Ukraine in their desire to forge closer ties with Europe;

(8) supports assisting Ukraine and United States allies in the region in gaining energy security in order to alleviate their vulnerability to the Russian Federation's threats and manipulations;

(9) expresses its continuing support for democratic allies who regularly face aggression on their borders from the Government of the Russian Federation and supports enhanced security cooperation with, and security assistance to, states in Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine;

(10) encourages governments in Europe to take similar and coordinated actions to make it clear to the Government of the Russian Federation that violating the territorial integrity of sovereign nations will have swift and significant consequences;

(11) calls for the immediate acceptance of a credible international observer mission in Crimea and other parts of the Ukraine;

(12) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to seriously engage with the Government of Ukraine in a political dialogue on a political and diplomatic path that respects Ukrainian sovereignty and the Crimea's complex historic and ethnic makeup;

(13) supports the efforts of the Government of Ukraine to bring to justice those responsible for the acts of violence related to the anti-government protests that began on November 21, 2013;

(14) supports the efforts of the Government of Ukraine to recover and return to the Ukrainian state funds stolen by former President Yanukovych, his family, and other current and former members of the Government of Ukraine and elites; and

(15) calls upon the leadership of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to reconsider its decision to place World Cup 2018 matches in Russia.

SENATE RESOLUTION 379—CONGRATULATING THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY IFC/PANHELLENIC DANCE MARATHON (''THON'') ON ITS CONTINUED SUCCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE FOUR DIAMONDS FUND AT PENN STATE HERSHEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 379

Whereas the Pennsylvania State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (referred to in this preamble as ''THON'') is the largest student-run philanthropy in the world, with 711 dancers, more than 375 supporting organizations, and more than 15,000 volunteers involved in the annual event;

Whereas student volunteers at the Pennsylvania State University annually collect

money and dance for 46 hours straight at the Bryce Jordan Center as part of THON, bringing energy and excitement to the campus for THON's mission to conquer cancer and raise awareness about the disease;

Whereas all THON activities support the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, which funds cancer research and provides financial and emotional support to pediatric cancer patients and their families;

Whereas in each year since 1977, when the 2 organizations first became affiliated, THON has been the single largest donor to the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital;

Whereas THON has raised more than $113,000,000 in total for the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital;

Whereas in 2014, THON set a new fundraising record of $13,343,517.33, besting the previous record of $12,374,034.46, which was set in 2013;

Whereas THON has helped more than 3,300 families through the Four Diamonds Fund, is helping to build a new Pediatric Cancer Pavilion at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, and has supported life-saving pediatric cancer research that has increased the survival rates for some pediatric cancers to nearly 90 percent; and

Whereas THON has inspired similar events and organizations across the United States, including at high schools and institutions of higher education, and continues to encourage students across the United States to volunteer and stay involved in great charitable causes in their community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Pennsylvania State University IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (''THON'') on its continued success in support of the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital; and

(2) commends the Pennsylvania State University students, volunteers, and supporting organizations for their hard work in putting together another record-breaking THON.

SENATE RESOLUTION 380—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK DAY

Mr. BURR (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 380

Whereas the Take Our Daughters To Work program was created in New York City as a response to research that showed that, by the 8th grade, many girls were dropping out of school, had low self-esteem, and lacked confidence;

Whereas in 2003, the name of the program was changed to ''Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work'' so that boys who face many of the same challenges as girls could also be involved in the program;

Whereas the mission of the program, to develop ''innovative strategies that empower girls and boys to overcome societal barriers to reach their full potential'', now fully reflects the addition of boys;

Whereas the Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Foundation, a nonprofit organization, has grown to be one of the largest public awareness campaigns, with more than 37,400,000 participants annually in more than 3,000,000 organizations and workplaces in every State;

Whereas in 2007, the Take Our Daughters To Work program transitioned to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, became known as the Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Foundation, and received national recognition for the dedication of the Foundation to future generations;

Whereas every year, mayors, governors, and other private and public officials sign proclamations and lend their support to Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day;

Whereas the fame of the Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work program has spread overseas, with requests and inquiries being made from around the world on how to operate the program;

Whereas 2014 marks the 21st anniversary of the Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work program;

Whereas Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day will be observed on Thursday, April 24, 2014; and

Whereas Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day is intended to continue helping millions of girls and boys on an annual basis through experienced activities and events to examine their opportunities and strive to reach their fullest potential: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the goals of introducing our daughters and sons to the workplace; and

(2) commends all participants of Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the vital role the participants play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 381—CONGRATULATING THE ATHLETES FROM THE UNITED STATES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 2014 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES AS MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC TEAM

Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 381

Whereas the 2014 Olympic Winter Games were held in Sochi, Russia from February 7, 2014, to February 23, 2014;

Whereas 230 Olympians competed on behalf of Team USA in Sochi, Russia;

Whereas members of Team USA earned 28 medals in total for the United States, including 9 gold medals, 7 silver medals, and 12 bronze medals;

Whereas Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest woman ever to win the gold medal in the Women's Slalom;

Whereas Joss Christensen, Gus Kenworthy, and Nicholas Goepper swept the podium in the Men's Ski Slopestyle;

Whereas Erin Hamlin won the United States' first-ever medal in the Women's Singles Luge;

Whereas Lindsey Van, Jessica Jerome, and Sarah Hendrickson became the first American women to compete in ski jumping in an Olympic Winter Games;

Whereas Ted Ligety became the first American man to win the gold medal in the Giant Slalom, and became the first American man to win 2 gold medals in Alpine Skiing;

Whereas Meryl Davis and Charlie White won the United States' first-ever gold medal in Ice Dancing;

Whereas the people of the United States stand united in respect and admiration for Olympians, and the athletic accomplishments, sportsmanship, and dedication of those athletes to excellence in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games;

Whereas the many accomplishments of Team USA Olympians would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many others, including the United States Olympic Committee, the relevant United States national governing bodies, and the many administrators, coaches, and family members who provided critical support for the athletes:

Whereas David Wise and Maddie Bowman both won the United States' first-ever gold medals in the events of Men and Women's Freestyle Skiing Halfpipe;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate extends sincere congratulations for the accomplishments and gratitude for the sacrifices of all athletes throughout the United States on the United States Olympic Team and to everyone who supported the efforts of those athletes at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2809. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2810. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2811. Mr. HARKIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2812. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2813. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2814. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2815. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2816. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2817. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2818. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Ms. MIKULSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2819. Mr. SCOTT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2809. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. SAFE CHILD CARE ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Safe Child Care Act of 2014''.

(b) BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Section 231 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13041) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (b)(3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)''; and

(B) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4);

(2) by moving paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) to subsection (a), and inserting them after paragraph (1) of that subsection;

(3) in subsection (a)(3), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this subsection, by striking ''subsection (a)(1)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)'';

(4) in subsection (b), by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) A background check required by subsection (a) shall be initiated through the personnel programs of the applicable Federal agencies.

''(2) A background check for a child care staff member under subsection (a) shall include—

''(A) a search, including a fingerprint check, of the State criminal registry or repository in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated;

''(B) a search of State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated;

''(C) a search of the National Crime Information Center database;

''(D) a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System;

''(E) a search of the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16901 et seq.); and

''(F) a search of the State sex offender registry established under that Act in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated.

''(3) A child care staff member shall be ineligible for employment by a child care provider if such individual—

''(A) refuses to consent to the background check described in subsection (a);

''(B) makes a false statement in connection with such background check;

''(C) is registered, or is required to be registered, on a State sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006; or

''(D) has been convicted of a felony consisting of—

''(i) murder, as described in section 1111 of title 18, United States Code;

''(ii) child abuse or neglect;

''(iii) a crime against children, including child pornography;

''(iv) spousal abuse;

''(v) a crime involving rape or sexual assault;

''(vi) kidnapping;

''(vii) arson;

''(viii) physical assault or battery; or

''(ix) subject to paragraph (5)(D), a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years.

''(4)(A) A child care provider covered by paragraph (3) shall submit a request, to the appropriate State agency designated by a State, for a background check described in subsection (a), for each child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) of the provider.

''(B) In the case of an individual who is hired as a child care staff member before the date of enactment of the Safe Child Care Act of 2014, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(i) prior to the last day of the second full fiscal year after that date of enactment; and

''(ii) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this subparagraph for that staff member.

''(C) In the case of an individual who is a prospective child care staff member on or after that date of enactment, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(i) prior to the date the individual becomes a child care staff member of the provider; and

''(ii) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this subparagraph for that staff member.

''(5)(A) The State shall—

''(i) carry out the request of a child care provider for a background check described in subsection (a) as expeditiously as possible; and

''(ii) in accordance with subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, provide the results of the background check to—

''(I) the child care provider; and

''(II) the current or prospective child care staff member for whom the background check is conducted.

''(B)(i) The State shall provide the results of a background check to a child care provider as required under subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) in a statement that—

''(I) indicates whether the current or prospective child care staff member for whom the background check is conducted is eligible or ineligible for employment by a child care provider; and

''(II) does not reveal any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the current or prospective child care staff member.

''(ii) If a current or prospective child care staff member is ineligible for employment by a child care provider due to a background check described in subsection (a), the State shall provide the results of the background check to the current or prospective child care staff member as required under subparagraph (A)(ii)(II) in a criminal background report that includes information relating to each disqualifying crime.

''(iii) A State—

''(I) may not publicly release or share the results of an individual background check described in subsection (a); and

''(II) may include the results of background checks described in subsection (a) in the development or dissemination of local or statewide data relating to background checks if the results are not individually identifiable.

''(C)(i) The State shall provide for a process by which a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) may appeal the results of a background check required under subsection (a) to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the criminal background report of the staff member.

''(ii) The State shall ensure that—

''(I) the appeals process is completed in a timely manner for each child care staff member;

''(II) each child care staff member is given notice of the opportunity to appeal; and

''(III) each child care staff member who wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information in the criminal background report of the child care staff member is given instructions about how to complete the appeals process.

''(D)(i) The State may allow for a review process through which the State may determine that a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) disqualified for a crime specified in paragraph (3)(D)(ix) is eligible for employment by a child care provider, notwithstanding paragraph (3).

''(ii) The review process under this subparagraph shall be consistent with title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.).

''(E) Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a private right of action against a child care provider if the child care provider is in compliance with this section.

''(F) This section shall apply to each State that receives funding under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.).

''(6) Fees that the State may charge for the costs of conducting a background check as required by subsection (a) shall not exceed the actual costs to the State for the administration of such background checks.

''(7) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent a Federal agency from disqualifying an individual as a child care staff member based on a conviction of the individual for a crime not specifically listed in this subsection that bears upon the fitness of an individual to provide care for and have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

''(8) In this subsection—

''(A) the term 'child care provider' means an agency of the Federal Government, or a unit of or contractor with the Federal Government that is operating a facility, described in subsection (a); and

''(B) the term 'child care staff member' means an individual who is hired, or seeks to be hired, by a child care provider to be involved with the provision of child care services, as described in subsection (a).''; and

(5) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) SUSPENSION PENDING DISPOSITION OF CRIMINAL CASE.—In the case of an incident in which an individual has been charged with an offense described in subsection (b)(3)(D) and the charge has not yet been disposed of, an employer may suspend an employee from having any contact with children while on the job until the case is resolved.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1 of the second full fiscal year after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2810. Mrs. BOXER (for herself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. RIGHT START CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION ACT OF 2014.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Right Start Child Care and Education Act of 2014''.

(b) INCREASE IN EMPLOYER-PROVIDED CHILD CARE CREDIT.—

(1) INCREASE IN CREDITABLE PERCENTAGE OF CHILD CARE EXPENDITURES.—Paragraph (1) of section 45F(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''25 percent'' and inserting ''35 percent''.

(2) INCREASE IN CREDITABLE PERCENTAGE OF RESOURCE AND REFERRAL EXPENDITURES.—Paragraph (2) of section 45F(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''10 percent'' and inserting ''20 percent''.

(3) INCREASE IN MAXIMUM CREDIT.—Subsection (b) of section 45F of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$150,000'' and inserting ''$225,000''.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

(c) INCREASE IN DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT.—

(1) INCREASE IN INCOMES ELIGIBLE FOR FULL CREDIT.—Paragraph (2) of section 21(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$15,000'' and inserting ''$30,000''.

(2) INCREASE IN PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES ALLOWABLE.—Paragraph (2) of section 21(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''35 percent'' and inserting ''50 percent'', and

(B) by striking ''20 percent'' and inserting ''35 percent''.

(3) INCREASE IN DOLLAR LIMIT ON AMOUNT CREDITABLE.—Subsection (c) of section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''$3,000'' in paragraph (1) and inserting ''$6,000'', and

(B) by striking ''$6,000'' in paragraph (2) and inserting ''$12,000''.

(4) CREDIT TO BE REFUNDABLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(i) by redesignating section 21 as section 36D, and

(ii) by moving section 36D, as so redesignated, from subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 to the location immediately before section 37 in subpart C of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1.

(B) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(i) Paragraph (1) of section 36D(a) of such Code (as redesignated by subparagraph (A)) is amended by striking ''this chapter'' and inserting ''this subtitle''.

(ii) Paragraph (6) of section 35(g) of such Code is amended by striking ''21(e)'' and inserting ''36D(e)''.

(iii) Paragraph (1) of section 36C(f) of such Code is amended by striking ''21(e)'' and inserting ''36D(e)''.

(iv) Subparagraph (C) of section 129(a)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21(e)'' and inserting ''section 36D(e)''.

(v) Paragraph (2) of section 129(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21(d)(2)'' and inserting ''section 36D(d)(2)''.

(vi) Paragraph (1) of section 129(e) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21(b)(2)'' and inserting ''section 36D(b)(2)''.

(vii) Subsection (e) of section 213 of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21'' and inserting ''section 36D''.

(viii) Subparagraph (H) of section 6213(g)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21'' and inserting ''section 36D''.

(ix) Subparagraph (L) of section 6213(g)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 21, 24, 32,'' and inserting ''section 24, 32, 36D,''.

(x) Paragraph (2) of section 1324(b) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''36D,'' after ''36C,''.

(xi) The table of sections for subpart C of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 36C and inserting the following:

''Sec. 36D. Expenses for household and dependent care services necessary for gainful employment.''.

(xii) The table of sections for subpart A of such part IV is amended by striking the item relating to section 21.

(5) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

(d) 3-YEAR CREDIT FOR INDIVIDUALS HOLDING CHILD CARE-RELATED DEGREES WHO WORK IN LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 25D the following new section:

''SEC. 25E. RIGHT START CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION CREDIT.

''(a) ALLOWANCE OF CREDIT.—In the case of an individual who is an eligible child care provider for the taxable year, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year the amount of $2,000.

''(b) 3-YEAR CREDIT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The credit allowable by subsection (a) for any taxable year to an individual shall be allowed for such year only if the individual elects the application of this section for such year.

''(2) ELECTION.—An election to have this section apply may not be made by an individual for any taxable year if such an election by such individual is in effect for any 3 prior taxable years.

''(c) ELIGIBLE CHILD CARE PROVIDER.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'eligible child care provider' means, for any taxable year, any individual if—

''(A) as of the close of such taxable year, such individual holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child care, or a related degree and such degree was awarded by an eligible educational institution (as defined in section 25A(f)(2)), and

''(B) during such taxable year, such individual performs at least 1,200 hours of child care services at a facility if—

''(i) the principal use of the facility is to provide child care services,

''(ii) no more than 25 percent of the children receiving child care services at the facility are children (as defined in section 152(f)) of the individual or such individual's spouse, and

''(iii) the facility meets the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations of the State or local government in which it is located, including the licensing of the facility as a child care facility.

Subparagraph (B)(i) shall not apply to a facility which is the principal residence (within the meaning of section 121) of the operator of the facility.

''(2) CHILD CARE SERVICES.—The term 'child care services' means child care and early childhood education.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such subpart A is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 25D the following new item:

''Sec. 25E. Right Start Child Care and Education Credit.''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

(e) INCREASE IN EXCLUSION FOR EMPLOYER-PROVIDED DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 129(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$5,000 ($2,500'' and inserting ''$7,500 ($3,750''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

SA 2811. Mr. HARKIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 88, line 8, insert '', such as rural and remote areas'' after ''underserved areas''.

SA 2812. Mr. ENZI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REVIEW OF FEDERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CARE PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, shall conduct an interdepartmental review of all early learning and care programs in order to—

(1) develop a plan for the elimination of duplicative and overlapping programs, as identified by the Government Accountability Office's 2012 annual report (GAO-12-342SP); and

(2) make recommendations to Congress for streamlining all such programs.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the heads of all Federal agencies that administer Federal early learning and care programs, shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, a detailed report that outlines the efficiencies that can be achieved by, as well as specific recommendations for, eliminating duplication, overlap, and fragmentation among all Federal early learning and care programs.

SA 2813. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 82, lines 9 and 10, strike ''to receive services under this subchapter while

their families'' and insert ''and children in foster care to receive services under this subchapter while their families (including foster families)''.

SA 2814. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 93, strike lines 3 and 4 and insert the following:

11432(g)(1)(J)(ii));

''(VII) State agencies and programs serving children in foster care and the foster families of such children; and

''(VIII) other Federal programs

SA 2815. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 98, strike line 15 and insert the following:

view.

''(U) CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.—The plan shall include an assurance that and describe how the State will develop and implement strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care provided under this subchapter for children in foster care with foster families who, notwithstanding section 658P, may or may not have a family income that exceeds 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size.'';

SA 2816. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 79, strike lines 18 through 22 and insert the following:

''(I) which may include the acquisition of course credit in postsecondary education or of a credential, aligned with the framework;

''(II) which, notwithstanding clause (v), shall require each child care provider described in clause (i) to ensure that, not later than September 30, 2021—

''(aa) each child care staff member providing direct services to children who was hired before that date has earned a degree, which may be an associate's degree or a baccalaureate degree, in early childhood education or a closely related field; and

''(bb) on and after that date, the child care provider will hire only individuals who have earned that degree as staff members described in item (aa); and

''(III) which shall be accessible

SA 2817. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 136, strike line 15 and insert the following:

658L(b).

''(4) EVALUATION.—

''(A) RESERVATION.—The Secretary shall reserve not more than 1 percent of the amount appropriated under this subchapter for each fiscal year, to conduct the evaluation described in subparagraph (B).

''(B) QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall evaluate the quality and effectiveness of activities carried out under this subchapter, using scientifically valid research methodologies, in order to increase the understanding of State and local program administrators concerning the practices and strategies most likely to produce positive outcomes. The Secretary shall disseminate the key findings of the evaluation widely and promptly.''; and

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SA 2818. Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Ms. MIKULSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 98, strike line 15 and insert the following:

view.

''(U) DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall demonstrate the manner in which the State will address the needs of children in child care services provided through programs authorized under this subchapter, including the need for safe child care, during the period before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a major disaster or emergency (as such terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)).

''(ii) STATEWIDE CHILD CARE DISASTER PLAN.—Such plan shall include a statewide child care disaster plan for coordination of activities and collaboration, in the event of an emergency or disaster described in clause (i), among the State agency with jurisdiction over human services, the agency with jurisdiction over State emergency planning, the State lead agency, the State agency with jurisdiction over licensing of child care providers, the local resource and referral organizations, the State resource and referral system, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care as provided for under section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)).

''(iii) DISASTER PLAN COMPONENTS.—The components of the disaster plan, for such an emergency or disaster, shall include—

''(I) guidelines for the continuation of child care services in the period following the emergency or disaster, including the provision of emergency and temporary child care services, and temporary operating standards for child care providers during that period;

''(II) evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down procedures, and procedures for communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions; and

''(III) procedures for staff and volunteer training and practice drills.''.

SA 2819. Mr. SCOTT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 140, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 10A. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Section 658Q of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858o) is amended—

(1) by inserting before ''Nothing'' the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PARENTAL RIGHTS TO USE CHILD CARE CERTIFICATES.—Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed or applied in any manner—

''(1) that would favor or promote the use of grants and contracts over the use of child care certificates; or

''(2) that would disfavor or discourage the use of such certificates for the purchase of child care services, including those services provided by private or nonprofit entities, such as faith-based providers.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 2:15 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Access and Cost: What the U.S. Health Care System Can Learn from Other Countries.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 11, 2014, at 10:15 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Open Government and Freedom of Information: Reinvigorating the Freedom of Information Act for the Digital Age.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 2:00 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee

on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, ''A More Efficient and Effective Government: Improving the Regulatory Framework.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 2:15 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL AND CONTRACTING OVERSIGHT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Financial and Contracting Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 11 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Whistleblower Retaliation at the Hanford Nuclear Site.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2014, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Finding the Right Capital Regulations for Insurers.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Capt. James Holt, a Marine Corps fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of this legislative session.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 670, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; the motions to reconsider be made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be made in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Travis D. Balch

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade of indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Brig. Gen. Michael E. Williamson

The following named officer for appointment as Chief of the Dental Corps and Assistant Surgeon General for Dental Services, United States Army, and for appointment to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 3036 and 3039(b):

To be major general

Col. Thomas R. Tempel, Jr.

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicted while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Kevin W. Mangum

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. William T. Collins
Brig. Gen. James S. Hartsell

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Robert E. Schmidle, Jr.

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Jan E. Tighe

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1327 AIR FORCE nominations (13) beginning KATHRYN L. AASEN, and ending JOHN K. WALTON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1329 AIR FORCE nominations (15) beginning DAVID M. BERTHE, and ending PAUL A. WILLINGHAM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1330 AIR FORCE nominations (34) beginning AMY R. ASTONLASSITER, and ending AIMEE N. ZAKALUZNY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1332 AIR FORCE nominations (60) beginning ELIZABETH R. ANDERSONDOZE, and ending AARON T. YU, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1335 AIR FORCE nominations (158) beginning WESLEY M. ABADIE, and ending SCOTT A. ZAKALUZNY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1387 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning WILLIAM E. DICKENS, JR., and ending RICHARD R. GIVENS, II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1388 AIR FORCE nominations (3) beginning KYLE WILLIAM BLASCH, and ending ANDREW T. MACCABE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1389 AIR FORCE nominations (3) beginning LUAN TRAN LE, and ending DAVID C. SCHAEFER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1390 AIR FORCE nominations (4) beginning CYNTHIA B. CAMP, and ending BRYAN M. WINTER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1391 AIR FORCE nominations (9) beginning LAURA I. FERNANDEZ, and ending ALBERT C. REES, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1392 AIR FORCE nominations (10) beginning DIANE M. DOTY, and ending EDWARD D. RONNEBAUM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1393 AIR FORCE nominations (15) beginning RICHARD L. ALLEN, and ending SANDRA R. VOLDEN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1394 AIR FORCE nominations (180) beginning CONNIE L. ALGE, and ending KENNETH E. YEE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

IN THE ARMY

PN1395 ARMY nomination of Sun Y. Kim, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1406 ARMY nomination of William T. Monacci, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1407 ARMY nomination of Glennie Z. Kertes, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1408 ARMY nomination of Charles A. Williams, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1409 ARMY nominations (3) beginning ROGER J. BELBEL, and ending YVES P. LEBLANC, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1423 ARMY nomination of Michael E. Cannon, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1424 ARMY nomination of Aizenhawar J. Marrogi, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1425 ARMY nominations (2) beginning THOMAS E. BYRNE, and ending JAMES H.

CHANG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1426 ARMY nominations (6) beginning CHRISTOPHER D. COULSON, and ending MICHAEL WOODRUFF, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1429 ARMY nominations (80) beginning EDWARD AHN, and ending D012017, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1310 MARINE CORPS nominations (404) beginning ERNEST P. ABELSON, II, and ending DAVID D. ZYGA, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 7, 2014.

PN1430 MARINE CORPS nomination of Ryan M. Oleksy, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1431 MARINE CORPS nomination of Sean T. Hays, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1432 MARINE CORPS nomination of Lakendrick D. Wright, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1433 MARINE CORPS nomination of John E. Simpson, III, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1434 MARINE CORPS nominations (2) beginning BILL W. BROOKS, JR., and ending MICHAEL W. COSTA, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1435 MARINE CORPS nomination of James R. Keller, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1436 MARINE CORPS nomination of Clennon Roe, III, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1438 MARINE CORPS nomination of Anthony Redman, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1439 MARINE CORPS nomination of Jeffrey P. Wooldridge, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1441 MARINE CORPS nominations (2) beginning BILLY A. DUBOSE, and ending JOHN P. MULLERY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1442 MARINE CORPS nominations (2) beginning CHRISTOPHER S. EICHNER, and ending JAMES SMILEY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1443 MARINE CORPS nominations (3) beginning RANDALL E. DAVIS, and ending WADE E. WALLACE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1444 MARINE CORPS nominations (3) beginning DAMON L. ANDERSEN, and ending RICHARDO A. SPANN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1445 MARINE CORPS nominations (3) beginning PAULO T. ALVES, and ending PATRICK J. TOAL, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1446 MARINE CORPS nominations (4) beginning CHRISTIAN D. GALBRAITH, and ending MARK J. LEHMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1447 MARINE CORPS nominations (6) beginning TIMOTHY J. ALDRICH, and ending CHRIS A. STOREY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1448 MARINE CORPS nominations (6) beginning KENNETH L. AIKEY, and ending SCOTT B. ROLAND, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1449 MARINE CORPS nominations (8) beginning TERRY H. CHOI, and ending FREDDIE D. TAYLOR, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

IN THE NAVY

PN1396 NAVY nomination of Leon M. Leflore, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 30, 2014.

PN1410 NAVY nomination of Gregory D. Sutton, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1411 NAVY nomination of Chad C. Schumacher, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1412 NAVY nominations (2) beginning JACK D. HAGAN, and ending RICHARD S. MONTGOMERY, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1413 NAVY nominations (4) beginning REINEL CASTRO, and ending DUSTIN R. WARD, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2014.

PN1450 NAVY nomination of Megan M. Donnelly, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1451 NAVY nomination of Danielle L. Leiby, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1452 NAVY nominations (16) beginning MICHAEL R. CATHEY, and ending ANDREW J. YOUNG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

REAPPOINTMENT OF JOHN W. MCCARTER AS A CITIZEN REGENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 32 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 32) providing for the reappointment of John W. MCCARTER as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent the joint resolution be read a third time and passed; and the motion 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 joint resolution (S.J. Res. 32) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S.J. RES. 32

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in accordance with section 5581 of the Revised Statutes (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, occurring by reason of the expiration of the term of John W. McCarter of Illinois on March 14, 2014, is filled by the reappointment of the incumbent. The reappointment is for a term of 6 years, beginning on March 15, 2014, or the date of enactment of this joint resolution, whichever occurs later.

CONDEMNING ILLEGAL RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 378, submitted earlier today by Senator COATS and myself.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 378) condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that 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. 378) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions submitted earlier today: Senate Resolutions 379, 380, and 381.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the

motions to reconsider be laid on the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2110 AND H.R. 4152

Mr. DURBIN. I understand there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2110) to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 4152) to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

Mr. DURBIN. I now ask for a second reading en bloc and object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2014

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 12, 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 be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and the time be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; that at 10:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to executive session, as provided under the previous order.

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

THANKING STAFF

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, before the final statement, I wish to give a special thanks to those clerks, pages, Capitol Police, doorkeepers, and so many others for the extra work they put in during the early morning hours as the Senate went virtually all night. I know it was a sacrifice personally to them and to their families. We appreciate their continued service to the Senate. They have our gratitude for sticking through this long ordeal and being part of the history of this Senate, an institution of which we are all proud to be a part.

PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, at 10:30 a.m. there will be a series of up to six rollcall votes on the confirmation of the McHugh, Leitman, Levy, Michelson, Parker, and Raskin nominations. Upon disposition of the Raskin nomination, the Senate will begin consideration of S. 1086, the childcare and development block grant reauthorization bill.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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 6:13 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 12, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

LESLIE JOYCE ABRAMS, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA, VICE W. LOUIS SANDS, RETIRING.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 11, 2014:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. TRAVIS D. BALCH

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

BRIG. GEN. MICHAEL E. WILLIAMSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF THE DENTAL CORPS AND ASSISTANT SURGEON GENERAL FOR DENTAL SERVICES, UNITED STATES ARMY, AND FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 3036 AND 3039(B):

To be major general

COL. THOMAS R. TEMPEL, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. KEVIN W. MANGUM

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM T. COLLINS
BRIG. GEN. JAMES S. HARTSELL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. ROBERT E. SCHMIDLE, JR.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. JAN E. TIGHE

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KATHRYN L. AASEN AND ENDING WITH JOHN K. WALTON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID M. BERTHE AND ENDING WITH PAUL A. WILLINGHAM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH AMY R. ASTONLASSITER AND ENDING WITH AIMEE N. ZAKALUZNY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ELIZABETH R. ANDERSONDOZE AND ENDING WITH AARON T. YU, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH WESLEY M. ABADIE AND ENDING WITH SCOTT A. ZAKALUZNY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH WILLIAM E. DICKENS, JR. AND ENDING WITH RICHARD R. GIVENS II, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KYLE WILLIAM BLASCH AND ENDING WITH ANDREW T. MACCABE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LUAN TRAN LE AND ENDING WITH DAVID C. SCHAEFER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CYNTHIA B. CAMP AND ENDING WITH BRYAN M. WINTER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LAURA I. FERNANDEZ AND ENDING WITH ALBERT C. REES, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DIANE M. DOTY AND ENDING WITH EDWARD D. RONNEBAUM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RICHARD L. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH SANDRA R. VOLDEN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CONNIE L. ALGE AND ENDING WITH KENNETH E. YEE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 30, 2014.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF SUN Y. KIM, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM T. MONACCI, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF GLENNIE Z. KERTES, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF CHARLES A. WILLIAMS, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ROGER J. BELBEL AND ENDING WITH YVES P. LEBLANC, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATION OF MICHAEL E. CANNON, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF AIZENHAWAR J. MARROGI, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH THOMAS E. BYRNE AND ENDING WITH JAMES H. CHANG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTOPHER D. COULSON AND ENDING WITH MICHAEL WOODRUFF, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH EDWARD AHN AND ENDING WITH D012017, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ERNEST P. ABELSON II AND ENDING WITH DAVID D. ZYGA, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 7, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF RYAN M. OLEKSY, TO BE MAJOR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF SEAN T. HAYS, TO BE MAJOR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF LAKENDRICK D. WRIGHT, TO BE MAJOR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF JOHN E. SIMPSON III, TO BE MAJOR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BILL W. BROOKS, JR. AND ENDING WITH MICHAEL W. COSTA, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF JAMES R. KELLER, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF CLENNON ROE III, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF ANTHONY REDMAN, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF JEFFREY P. WOOLDRIDGE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BILLY A. DUBOSE AND ENDING WITH JOHN P. MULLERY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTOPHER S. EICHNER AND ENDING WITH JAMES SMILEY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RANDALL E. DAVIS AND ENDING WITH WADE E. WALLACE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAMON L. ANDERSEN AND ENDING WITH RICHARDO A. SPANN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH PAULO T. ALVES AND ENDING WITH PATRICK J. TOAL, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTIAN D. GALBRAITH AND ENDING WITH MARK J. LEHMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH TIMOTHY J. ALDRICH AND ENDING WITH CHRIS A. STOREY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KENNETH L. AIKEY AND ENDING WITH SCOTT B. ROLAND, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH TERRY H. CHOI AND ENDING WITH FREDDIE D. TAYLOR, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF LEON M. LEFLORE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF GREGORY D. SUTTON, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF CHAD C. SCHUMACHER, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JACK D. HAGAN AND ENDING WITH RICHARD S. MONTGOMERY, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2014.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH REINEL CASTRO AND ENDING WITH DUSTIN R. WARD, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2014.

NAVY NOMINATION OF MEGAN M. DONNELLY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF DANIELLE L. LEIBY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MICHAEL R. CATHEY AND ENDING WITH ANDREW J. YOUNG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 10, 2014.