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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, ultimate judge of us all, provide for the needs of our lawmakers from Your boundless resources. Lead them along paths that will bring glory and honor to Your Name as You surround them with the shield of Your divine favor. Lord, intervene in their lives to keep them from becoming weary in choosing the harder right and lead them in the way everlasting. Keep our Senators from presuming that You are automatically on their side. Instead, let them earnestly seek to be on Your side. Enable them to find unity with each other because of their connection with You.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk which is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time between 2:15 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. be controlled by Senator HOEVEN and the time from 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. be controlled by the Democratic leader or his designee.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. This morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business while we continue to organize for the new Congress. We will need to pass a resolution making committee appointments later today so they can begin their work on the Keystone Pipeline bill and other important priorities.

As we announced last month, the bipartisan keystone energy bill will be on the floor and it will be open for amendment next week. The House is also sending over a reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program today, and we will need to take action on that quickly as well.

OPENING THE 114TH SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yesterday we inaugurated the 114th Senate of the Congress. We welcomed back many dedicated Members and swore in many new ones. I have high hopes for our new colleagues. They share the resolve of my

conference to restore the Senate to a place of high purpose, and they are determined to make a positive difference in the lives of the people who sent them.

The men and women we have just sworn in have inaugurated one significant change already; that is, the majority we seated yesterday. I look to this new beginning with optimism and a profound sense of purpose, and I look to my colleagues with gratitude for their trust. Next to serving the people of Kentucky, this is the highest of honors. I recognize the serious expectations of the American people and I know they are counting on us—and I do mean all of us—every single Member of this body.

We are in a moment of great anxiety as a nation. The people we represent have lost faith in their government. They no longer trust Washington to do the right thing. Many face the reality of losing health plans after being told otherwise. Many struggle with rising medical costs after Washington officials repeatedly said they would be lowered. Confidence in the American dream has plunged. Anxiety about the type of country we leave to the next generation is widespread. For many it has never seemed more difficult just to get by.

When Americans look overseas they see a world filled with chaos: instability roiling the Middle East, terrorists pressing an aggressive agenda, and autocrats scoffing at a superpower that doesn't seem to have a real plan.

At home they see a government that is either uninterested in or incapable of addressing their concerns, a government that seems to be working for itself instead of them. Whether it is Washington's dysfunction or a bureaucracy that has grown so Byzantine and unaccountable, it tried to muzzle political opponents and ignore the needs of veterans.

The American people have simply had enough, and this past November

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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they had their say. The message they sent was clear. If voters hit the brakes 4 years ago, this time they have spun the wheel. They said they want the administration to change course and move to the middle. They said they want Congress to send legislation to the President that addresses their concerns. This November the American people didn't ask for a government that tries to do everything and fails, and they didn't demand a government that aims to do nothing and succeeds. They asked simply for a government that works.

They want a government of the 21st century, one that functions with efficiency and accountability, competence and purpose. They want a Washington that is more interested in modernizing and streamlining government than adding more layers to it, and they want more jobs, more opportunity for the middle class, and more flexibility in a complex age with complex demands.

That is why we plan to pursue commonsense jobs ideas, including those with bipartisan support: measures such as reforming a broken tax system to make it simpler and friendlier to job creation, opening more markets to American-made products so we can create more jobs at home, and moving forward with bipartisan infrastructure projects such as the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Americans are challenging this Congress and this President to work for them. They are challenging lawmakers in Washington to work for jobs for Americans, not just jobs for themselves. It seems simple enough. But in the end, in the era of divided government control, we are going to have to work hard to meet expectations and we are going to have to work together.

Step No. 1 is getting Congress functioning again. That means fixing the Senate. Last session the House sent over countless commonsense bipartisan bills. Too many of them died right here without so much as a hearing, and Senators from both parties with ideas for jobs and growth were routinely stopped.

So it is time to change the business model. We need to return to regular order. We need to get committees working again. We need to recommit to a rational, functioning appropriations process. We need to open the legislative process in a way that allows more amendments from both sides.

Sometimes it is going to mean actually working late, but restoring the Senate is the right and practical thing to do because we are only going to pass meaningful legislation if Members of both parties are given a stake in the outcome. That is the genius of regular order. That is the genius of the Senate.

I am reminded of this every time I walk into my office. On the wall are portraits of John Sherman Cooper, a Republican, and Alben Barkley, a Democrat. Keeping watch from below is a bust of Henry Clay. Each of these Sen-

ators—each of these Kentuckians—came from a different political party. Each viewed the world through a different ideological lens, but all of them believed in the Senate and all of them left behind important lessons for today: Clay, about putting country first and pursuing principled compromises; Cooper, about choosing when to make a stand and making it; and Barkley, about having the courage to think differently from a President of the same political party he had served dutifully for years.

These lessons echo into the present and they help point the way toward a better functioning government. A Senate and a Congress that function again will help move us past an era of government by crisis. It doesn't mean everything will be perfect, it doesn't mean we will never come up against a deadline, and it doesn't mean we will always agree, but together we can commit to changing the way Washington operates. This can be done. It can be done.

This Senate has seemed imperfect at moments, but it has been proven to be a place of high purpose at many other times, a place where our country has come together to confront great challenges and advance solutions that once seemed completely out of reach. That is the Senate I saw when I saw Senator Cooper whip votes for the Civil Rights Act many believed would never pass, that is the Senate I saw when President Reagan worked with Democratic leaders to pass major reforms to taxes and Social Security, and that is the Senate I saw when a Republican Congress worked with President Clinton to pass historic welfare reform.

The promise of the Senate is real. Time and time again it has been an engine for bipartisan achievement to which both parties can assume either credit or blame, and that is how we should view it today.

So, yes, the American people elected divided government, but that doesn't mean they don't want us to accomplish anything. If there is a will to do so, we can come together to achieve great things. If President Obama is interested in a historic achievement of his own, this can be his time as well.

The President has already indicated a willingness to work with us on trade and infrastructure and comprehensive tax reform. These efforts are going to require a lot of work. Navigating the political pitfalls will not be easy, but passing these types of measures will represent a win for the American people—wins we could all be proud of. The truth is we could work for bigger things too. We could work together to save and strengthen Medicare, to protect Social Security for future generations, to balance the budget and put our growing national debt on a path to elimination. But bipartisan reform can only be achieved if President Obama is interested in it. The President is the only one who can bring his party on board. He is the only one, obviously,

who can sign something that Congress sends him. I assure you, threatening to veto a jobs and infrastructure bill within minutes of a new Congress taking the oath of office—a bill with strong bipartisan support—is anything but productive.

I appreciate that bipartisan compromise may not come easily for the President—not his first inclination. The President's supporters are pressing for militancy, not compromise. They are demanding the comforts of purity over the duties of progress.

From DC to Montpelier, they see the limits of an exhausted 20th century mindset asserting itself, even when nearly every lever of power has been in hand. Across the Atlantic, they see the Sun setting on the social democratic idea. They see the tragic legacies of welfare states—empty promises and fear of the future. It is understandable why the President's supporters might want to retreat to past comforts, but now is the time to accept reality. Now is the time to actually move forward.

Americans know that democracy is not about what you can get away with, it is about what you can achieve together. Many in this body, on both sides of the aisle, understand that. I have talked to many colleagues on the other side of the aisle who understand this fully.

We are calling on the President to ignore the voices of reaction and to join us. Whatever he decides, though, this Congress is going to function again. Let's pass legislation that focuses on jobs and the real concerns of the middle class.

After so many years of sluggish growth, we are finally starting to see some economic data that can provide a glimmer of hope. The uptick appears to coincide with the biggest political change of the Obama administration's long tenure in Washington—the expectation of a new Republican Congress. This is precisely the time to advance a positive, progrowth agenda.

Some of the measures the new Congress will pass may seem significant; others may seem modest. That is OK. As we have seen in recent years, a bigger bill does not always mean a better bill.

While we are always going to search for areas where we can agree, the President may not be enamored of every bill we pass, and that is OK too. It is not our job to protect the President from good ideas. A little creative tension between the Executive and the legislature can be pretty healthy in a democracy such as ours. Presidents and Congresses have disagreed before. They have confronted challenges that eclipse the ones we see today. What is important to remember is that the Senate has always endured—always. We have a duty to restore it now so we can meet the mandate of the people who sent us here.

Former majority leader Howard Baker once noted that making the Senate work is like “trying to make 99

independent souls act in concert under rules that encourage polite anarchy." Yet he also reminded us that "it doesn't take Clays and Websters and Calhouns to make the Senate work." It simply takes men and women of honor working in a spirit of good faith.

It may be difficult, but it has been done before and it can be done again, and if we are going to get there, it helps to recall in whose footsteps we walk today. This is the same Chamber where Dirksen and Mansfield allied for historic progress. This is where Byrd drew from antiquity to rouse colleagues to present challenges and where in later years he would critique successors on the finer points of procedure. This is where Mitchell honed the skills he needed to help bring warring communities together, enemies who responded to critics not just with floor speeches or press conferences but actually live ammunition. This is where Dole shared war stories with Inouye, and with a fateful tap on the shoulder, he would partner with Moynihan in their effort to reform Social Security.

The names of many Senators who came before us are etched into the desks we sit at today. The men and women who precede us include future Presidents and Vice Presidents. They include former athletes, veterans, and astronauts. We have forgotten some, we remember others, but their legacies live on.

Here is how Senator Claude Pepper put it:

The Senate is inefficient, unwieldy [and] inconsistent; it has foibles, its vanities, its members who are great . . . and those who think they are great. But like democracy . . . it is strong . . . it has survived many changes, it has saved the country [from] many catastrophes, [and] it is a safeguard against any form of tyranny.

In the last analysis, Pepper noted, the Senate "is probably the price we in America have to pay for liberty." For everything Senator Pepper and I may not have agreed on, we certainly agreed on that.

In the same way, each of us here may not agree on every issue. We may be Republican, we may be Democrat, but we are all Americans. We each have a responsibility to make the Senate function, and we each have a duty to work for the people who sent us here in serious times to get serious results.

Let's restore the Senate we love. Let's look for areas of agreement when we can. Above all, let's make Washington work again for the people we serve.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

PRESERVING THE SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, before I read a statement into the RECORD

which was written by the minority leader, Senator REID, I have to say that the Senators who serve on the Democratic side of the aisle are committed to the traditions, precedents, and the rules of the Senate. We, of course, will work to preserve this great institution and protect our own individual rights and responsibilities in the Senate.

I welcome what Senator McCONNELL, our new majority leader, has envisioned as a more active floor in the Senate where we do not run into lengthy and repeated filibusters but bring amendments to the floor, debate them, vote on them, and ultimately pass legislation. That is the procedure of the Senate which historically had been honored but fell, sadly, into disrepair over the last several years.

Although we hope our minority status in the Senate is short-lived, I think we will establish that the Democrats are a much better minority when it comes to the Senate than perhaps those on the other side of the aisle, but only time will tell.

NEW CONGRESS

Mr. DURBIN. I have the opening remarks from the Democratic leader, HARRY REID, which I wish to read into the RECORD.

Senator REID states:

As some already know, I had a mishap in my home last week while exercising. As a result, I sustained several broken bones in my face and ribs. As bad as that sounds, I am doing well and recovering quickly.

I regret I am not on the Senate floor to make these remarks in person, but my doctors have urged caution and ordered me to stay home while I recuperate.

I thank my friend, the Assistant Democratic Leader, for delivering my remarks today.

A Greek philosopher once wrote: "There is nothing permanent except change." Our nation's elections prove that theory every two years. This is one of those times of change—for the Senate and for our country.

The desks in this Chamber have been rearranged, committee assignments adjusted, and a new majority assumes control for the next two years. Or in other words, it's just another Wednesday in January at the start of a new Congress.

For all of the changes, our duties as United States Senators remain the same: We are here to help working Americans and ensure our government has all it needs to serve the people.

In spite of almost no Republican cooperation over the last six years, we've made significant strides in many regards. The new Majority Leader claims the Senate hasn't achieved, in his words, "squat" in recent years. The numbers, however, tell a different story. Today the U.S. unemployment rate stands at 5.8 percent. Over the last six years the American economy has added 10 million jobs. The stock market has reached all-time highs. Our nation's manufacturers are thriving. The American automobile industry was brought back from the brink of collapse in spite of Republican opposition. And let's not forget that there are more than 10 million Americans newly insured with health care coverage.

While some here in Washington may see that as "squat," the economic recovery has been very real to American families. I know

how important it has been to working Nevadans.

And while we worked to improve the economy without Republicans' help, we also worked to fulfill our constitutional obligation to offer advice and consent on Presidential nominations.

Just last Congress we confirmed 132 judges—the most since the Carter Administration. Overall, we confirmed 611 of the President's nominees last Congress in spite of Republican opposition. As we speak, we have an Attorney General and a Secretary of Defense waiting to be confirmed. I remind everyone that last Congress the Republicans mounted an unprecedented filibuster for a nominee for Secretary of Defense [a former Republican Senator].

I challenge my friend, the Majority Leader, to change course and work with Senate Democrats in confirming the President's nominees in the 114th Congress. Working together, we can easily meet and surpass last Congress's benchmark of 611 confirmations.

My Republican colleagues, and especially the Majority Leader, should also know that Senate Democrats are especially eager to continue to help American families.

Working together, we can send meaningful, bipartisan legislation to the President for his signature.

The mistakes of the past, the gratuitous obstruction and wanton filibustering will not be a hallmark of the Democratic minority in the 114th Congress. The filibuster is an indispensable tool of the minority, but Republicans' abuse of it last Congress has come to epitomize the gridlock here in the United States Capitol.

To be clear, I have no intention of just rolling over. I can't. Not when the middle class is teetering on the verge of extinction.

Any attempt to erode protections for working American families—the dismantling of Dodd-Frank, the weakening of net neutrality rules, or the Republicans' never-ending quest to repeal the Affordable Care Act, known as ObamaCare—will be met with swift and unified Democratic opposition.

But we'd rather legislate together. And there's plenty of common ground for bipartisan compromise if Republicans are willing.

That is the end of the statement from Senator REID.

TERRORIST ATTACK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, throughout the history of the United States of America, we have had a remarkable alliance with the nation of France. It bears remembering and repeating that the French stood by our side when America was fighting for its independence from Great Britain. The French were honored in many ways for that alliance and help, including, as I recall, a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette which hangs in the U.S. House of Representatives to this day.

That was not the only time by any means that the French have stood with us and we have stood by their side. It happened during World War I, World War II, and many times after that. Through the NATO alliance and in many other ways, we have worked with the people of France for common goals and common purpose, and that is why we were so saddened this morning to learn of the news that was reported by the Tribune:

Masked gunmen shouting “Allahu akbar!” stormed the Paris offices of a satirical newspaper Wednesday, killing 12 people before escaping. It was France’s deadliest terror attack in at least two decades.

With a manhunt on, French President Francois Hollande called the attack on the Charlie Hebdo weekly . . . “a terrorist attack without a doubt.” He said several other attacks have been thwarted in France “in recent weeks.”

France raised its security alert to the highest level and reinforced protective measures at houses of worship, stores, media offices and transportation. Top government officials were holding an emergency meeting and Hollande planned a nationally televised address in the evening. Schools closed their doors.

World leaders including President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the attack, but supporters of the militant Islamic State group celebrated the slayings as well-deserved revenge against France.

This event in Paris recalls what we lived through not that long ago when the United States—on September 11, 2001—was attacked by terrorists and more than 3,000 innocent Americans lost their lives in New York, in Washington, and in the countryside of Pennsylvania. Many of us recall that at that moment—that sad, awful moment—people around the world rallied to stand with the United States in our grief and in our determination for justice. We particularly remember that the people of France did that, and they spoke out in one voice saying they were going to be by our side in this battle against terrorism. I think it is appropriate today that we follow suit, that we join in that same spirit. “A ce moment tragique, nous sommes tous Parisiens, nous sommes tous Français.”

Let us all work together not only to bring justice to this horrible situation—this attack on free press in France—but let us also work together to bring an end to terrorism in our time. We can work with our allies and friends in France to achieve that goal.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

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

CONGRATULATING SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY ON 40 YEARS IN THE U.S. SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 40 years ago this week, a young prosecutor from Vermont was sworn into the Senate. He was part of a historic group of lawmakers often referred to as the “Watergate babies.” Today that man is President pro tempore emeritus as well as the most senior Member of the Senate. It is an honor to serve with him and to recognize Senator PATRICK LEAHY for reaching this historic milestone.

PATRICK LEAHY remains the youngest Senator—and the only Democratic Senator—ever sent to this body by the people of his home State of Vermont. But that is not what makes PATRICK LEAHY exceptional. What makes him exceptional is the fact that he is a consensus builder—a thoughtful man committed to making government work better. It has been a privilege for me to work closely with Senator LEAHY serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As a member of that committee since 1979 and for many years as chairman, Senator LEAHY made a profound mark on America’s system of justice. He has voted on the nominations of every sitting member of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has fought to preserve the balance between liberty and security during especially difficult times. Senator LEAHY has also fought to make America’s respect for human rights a cornerstone of our Nation’s foreign policy. He has been a leader in the global effort to ban antipersonnel landmines. He championed the “Leahy Law” to prevent U.S. tax dollars from benefiting human rights abusers abroad. He was a leader in recent efforts to free U.S. citizen Alan Gross from a Cuban jail and in the modernization of our Nation’s policy toward that island.

One last point, PAT LEAHY is also, almost certainly, the biggest “Dead Head” in the Senate. Twenty years ago, he invited his good friend, Jerry Garcia—the lead guitarist for the Grateful Dead—to join him for lunch here in the Capitol. Two other members of the band came, too: drummer Mickey Hart and bass player Phil Lesh. As one might imagine, this unusual foursome created a bit of a stir in the Senate Dining Room. Then in walked Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Ever the bridgebuilder, Senator LEAHY walked over to Senator Thurmond and said: “Please join us. There’s someone I want you to meet.”

It is a story worth pondering as we begin the 114th Congress. If we could all be so open to creating unlikely alliances, there is no telling what we might achieve in the next 2 years.

Again, I thank my friend Senator LEAHY on his 40 years of service to the people of Vermont, America, and to the great causes that face our generation.

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

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

RESTORING THE SENATE’S GREATNESS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to address the state of the Senate and how to restore its greatness.

Yesterday, I was sworn in as the President pro tempore. Although there have been some notable exceptions throughout history, the modern practice of the Senate has been to elect as the President pro tempore the most senior Member of the majority party. As one noted historian of the Senate has generously written, “election of a senator to the office of president pro tempore has always been considered one of the highest honors offered to a senator by the Senate as a body.”

I am greatly honored to have been selected for this position, but I am keenly aware of the great responsibilities that come with it. The President pro tempore of the Senate is one of only three legislative offices established by the U.S. Constitution, and in recent decades it has been occupied by true giants of the Senate. Their names, which include Vandenberg, Russell, Byrd, Stevens, Inouye, and LEAHY, resonate as some of the greatest legislators ever to serve in this body.

Beyond the President pro tempore’s formal responsibilities in presiding over the Senate and helping ensure the continuity of government, this office represents a unique opportunity to assist the majority leader in guiding the Senate as it addresses the critical issues facing our Nation. In that sense, the President pro tempore serves as an elder statesman, sharing accumulated knowledge and lessons learned through long experience.

I consider it fortuitous that the beginning of my service as President pro tempore coincides with the start of a new year. For many, the new year is a time for reflecting upon the past and reviewing commitments for the future. I believe we as Senators should use this opportunity for some much needed introspection about the state of this institution.

The Senate has long been heralded as the world’s greatest deliberative body. With so many critical challenges facing our Nation today, there has never been a more important time for the Senate to live up to its storied legacy and to fulfill its responsibilities to the American people.

Central to properly understanding our responsibilities as Senators is to appreciate the Senate’s role in our system of government. This means understanding both the Senate’s purposes and its unique place at the center of our constitutional structure. It is important for us to consider these issues.

James Madison famously called the Senate the great anchor of the government. He described its purpose as twofold: “first to protect the people against their rulers; secondly to protect the people against the transient impressions on to which they themselves might be led.”

The Senate accomplishes the first goal—protecting the people against their rulers—by playing a crucial role in the appointment and removal of both judges and executive branch officers. The President’s power to appoint is tempered by the requirement that his appointees receive the Senate’s advice and consent. Additionally, the Senate possesses the power to remove from office any official that has engaged in high crimes and misdemeanors. The President’s power to enter into treaties is also critically checked by the requirement that the Senate provide its advice and consent to a treaty before ratification.

As such, the President does not have unfettered power to fill up executive offices, pack the courts or make agreements with foreign nations. He cannot staff agencies with corrupt, incompetent or ideologically extreme cronies unless the Senate allows him to do so. He cannot conclude treaties that will harm American interests unless the Senate gives its assent. In selecting life-tenured judges to apply the Constitution and laws of the land, the President cannot act unless the Senate confirms his nominee. In all of these settings, the Senate serves as a crucial check against executive abuse.

The Senate accomplishes the second of Madison’s goals—protecting against temporary shifts in popular opinion—through its character and its institutional structure. In contrast to the large, transient House, the Senate is small, more stable, and therefore, it has the opportunity to be more thoughtful. Four hundred thirty-five Members inhabit the House, and only 100 fill this Chamber. The entire House stands for election every 2 years. Naturally, reelection is constantly on Representatives’ minds. Senators, by contrast, have 6-year terms and only one-third go before the voters each election. Even with the pressures of modern campaigns, these divergent characteristics produce fundamentally different institutions.

But the Framers designed the Senate to do much more than merely check transient and occasionally intemperate impulses. They created the Senate to refine the public’s will and to give more wisdom and stability to the government. The Framers chose the Senate’s relatively small size to enable more thorough debate and to provide individual Members greater opportunity to improve legislative proposals. Longer, staggered terms would give Members greater flexibility to resist initially popular yet ultimately unwise legislation. They would also guard against temporary majorities. A fluke election may produce significant ma-

jorities for one party that 2 years later disappears. This can lead to wild swings in the law as each new majority seeks to enact a vastly different agenda during its brief period of power. Overlapping terms help to avert this danger.

Finally, statewide constituencies require Senators to appeal to a broader set of interests—including the concerns of the State governments themselves—than do narrow, more homogenous House districts.

To these constitutional characteristics, the Senate has added a number of traditions—some formal and others informal—that have enhanced its deliberative character. These include the right to extended debate, an open amendment process, and a committee system that gives all Members—from the most seasoned chairmen to the newest freshmen—a hand in drafting and improving legislation.

The late Senator Byrd liked to say that “as long as the Senate retains the power to amend and the power of unlimited debate, the liberties of the people will remain secure.”

The Senate protects liberty by giving each Senator an active role in the legislative process. This multiplies the checks against bad laws and expands the universe of individuals working to make good laws better. It erects what Madison called a necessary fence against hasty and unwise government action. It enables each Senator to bring his or her own wisdom and considered judgment to bear on pressing national issues.

When the Senate functions properly, it is a truly deliberative body in which all Senators work to identify the common good and the best means to achieve that common good. The Federalist describes the common good as the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. This is to be distinguished from the individual good, which may vary from person to person and which may not result in the Nation’s benefit.

Much like the Senate is designed to protect against transient shifts in public opinion, it is also designed to enable Senators to pursue the common good. Senators are able to prioritize achieving the correct results over doing what is politically convenient. The best answers do not always immediately present themselves nor are they always easily explained. Longer terms give Senators more time to investigate, to analyze, to reconsider, and to recalibrate, and so do robust debate and an open amendment process. These are critical elements of our deliberative pursuit of the common good.

Another crucial component of our pursuit of common good is prudence. Aristotle called prudence the legislative science because it concerns the best means of achieving the most good in practice. Prudence restrains us from seeking immediate and complete vindication of a single abstract principle. Instead, it counsels us to work within

our existing circumstances to vindicate the enduring principles upon which our liberty depends.

While we should remain true to our principles, we must also recognize that we operate in an imperfect world where we do not control all of the levers of power. We cannot simply charge forward blind to present realities. To do so is to jeopardize our hopes for achieving any meaningful success, because in the messy world of politics, adopting an all-or-nothing strategy usually produces only the latter—nothing.

Politics is the art of the possible. Ideology is important, and rhetoric is captivating. But at the end of the day, when the campaign is over, the American people sent us here to govern. We are here to protect their liberties and to protect and improve their lives. When we grandstand or hold out for impossible demands, we do nothing but a disservice. The Framers gave us staggered, extended terms so that we could use our independent judgment to get things done. We should try to get to it.

An astute commentator observed that the Senate stands at the crossroads of our constitutional system. It shares power with the other branches of the Federal Government. It ensures temperance in the legislative branch. It must consent or not consent to the President’s treaties and appointments, and it plays a critical role in appointments to the Supreme Court.

But it also—and this is unique among the branches of the Federal Government—embodies the interests of federalism and State power at the national level.

The Framers created the Senate to be much more than a simple legislative body. The Senate is uniquely positioned to mediate both among the Federal branches of government and between the Federal and State governments. As such, the Senate truly embodies the role described by one wise commentator as the sober guardian of the Republic.

Our responsibilities as Senators follow directly from the Senate’s constitutional role. As the people’s representatives and as envoys of our individual States’ interests, we are accountable to our States and to our Nation. We do not serve any one party or principle, or any particular ideology or faction. We may align ourselves into certain groups—Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal—for purposes of organization and cooperation, but we are Senators first. Other labels are secondary.

Civility and statesmanship must be our constant ideals. Madison once instructed that “the Senate is to consist in its proceeding with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom, than the popular branch.” A key purpose of this body is to calm the passions that arise from the heat of political discourse. As such, we must always be courteous in our communications one with another, both formal and informal, on the floor and off, face-to-

face or on a video screen. When we disagree we need to do so with dignity and respect, acknowledging the sincere motives and passions of even our most firm adversaries.

Statesmanship connotes public spiritedness and a willingness to compromise in pursuit of broader goals. Petulance and unilateralism accomplish nothing in this body. Any Senator who would choose the glow of the camera over the prospect for meaningful achievement seriously misunderstands their role as a Senator.

Next on the list of practices Senators must follow are prudence and considered judgment. I have already spoken about prudence. It is a habit of mind that focuses on present realities and achievable goals—not pie-in-the-sky pipedreams. Prudent lawmakers make experience—not theory—their guide, and they recognize that success in a republic requires harmonizing competing values.

Considered judgment is closely tied to prudence. Prudence is not rash. It requires deliberation and thoughtful analysis. Our constituents sent us here because they trusted our judgment and favored the general outlines we presented in our campaigns. Now that we are here, it is time to put our plans into action. We do this by studying problems, investigating proposals, and carefully choosing solutions that best cohere with our principles. Exercising judgment is an individual matter. Colleagues and opinion leaders may guide our deliberations, but the ultimate choice of policy is one which we each must make on our own.

The final two obligations I wish to highlight are our responsibilities: first, to seek the common good through earnest deliberation, and second, to achieve consensus to the extent possible.

As I explained, the Framers designed the Senate so that Members would be able to seek the common good encumbered by few political constraints. Because we stand for election only every 6 years, we are less susceptible to swings in public opinion. We have the independence to value long-term impact over short-term politics. And because we are a small body—relatively speaking—all Members are able to participate fully in the legislative process and to add their voice of praise, warning or suggestion to each proposal that we consider. We deliberate not to score points or to craft sound bites but because we believe that in the contest of opposing views, the best answers will win out.

I mentioned consensus. Although much of our day-to-day operations are conducted by unanimous consent, obviously we do not do everything around here by consensus. We are 100 fiercely independent legislators. Even at the end of a lengthy debate with numerous opportunities for amendment, we may remain sharply divided about a bill's wisdom or the objective it seeks to achieve. But that does not mean con-

sensus should not be our goal. We should take counsel from past legislative victories which show that broad victories produce lasting reform, whereas narrow partisan power plays tend to yield only rancor and repeated attempts to repeal.

For 38 years I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving in the Senate. During that time, I have witnessed it at its best and, more recently, at its worst. My experience throughout the last four decades has confirmed to me the wisdom of the first Adlai Stevenson, then Vice President, who in his 1897 farewell address captured the essence of the Senate:

In this Chamber alone are preserved without restraint two essentials of wise legislations and good government: the right of amendment and of debate. Great evils often result from hasty legislation; rarely from the delay which follows full discussion and deliberation.

In recent years these foundations of the Senate's unique character—meaningful debate and an open amendment process—have come under sustained assault by those who have prioritized scoring political points over preserving the Senate's essential role in our system of self-government.

Rather than simply bemoan this recent institutional damage, we have a duty to use this new Congress to restore the Senate. By returning to regular order and committee work, promoting robust debate, and enabling a deliberative amendment process, we can make the Senate work again—both Democrats and Republicans.

First, robust debate. Senators' ability to engage in meaningful, substantive debate is at the core of the Senate's identity. Through robust discussions and inclusive deliberation, Senators examine all sides of an issue. We air opposing views and ensure that in haste we do not make worse the problems we are trying to solve.

When individual Senators have the right to debate a matter fully, it engenders confidence that the final legislation produced represents the best possible bill upon which the Senate can agree. Many pieces of legislation that seemed imperfect passed this way and have gone on to benefit the Nation greatly. For over 200 years, the Senate has provided each Member broad prerogative to debate and discuss the critical issues of the day. In the early years of the Republic, visitors flocked to the Senate gallery to hear Senators such as Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John C. Calhoun, just to mention three, to hear them expound upon matters of national concern.

It was in this body that some of our Nation's most important debates over taxation, slavery, expansion, and foreign affairs took place. For many years, free-flowing debate was so intertwined with the identity of the Senate that no effective cloture mechanism to cut off debate even existed until well into the 20th century.

While the need to end debate in certain circumstances is clear, we have

strayed too far from this important deliberative tradition. In particular, the practice of filing for cloture at the very same time a bill is brought up for consideration has proliferated to a disturbing degree. When a full and robust debate has occurred, invoking cloture is often appropriate. But we must not abuse this power by reflexively seeking to cut off debate before it even begins. Let us return to a system where all Senators have a say in what the Senate does and are able to express their views without getting cut off.

The second Senate hallmark we must restore is an open amendment process. The reason for an open amendment process is to improve legislation. No single Member can foresee all contingencies that may arise or identify all of the potential pitfalls.

There is a reason there are 100 Senators, not just 1. More eyes mean more mistakes caught and more opportunities for improvement. An open amendment process also facilitates consensus. One amendment may resolve a particular Senator's concern, allowing him to support what he or she once opposed. Another may make a bill politically palatable to Senators who support the bill in principle but not in its current form.

Amendments may also achieve buy-in as Senators who successfully amend a bill find themselves more committed to final passage. When Senators retain the ability to amend legislation, such input can establish a wide and lasting base of support that crosses partisan and ideological lines. Indeed, an open and honest amendment process has frequently enabled diverse coalitions to find important areas of agreement.

I even found that the former Senator from Massachusetts, the late Ted Kennedy, the famed liberal lion of the Senate, a man I came to Washington to battle, could be a productive partner. In the process, he became one of my closest friends, even if we widely disagreed on a lot of things. I miss him personally. We were able to do things that would not have been done had it not been for the work we did together.

Unfortunately, over the past several years, the Senate's traditionally open amendment process has come under increasing attack. For the sake of shielding electorally vulnerable Senators from tough votes, we have emasculated one of this institution's critical characteristics. It is time to stop manipulating Senate rules to prevent amendments. It is time to stop blocking amendments for fear of tough votes. It is time to return to healthier ways of doing things, where we work together to improve legislation rather than doing all we can to keep Members out of the process.

The third hallmark we must restore is a vigorous and productive committee system. Although perhaps not as moribund as our amendment process, the role our committees play in drafting and refining bills has indeed suffered in recent years. For centuries Senate

committees have served as the primary forum for critical deliberation and amendments in this body.

Bills introduced in the Senate are referred to the relevant committees where Members have the opportunity to consider, debate, and amend the bill at length. Committees are the workhorses of the Senate or at least should be. On the floor we can do only one thing at a time. But any number of committees and subcommittees may operate simultaneously, allowing Senators to work out language and make compromises on multiple bills at the same time.

Committees also perform a crucial investigative function. They hold hearings, call witnesses, and solicit expert opinions on a wide variety of issues, enabling Members to expand their understanding and to better fine-tune individual bills. Lately, however, we have witnessed a disturbing trend of bypassing the committee process altogether by bringing bills directly to the floor for votes.

This practice undermines committee work and frustrates Members who diligently seek to move their legislative priorities through the committee. It also deprives bills of the benefits of committee review, which include more search and consideration of language, opportunities for comment by outside experts, and the ability to address support for amendments without tying up precious floor time.

A healthy committee process is essential to a well-functioning Senate. This body is not a fiefdom. We do not convene merely to give our assent to immutable messaging bills. We are supposed to work together to write, amend, and pass important legislation. When Senators bring up for consideration bills they have written without input from other Members, manipulate Senate procedure to prevent floor amendment on those bills, and then simultaneously file cloture to cut off debate, they act as autocrats rather than agents of democracy.

Let's return this body to one that operates by consensus, not dictate. Let's return the committee process to its proper place in our legislative landscape, as the first line of review rather than an utter irrelevancy. Let's restore the Senate to its proper role in our constitutional system by restoring the traditions that have made this body so great: robust debate, an open amendment process, an active, meaningful committee process.

Equipped with these tools, the Senate historically never shied away from taking on what everyone agreed were the toughest issues of the day. Yes, we had to take tough votes. Yes, we could not rush legislation through as fast as we sometimes would have liked. Yes, we sometimes felt deep disappointment when proposals we championed fell short. But while the Senate's rules can be frustrating and politically cumbersome, they are what allowed the Senate to serve the country so well for so very long.

Restoring the Senate in this manner will not be easy. After years of bitter partisan tension, we cannot expect a complete change to come overnight. But by reestablishing our historic aims and reinstituting our designing modes of operation, including robust debate, an open amendment process, and regular order through committee work, the Senate can once more be about the peoples' business and observe the title of the world's greatest deliberative body.

WISHING SENATOR HARRY REID A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, one of my friends in this body is the distinguished minority leader, HARRY REID. HARRY and I have been friends for a long time. He has served here for a long time. He served well in many respects. He certainly was a tough majority leader. He is a tough guy.

Recently he suffered some very severe injuries. He is mending. These injuries seem to be injuries he can handle, although very strong, tough injuries. I wish him the best, that he may be able to recuperate well, come back again to this deliberative body, and play the role he needs to play for the minority in this illustrious body.

HARRY and I believe many things together, especially in the religious area. He is a fine man. His wife Landra is a very fine woman. I am glad to see that her health has improved. She is a terrific person. Both of them are terrific people in their own right. I pray that the Lord will heal HARRY and make it easier for him to come back as soon as he can. Being a tough guy, he will be back here pretty soon. I wish him the best. It is no secret that Elaine and I have been praying for him. Hopefully, those prayers will be efficacious.

I have great respect for my colleagues on the other side as well as my own colleagues on this side. These are good people. There are very few Senators—not more than 2—in my 38 years in the Senate that I thought might not have much redeeming value. Everybody else has played significant roles in this body, sometimes that I hotly contested and differed with, but nevertheless very good people over all these years.

HARRY REID is one of the nicest people one will ever meet off the Senate floor. He is all right on the Senate floor too. All I can say is that I wish him well. I am praying for his recovery. I want him to succeed in every way. He is from our neighboring State. Nevada is very important to us. We like both Senators from Nevada. Senator HELLER is one of the finest Senators here. They work well in Nevada's interests together. I hope everything goes well with Senator REID and his wife Landra and his lovely family. They are good family people.

I wanted to make those comments on the floor because of the high esteem in which I hold HARRY. Yes, we disagree on a lot of issues, sometimes pretty

strongly we disagree, but great Senators can do that. They can get over it quickly too.

I hope the remarks I made earlier in the day on this deliberative body will be taken up by everybody in the Senate to realize this is the greatest deliberative body in the world. We need to make sure it remains such. That means tough votes. It means tough amendments. It means long days here sometimes, but it also means an ability to have a rapport with my friends, not only on this side but the other side as well and for them to have a rapport not only with their side but with our side.

Let's hope we can build something and let's hope we can bring our two sides together and work in the best interests of the country and get some things done that are sorely in need and do things that both Democrats and Republicans can say: We did it together. Yes, there were tough times. Yes, we differed from time to time. But we did it together, and we did it in the best interest of the country.

I hope both leaders will be able to work together in this manner and that all of us will do our work in the best interest of this country. I do not think we necessarily have to forget politics, but we ought to sublimate them sometimes to the point where they do not interfere with getting very important work done.

I wish HARRY REID the best. As I said, he is in my prayers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

JOBS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, first of all, this is the first opportunity I have had to follow our new President pro tempore of the Senate on the floor. He was just elected yesterday.

I have spoken on the floor at times when he has been in other leadership roles. He is a solid Member of this Senate whom we rally around in so many ways. The comments he just made about the leader of our friends on the other side and the importance of family to Senator REID—that is also important to Senator HATCH. People are important to Senator HATCH. I believe he is going to be a tremendous President pro tempore of the Senate, chairman of the Finance Committee, and a critical leader at a critical time.

The comments he made on the floor today about Senators being willing to take tough votes, to take positions on issues, to let the American people know where we stand—that is not only where the Senate ought to be but in so many ways it is where Senator HATCH has always been as a Member of the Senate and now as the highest elected official in the Senate, the President pro tempore of the Senate. I look forward to seeing him do that job, seeking his advice, and watching his leadership as he leads us now in multiple ways in the Senate.

Mr. HATCH. Would the Senator yield for a comment?

Mr. BLUNT. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. HATCH. I thank my dear friend from Missouri for being so kind and thoughtful to me and the Senate. I appreciate our friendship and the leadership he provides in this body.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank my friend for his leadership and his comments.

The Presiding Officer and I are looking at legislation we looked at last year where the Senate would simply have to stand up on rules and regulations that have an impact on the economy and say "Yes, we are going to improve those" or "No, we are not going to do those." That would be a role for the Senate where the regulators for the first time have an obstacle and an opportunity to come to the people who have to go to the voters and say: What do you think about this rule? What do you think about this regulation?

I look forward to seeing the REINS Act again that would put some more controls over regulators, which both the Presiding Officer and I have worked on.

Today I will talk for a few moments about the work we will hopefully get to quickly.

The first numbered bill in this new Senate is the bill to authorize the Keystone Pipeline. In the 6 years that Canada has been waiting to try to sell us a product that we need, I have spoken about this—as many of us have—many times. It is hard to actually think about what I might say today that hasn't been said before in that 6-year period of trying to do what I believe and what most Americans believe is the logical thing for us to do.

Our best trading partner, Canada—more North American energy is one of the critical keys to our economic future. As I over and over again think of the list of opportunities in front of us, that has to be near the top. What happens when we have more American energy? What happens when we are more self-sufficient with our two closest neighbors for the energy we use, the energy we need? What happens when we are less dependent on economies that we don't do as much business with or places that aren't as friendly to us as our neighbors to the north and our neighbors to the south?

More American energy has an impact on utility bills, it has an impact on transportation, and it has an impact on whether we are going to make more things. An economy that grows things and makes things is stronger than an economy where we just trade services with each other. We should be looking for those things which create that competitive incentive for us to get back into manufacturing.

In the last session of Congress, we were able to pass a bill I cosponsored with Senator BROWN from Ohio on advanced manufacturing, and I think it is going to have an impact on doing things in different ways, but I don't suggest that it would have a greater impact than a utility bill that somebody thinking about building a factory

understood that they had a great likelihood of being able to pay for a long time and in a competitive way or a delivery system that works. Those are the kinds of things that will create more American jobs.

The Keystone Pipeline clearly creates some jobs in and of itself. I think 20,000 jobs or so is the estimate just to build the pipeline and another 20,000 for all of the support of material and things that go into that pipeline.

I think the President's own State Department has a number of 42,000 jobs that would be created if we go to this shovel-ready project. We had a lot of discussion in the country when the President became President about the importance of finding shovel-ready projects. This is a project where people have had the shovels in hand for a long time. They have a product we need. We are their best trading partner. It is logical that they would want to sell it to us. It is equally logical that we should want to buy it from them. The State Department says over and over again—and this is the State Department where the Secretary of State was put in place by the President, who yesterday said he would veto this bill—the State Department says over and over again that there is no environmental impact we should be concerned about.

For people who say: Well, the Canadians should be concerned about the impact of taking that oil out of the ground, that is really going to happen. The oil sands are going to be heated up. The oil is coming out of the ground. It is going to be sold to somebody. The question is, Do we take advantage of that logical opportunity or do we give that opportunity to somebody else?

When we get into this debate next week, somebody will say: Well, maybe there are 40,000 jobs to build the pipeline, but there are only three or four dozen jobs to run the pipeline. Well, of course—it is a pipeline. It is not complicated to do, but it is the logical and easiest way to move fuel that we need, oil that we need, oil that would become part of our commerce and other commerce.

But anybody who thinks that those are the only jobs that would be created when we grasp the idea of more American energy just isn't thinking about what this means to our economy. There are many jobs to be created. That is why this has become such an important issue and such an important vote—not just for the pipeline itself but for the message it sends to the American workforce, the message it sends to people who are thinking about making things in America, and the message it sends about our future economy. This is one of many things that are just waiting for us to take advantage of them so that we can grow our economy in new and positive ways.

Among the things that will be said that I will disagree with on this in the next few days: Well, this is only 35 permanent jobs. Anybody who believes that embracing more American energy

is only 35 American jobs is either kidding themselves or just trying to kid the American people.

We need to take advantage of this opportunity. There is no government funding involved. It is just government approval. This is a \$7 billion project, 42,000 jobs. The government just has to say yes.

Six years and several months ago—I think about 2 months ago now we passed the 6-year anniversary of the Canadians having the application and asking us to let them do this. Why do they even have to do that? Because they cross an international border. We build pipelines in the country all the time with very little Federal involvement.

This is revenue for the States, communities, and counties this pipeline goes through. There is a revenue stream there. You pay for the permanent ability to have that infrastructure available to you. It is a \$7 billion project, revenue for State and local government, but most importantly, it is a sign from the people of the United States of America through their government that we are going to take advantage of this great opportunity of more American energy that is in front of us.

Since he came to the Senate the same day I did 4 years ago, Senator HOEVEN has been a leading advocate as a North Dakotan. He understands what energy can do for the economy. He also understands the importance of being able to transport that energy product around in the right way. It frees train cars for manufactured goods, agriculture, and other things. It does so in the best way. Senator MANCHIN, joining with Senator HOEVEN as the principal sponsors of the bill, is a leader on these energy issues. He understands energy issues. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bill. I believe there are 60 of us who have cosponsored the bill—clearly enough to send the bill to the President's desk. It would be nice if the President would look at the opportunity and decide to sign this bill.

This is an important part of the future of the country. It is time for the Senate, the Congress, and the Government of the United States to wrap its arms around what this means to the people of the United States. It means good jobs. It means a different future than if we don't have it.

One other topic I wish to mention while on the floor is—speaking of good jobs—jobs for veterans. A bill I filed in the last Congress in the Senate has passed the House again last night, the Hire More Heroes Act. I hope we can get to it quickly. Last year it passed in the House 406 to 1, but the Senate wouldn't take up the bill that passed the House 406 to 1.

How do we hire more heroes under this act? We give people who already have veterans health benefits—TRICARE or other VA benefits—a little bit of an exception as an employee. Employers don't have to count them

toward the 50 employees that trigger a law that many employers are trying to avoid being affected by, the so-called Affordable Care Act.

We have a chance to go to those who served us and say: Look, we are going to create one additional opportunity. We are not going to count the fact that you already have health care against you; we are actually going to let it work in favor of your opportunity to get a job and to move forward with that job.

Whether it is more American energy or hiring our heroes for jobs they need to have—the veteran unemployment numbers are unacceptable. Veterans who have served since 9/11 at one time last year had an unemployment rate right at the 9 percent number. Any number is unacceptable. We need to take those veterans' skills and put them to work. I hope we do that by quickly following our colleagues on the other side of the building—who now have passed this bill twice—and getting this bill on the President's desk as well.

Hiring our heroes, creating jobs, looking at more American energy—I am hopeful these are the kinds of things this Congress will quickly send a message to the President and the country—these are the kinds of things we want to see happen for more opportunity for young Americans and for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I share the view of my colleague from Missouri about the importance of the Keystone Pipeline. We will have an opportunity over the next several days to talk more extensively about that and the importance it has to our economy and to energy security. Obviously it is something that we think is about jobs and the economy, which is why there is so much support for it in the Senate among Republicans in the Senate, and I would argue—I think there will be a lot of Democrats as well.

Yesterday Republicans assumed the majority in the Senate thanks to the overwhelming support of the American people, and we are ready to roll up our sleeves and go to work.

This week President Obama is going to be traveling around the country attempting to take credit for the recent shred of economic good news we have finally seen after 6 years of economic stagnation under the President's policies. Unfortunately, all of the campaign-style tours in the world cannot disguise the fact that our economy is nowhere near where it should be. More than 5 years after the recession supposedly ended, Americans are still feeling the pinch. Wages are stagnant. Household income has declined by almost \$3,000 on the President's watch. The price of everything from health care to education has risen. And the President's policies have done nothing

to help. In fact, the President's policies have actually made things worse. Whether it is the taxes in the President's health care law or the energy tax proposed by the President's out-of-control EPA, the President's policies have done nothing to help the economy.

But there is reason for Americans to be hopeful. Poll after poll has demonstrated that the American people are concerned about jobs and the economy, and in the new Congress Republicans are going to make jobs and the economy our priorities. We are committed to passing legislation that would help create jobs, grow the economy, and expand opportunities for struggling middle-class families, and we plan to get started right away.

This week the senior Senator from North Dakota, Mr. HOEVEN, reintroduced legislation to approve the job-creating Keystone XL Pipeline. According to the President's own State Department, this commonsense project would support more than 42,000 jobs. It would also substantially increase revenue to State and local governments, providing increased funding for local priorities such as schools, roads, and bridges.

I can speak firsthand to that because it would cross my home county, Jones County, in South Dakota. I can say the people in my home county see the opportunity to generate revenues that would help support the local school district in an area of the State which is losing population and having a harder and harder time keeping the school open.

The pipeline has bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress, and I am hopeful that the President will drop his inexplicable opposition and finally sign off on this job-creating project.

Republicans also plan to take up the other job-creating measures that spent far too long languishing in the Democratic-led Senate. The Obamacare tax on lifesaving devices, such as pacemakers and insulin pumps, has already had a negative impact on jobs and the medical device industry. At a time when our economy is still suffering from years of stagnation, repealing this tax is a no-brainer. I am confident we will have bipartisan support for this repeal, and I hope—I hope—the President will sign it.

Republicans also plan to repeal the Obamacare provision that changed the definition of full-time work from 40 hours per week to 30 hours per week. This provision is forcing businesses to reduce employees' hours and wages and hire part-time rather than full-time workers in order to comply with the Obamacare requirements. Millions of Americans who want full-time work are currently stuck in part-time jobs because they can't find anything else. The last thing the government should be doing is making it more difficult for employers to offer full-time positions.

Another Obamacare position that is making it difficult for employers to

hire is the employer mandate. Later today I will introduce a bill called the HIRE Act, which would make it easier for employers to hire new workers by exempting Americans who have been unemployed for more than 27 weeks from counting as employees for whom a tax penalty must be paid by the employer under Obamacare's employer mandate.

In addition to passing job-creating legislation, the new Republican majority is committed to increasing congressional oversight. Executive branch agencies have been out of control under the Obama administration. The President's EPA alone has proposed billions of dollars' worth of regulations that will have a catastrophic effect on our economy and eliminate tens of thousands of jobs, if not hundreds of thousands of jobs. Just one of these regulations—the backdoor national energy tax on coal-fired powerplants—would cause Americans' energy prices to soar and destroy families' livelihoods.

In my State of South Dakota, household energy prices could increase by as much as 90 percent. South Dakotans with incomes below \$50,000 a year already spend one-fifth—one-fifth—of their aftertax income on residential and transportation energy costs, which is twice the national average, I might add. They can't afford a 90-percent increase in their costs.

What is more, this national energy tax will have almost no effect on our air quality. It would devastate communities and drive up energy bills in this country for nothing.

The EPA is far from the only Federal agency to have abused its power under the Obama administration. Take the Obama IRS, for example, which targeted organizations for extra scrutiny based on their members' political beliefs. It is past time for Congress to assert its oversight authority and check the executive branch's overreach.

While Republicans want to work with Democrats as much as possible, we will not hesitate to draw a bright line between Democratic and Republican priorities.

Republicans want to address some of the biggest challenges facing our economy, to put our Nation on the path to long-term prosperity. That means doing things such as reforming our Tax Code, which is inefficient and bloated, making it simpler and fairer for families and businesses in this country. It also means reforming our regulatory system to eliminate inefficient and ineffective regulations that are discouraging job growth.

The Democratic-led Senate was pretty dysfunctional. The minority party was largely shut out of the legislative process. Bills were frequently written behind closed doors. The committee process was largely defunct. Too often the Senate floor was a forum for partisan politicking rather than serious debate. What was the result? The voices of too many Americans got shut

out of the process and the Senate accomplished next to nothing for the American people.

Republicans intend to change all of that. Under Republican control, the Senate will return to regular order. That means bills will once again be debated and amended in the open, in committee, before coming to the Senate floor. Once bills come to the floor, all Senators, regardless of party, will have the opportunity to offer amendments and to fully debate legislation before it comes to a vote.

The American people deserve a Senate that works and Republicans intend to give it to them. The American people have spent a long time struggling in the Obama economy, but they are about to get some relief. Republicans are determined to pass solutions that will help create jobs, grow our economy, and expand opportunities for American families. We hope—we hope—the Democrats in the Senate and the President will join us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING OUR COUNTRY

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, as we begin this new session, I think it is important for us to remember why we are here and what our job is as Senators. What our job is, it seems to me, is to try to understand the needs of the American people, the problems facing our constituents, and propose real solutions to those problems. So before we get involved in all of the debates I know we are going to have, let me put on the floor what I believe—in hearing from the people of the State of Vermont—are some of the most important issues facing our country and the need for the Senate, the Congress, and the President to address those issues.

First and foremost, to my mind, is the state of American democracy. We are a democracy, and men and women have fought and died to preserve American democracy, which means the people of America—not kings, not queens, not an aristocracy but the people of this country—regardless of where they come from or their economic status, have the right to participate in the political process, to elect their leaders and create the future they want for themselves and their kids.

What is the status of American democracy today? We just came out of a midterm election where Republicans did very well. But I think it is important to understand that in that election—that national election—63 percent of the American people didn't vote. Eighty percent of young people didn't vote. The overwhelming majority of low-income and working people didn't vote.

There are a million reasons an individual doesn't vote, but my guess is that for many people they look at the political process and they say: Yes, my

family is hurting. I am working longer hours for lower wages. My job went to China. My kid can't afford to go to college. I can't afford health insurance. What are those people in Washington doing to protect my interest? Not much—not the Republicans, not the Democrats. I am hurting. What are they doing? People say: Hey, I don't want to participate in this process. It doesn't mean anything. I am not going to vote.

I think another aspect about why people don't vote is they turn on their TVs and they are bombarded with 30-second ugly television ads—often ads that come not even from the candidate but from people who do “independent expenditures.” As a result of the disastrous Supreme Court decision on Citizens United, billionaires, corporations are now allowed to spend unlimited sums of money in a political process. If somebody is a billionaire, they can now spend hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars to destroy other candidates or to elect the candidates they want.

Is that truly what American democracy is supposed to be about? Do we believe that men and women fought and died for us so billionaires can elect candidates to protect the wealthy and the powerful?

I would say at the very top of the agenda for this Congress should be a movement to overturn, through a constitutional amendment, this disastrous Supreme Court ruling on Citizens United. In my view, we should move toward public funding of elections so all of our people, regardless of their economic status, can participate in the political process and run for office.

I think the next issue we have to take a very hard look at is the 40-year decline of the American middle class. I know some of my Republican friends talk about what has happened under the Obama administration, and they are right in saying we are nowhere where we should be economically. No one debates that. But let us not forget where we were 6 years ago when George W. Bush left office. Everybody remembers where we were: 700,000 people a month—a month—were losing their jobs.

People say: Hey, we are growing 200,000 or 300,000 jobs a month now, not good enough. Right, it is not good enough, but growing 200,000 or 300,000 jobs a month is a heck of a lot better than losing 700,000 jobs a month.

Our financial system—the U.S. and the world's—was on the verge of financial collapse. That is where we were when Bush left office. Now Wall Street is doing very well.

In terms of our deficit, when Bush left office we had a \$1.4 trillion deficit. Now that deficit is somewhere around \$500 billion. Are we where we want to be? No. Are we better off than we were 6 years ago? Absolutely.

But when we look at the middle class today, we understand the problems are not just the last 6 years or the last 12

years. The problems are what has been going on over the last 40 years. The fact is, we have millions of working people who are earning, in real inflation-accounted dollars, substantially less than they were 40 years ago.

How does it happen, when we are seeing an explosion in technology, when worker productivity has gone up, that the median male worker—that male worker right in the middle of the economy—earns \$783 less last year than he made 41 years ago?

Look at why people are angry. That is why they are angry. In inflation-accounted-for dollars, the median male worker is making \$783 less last year than he made 41 years ago. The median woman worker made \$1,300 less last year than she made in 2007.

Since 1999, the median middle-class family has seen its income go down by almost \$5,000 after adjusting for inflation. So people all over this country look to Washington and they say: What is going on? You gave us this great global economy. You have all these great unfettered free-trade agreements. We have all this technology. Yes, I know the billionaires are getting richer, millionaires are getting richer, with 95 percent of all new income going to the top 1 percent. We have one family, the Walton family, now owning more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of Americans. Yes, the billionaires are doing great, but what is happening to me?

What is happening to the middle class? The answer is, for a variety of reasons, in the last 40 years the middle class has shrunk significantly. Today we have more people living in poverty than at almost any other time in American history, and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on Earth.

So what do we do? What do we do to rebuild the middle class? What do we do to create the millions of decent-paying jobs we need? Let me throw out a few suggestions that I hope in this session of Congress we will address.

For a start, everybody in America understands our infrastructure is collapsing—no great secret. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, nearly one-quarter of the Nation's 600,000 bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and more than 30 percent have exceeded their design life.

What that means is that all over this country bridges are being shut down because they are dangerous and they need repair, almost one third of America's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and 42 percent of major urban highways are congested. As we speak, in cities all over America people are backed up in traffic jams, burning fuel and wasting time because we don't have proper infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers says we must invest \$1.7 trillion by 2020—5 years—just to get our Nation's roads, bridges, and transit to a state of good repair—more than four times the current rate of spending.

So what happens when we invest in infrastructure? I will introduce legislation to invest \$1 trillion in rebuilding our roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, aquifers, older schools, and rail. When we do that, \$1 trillion in infrastructure investment not only makes our country more productive and efficient, but it also creates a substantial number of decent-paying jobs. A \$1 trillion investment would maintain and create 13 million decent-paying jobs. The fastest way to create good-paying jobs is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. In my view, that should be a very, very high priority for this Congress.

The second issue I think we need to address—and I understand there are differences of opinion on this issue. I think when our kids and our grandchildren look back on this period and they look at an issue such as the Keystone Pipeline, they will be saying: What were you people thinking about? How could you go forward in terms of increasing the exploration and production of some of the dirtiest oil on this planet when virtually all of the scientists were telling us that we have to substantially reduce carbon emissions and not increase carbon emissions?

In my view, an important mission of this Congress is to listen to the science and the scientific community. They are telling us loudly and clearly that climate change is real, climate change is caused by human activity, climate change is already causing devastating problems in America and around the world in terms of drought, in terms of flooding, in terms of extreme weather disturbances, and we have to transform our energy system away from fossil fuel and into energy efficiency, into weatherization, into wind, into solar, into geothermal, and into other sustainable energies. When we do that, we not only lead the world in reversing climate change, but we also create a significant number of jobs.

In this last election, interestingly enough in some of the most conservative States in America, voters voted to raise the minimum wage because they understand that a minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour—here in Washington, DC, the Federal minimum wage—is literally a starvation wage. No family, no individual can live on \$7.25 an hour. I applaud all those fast food workers all over this country—people who work at McDonald's and Burger King—for having the courage to go out on the streets and say: We have to raise the minimum wage. I applaud their courage in doing that, and I applaud the many States around this country, including the State of Vermont, who have raised the minimum wage. In my view, if someone works 40 hours a week, they should not be living in poverty. I hope that one of the major priorities in this Congress is to raise the minimum wage to a living wage. Over a period of years, I would raise that minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

It is also unacceptable that in America today women who do the same

work as men earn 78 cents on the dollar compared to male workers. I think we have to address this discrimination, and we need to move forward with pay equity for women workers.

When we talk about the decline of the American middle class and the fact that millions of workers are working longer hours for lower wages, when we talk about the fact that in the last 14 or so years this country has lost 60,000 factories and millions of good-paying manufacturing jobs—when we put that issue on the table, we begin the discussion which is long, long overdue about our trade policies. That is what we have to talk about. The truth of the matter is that from Republican leadership in the White House to Democratic leadership in the White House, there has been support for a number of trade policies which, when looking at the cold facts, have failed. NAFTA has failed. CAFTA has failed. Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China—PNTR—has failed. Over the last 30 years, Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents have continued to push unfettered free trade agreements which say to American workers: Guess what. You are now going to be competing against somebody in China who makes \$1.50 an hour. If you don't like it, we are going to move our plant to China.

And many companies have done exactly that. Do we think that is fair? Do we think that is right? I don't.

We are going to be coming up with the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, TPP. Without going into great detail at this point, I have very, very serious problems with that agreement. In terms of the process, no Member of this Congress has been able to walk into the office where these documents—highly complicated legal documents—are held, bring staff in there, and copy the information. We are not allowed to do that, but we are supposed to vote on a fast-track agreement to give the President the authority to negotiate that agreement. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

So I hope we use the TPP as an opportunity to rethink our trade agreements. Trade is a good thing, but American workers should not suffer from unfettered free trade. Trade should be used to benefit the middle class and working families of this country and not just the multinational corporations.

We live in a highly competitive global economy. Everybody understands that. I think we also understand that our young people are not going to do well and our economy does not do well unless our people have the education they need to effectively compete in this global economy. It saddens me to note that a number of years ago the United States of America led the world in terms of the percentage of people who had college degrees. We were number one. Today we are number 12. The reason is that the cost of college has soared at the same time that the in-

come of many middle-class and working-class people has declined. We are in a position now where hundreds of thousands of young people thinking about their future look at the cost of college, look at the debt they will incur when they leave college, and they are saying: I don't want to go to college. I am not going to go to college. I am not going to get post-high school education. That is a very bad thing for this country. It is a bad thing for our economy. We should put high up on the agenda the issue of how in America all of our people, regardless of the income of their families, can get the education they need without going deeply in debt. This issue of college indebtedness is a horror.

I remember a few months ago talking to a young woman in Burlington, VT, who left medical school \$300,000 in debt. Her crime was that she wanted to become a doctor and work with low-income people. She shouldn't be punished with a debt of \$300,000. Other people are graduating college \$50,000 in debt. And graduate school—we have attorneys in my office who have a debt of over \$100,000. We can do better than that as a nation.

Those are some of the issues. There are others out there. But I think what is most important is that we try to listen to where the American people are today—to the pain of a declining middle-class, to single moms desperately struggling to raise their kids with dignity, to older people trying to retire with a shred of dignity.

On that issue, let me be very clear. If there is an attempt going to be made here in the Senate to cut Social Security or to cut Medicare, there will be at least one Senator fighting vigorously on that. Poverty among seniors is going up. Millions of seniors in this country are trying to make it on \$12,000, \$13,000, \$14,000 a year. The last thing we should be talking about is cutting Social Security. In fact, we should be talking about expanding Social Security.

There are a lot of issues out there. I hope we don't get lost in the weeds. I hope we focus on those issues that are major concerns to the American people. I hope very much that we have the courage to stand up to the very, very wealthy campaign contributors and their lobbyists who have enormous influence over what takes place here, and that we in fact represent the people who sent us here who are overwhelmingly middle-class and working-class people.

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

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

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, under the direction of our new majority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, we have been entrusted with a great opportunity to lead this new Congress—the 114th Congress—and it is a great honor. Maybe people assume that to be the case, but it is always a good idea to express it out loud and to say how grateful we are for the opportunity to be able to lead the 114th Congress and serve in the majority in the Senate.

It is also important to say we approach this opportunity with great humility—not just with humility but with also a determination and a commitment to address the top priorities of the American people. If there is one issue I heard about from my constituents in Texas during my reelection campaign, which concluded on November 4, it is: Why can't you guys and gals get things done? How come you can't address the problems that confront the American people? By and large, at the top of that list were jobs and stagnant wages, part-time work when people want to work full-time. They were kitchen table, bread-and-butter sorts of issues.

Now we have an opportunity starting this week to address one of those priorities, which is creating jobs with the approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline. The Keystone XL Pipeline is important for a lot of reasons, one of which is job creation. It obviously transports oil from Canada through the United States, bypassing the delivery of this oil in railcars, which has been the subject of some news reports when some of them have gone off-rail and created some accidents. The oil ends up in Southeast Texas, where we have a lot of refineries which create a lot of jobs but where that crude oil will then be refined into gasoline and jet fuel and other refined products.

This is also important because this is a supply of oil from a friendly neighbor, Canada—one of our closest allies—and reduces our dependence on oil from parts of the world that aren't quite as stable certainly as Canada is. So it is important from a jobs perspective. It is important from a geopolitical perspective and a national security perspective as well.

I went back and looked and noted that the President actually formed a Jobs Council during his first term in office. The job of the members of the council was to put their heads together and provide strategic advice on ways to boost the economy. This is the President's Jobs Council that he created during the first term of his Presidency. The group's main homework assignment was to produce this framework for job creation and enhance national competitiveness. In fact, they produced something entitled "Road Map to Renewal." I haven't Googled that or Binged it or put it in a search engine, but I bet if anybody who happens to be listening is interested, they could type that into a search engine on the Inter-

net—the "Road Map to Renewal"—and find out all they want to know about it. It includes a number of specific and practical recommendations for action.

One of those recommendations to the President was to "optimize all of the nation's natural resources and construct pathways (pipelines, transmission and distribution) to deliver electricity and fuel."

That would seem to be right in the wheelhouse of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The report added that regulatory and "permitting obstacles that could threaten the development of some energy projects, negatively impact jobs and weaken our energy infrastructure need to be addressed." So the President's own Jobs Council recognized that the key to America's energy security is to focus on America's energy development, including the transmission lines and pipelines by which this natural resource is transported.

I know perhaps coming from an energy State such as Texas we are perhaps a lot more familiar with the pipelines and the oil and gas industry because it creates so many jobs and so much prosperity in my State, but some people are a little apprehensive about the idea of a pipeline going under the ground. I invite them to again type into their favorite search engine on the Internet "oil and gas pipelines" and look at the map that pops up. It is astonishing how many existing pipelines exist in the United States today. I bet 98 percent of Americans don't even know they exist. Maybe that is too high; maybe it is 95 percent. So this is a safe and efficient and effective way of transporting these natural resources all around the United States. Obviously, if they are transported by pipeline, they don't have to be transported by railcar, including through some populated parts of our country, and subjected to some of the accidents we have read and heard so much about. These underground pipelines are a fairly common reality in our country, which leads me to be absolutely mystified at the resistance from some on the other side of the aisle and in the White House to doing what should be in our self-interests, which should be something that addresses one of the most important things the American people care about, which is jobs, and the other thing they care an awful lot about, which is security and reducing our dependence on imported energy from the Middle East.

That was 3 years ago last month that the President's Jobs Council made this recommendation. Then there is last month, when the President said this: "I'm being absolutely sincere when I say I want to work with this new Congress to get things done."

Hearing that was like music to my ears and I think to a lot of people, to have the President say he wants to work with the Congress, even though Republicans won the majority in the House and in the Senate. So imagine

my confusion and the confusion on the part of so many Americans when yesterday the White House Press Secretary said the President would veto any legislative approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Think about the timing of that statement. We had an election on November 4, we had the new Congress sworn in yesterday, the President said a month ago he wanted to work with the Congress, and then the first day of the Congress, before the legislation was even filed much less voted out of committee and brought to the floor, the President said: If you pass that, I am going to veto it. I am probably not the only one who is confused by the contradiction.

We know this pipeline would produce thousands of well-paying jobs and would enhance the supply of energy from a close ally and neighbor, as I said earlier.

So the President issued a veto threat on the day the new Congress was sworn in, and it is clear to me that notwithstanding the President's previous statements, he is either confused or he has changed his mind about cooperating with the Congress. I hope he meant what he said when he said he would work with us to try to address the concerns of middle-class families when it comes to jobs and help grow the economy and help America prosper. But I am here to say that Republicans who now have the honor and responsibility of serving as the majority in the Senate and in the House did listen. We heard the message delivered to us by the voters on November 4. We know they don't want more bickering. They don't want more dysfunction. The American people, including my constituents in Texas, want results. They want jobs. They want full-time, not just part-time work, and they want the security that would come with legislation such as this that we are considering today.

That is why this week our new majority leader, the senior Senator from Kentucky, Mr. McCONNELL, has decided we will take up this energy project as job No. 1. This is bipartisan legislation. I was watching TV this morning, I think with the Presiding Officer, and we were together and saw that Senator MANCHIN from West Virginia and Senator HOEVEN from North Dakota were appearing on a morning TV show talking about the importance of this legislation, and they estimate they have as many as 63 votes in the Senate, which by definition is a bipartisan majority, to pass this legislation.

This place can be pretty confusing at different times, and I am perplexed why the same President who said he wants to work with us is issuing premature veto threats, even though there is a bipartisan majority for this legislation.

Again, the President said he is for an "all of the above" approach to take care of our energy future. If that is true, then this should be a part of that approach. He has acknowledged the important connection between job growth

and energy development. If there is a poster child for the role that the energy sector can play in growing the economy, it is my State. Texas is a State where we are quite familiar with the oil and gas industry. We are not just sold on oil and gas because we do produce the most electricity from wind turbine of anywhere in the country. We are truly an “all of the above” State. But after years of anemic economic growth and the lowest workforce participation in four decades, does the President of the United States think this is an inconsequential piece of legislation? Why does he not work with us as opposed to remaining an obstruction to real progress the American people are crying out for?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is my first “Time to Wake Up” speech in the Senate as a Member of the minority. Being in the minority will give me the opportunity, for the first time, to use the tools uniquely available to Members of the Senate minority. On the issue of climate change, which is affecting all of our States but particularly Rhode Island, I intend to use those tools politely and persistently.

We have just left a period of partisanship and obstruction by the minority unique in the Senate’s history. I do not intend to return us to those days. My intent is to enliven the Senate and see to it that it does its duty, that we as Senators do our duty to our fellow Americans. My intent is not to blockade and degrade this great institution with obstruction for the sake of obstruction. My goal, in short, is Senate action, not Senate inaction.

Pope Francis recently spoke to the world about mankind’s care of God’s creation. He warned us against what he called negligence and inaction. I hope to be a constant spur in the Senate against negligence and inaction, specifically the negligence and inaction that is our present Senate standard of care for God’s Earth.

I know that powerful forces of negligence and inaction are arrayed against us. I know the Supreme Court’s reckless and shameful decision in the Citizens United case has empowered those forces as never before. I know there has resulted an unprecedented campaign by polluting interests of political spending and threats. It is plain to see that the polluters’ campaign has, for now at least, silenced meaningful bipartisan debate about carbon pollution. We can line up the Citizens United decision and the silence almost exactly. Coal and oil interests are enjoying massive economic subsidies—massive subsidies—and similar to any special interest, they will fight to protect those special benefits. But it can’t last. It can’t last. My confidence is

strong because our American democracy is ultimately founded in the will of the American people, and the American people understand the need to end our days of negligence and inaction. They want us to run the blockade that polluters have built around Congress.

Polling shows this. More than 80 percent of Americans say they see climate change happening right around them. Two-thirds say they would pay more for electricity if it would help solve this problem. Among Independents, that is 64 percent.

Even among young Republicans, voters get it—young voters, anyway. Under the age of 35, most Republican voters, according to polls, think that climate denial is ignorant, out of touch or crazy. Those are the words from the poll. Under 50 years of age, a majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents support action against climate change. Among all Republicans of all ages, fully half support restrictions on carbon dioxide, and nearly half think the United States should lead the fight.

Trusted American institutions get it, too—from the Joint Chiefs of Staff of our military services to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, from all of America’s major scientific societies to the experts we trust day in and day out at NOAA and at NASA, and from the leaders of America’s corporate community—Walmart and Target, Apple and Google, Ford and GM, Mars and Nestle USA, Alcoa and Starbucks, Coke and Pepsi. From all of them and from many other respected voices comes the message that climate change is a serious threat. I have confidence that Congress will soon have to heed their voices.

We might mention the recent agreement in Lima where 194 countries all agreed to carbon reductions. Does the Republican Party in the United States of America really want to be aligned with Vladimir Putin, the great international climate denier?

My confidence also comes from necessity. This simply must be done. Our human species developed on this earth in a climate window that has always been between 170 and 300 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—always. For as long as human kind has been here on Earth, carbon concentration has wobbled up and down but always within that range—through our entire history, going back a million and probably more years. We have now rocketed outside that range and broken 400 parts per million, a condition on Earth that is a first, again, in millions of years.

Our oceans, as a result, are acidifying measurably at a rate unprecedented in the life of our species. One has to go back into distant geologic time to find anything similar. If you go back that far and look at what the geologic record tells us about what life was like on the planet in those primal eras, it presents a daunting prospect.

The scientific warnings about what this means are now starting to be

matched in our experience with unprecedented rain bursts and droughts, wildfires and heat seasons, sea levels and ocean temperatures. In the tropic seas, coral reefs are dying off at startling rates; in the Arctic seas, sea ice is vanishing at levels never recorded until now. Everywhere the oceans shout a warning to those who will listen. Rhode Island, as a coastal State, as the Ocean State, is particularly hard hit. We get the land problems such as the rain bursts heavily associated with climate change, which in 2010 brought unprecedented flooding along our historic rivers. We have the sea level rise. It is expected now to be several feet by the end of the century—by a warming sea that has also disturbed our fisheries and distressed our fishing economy. “It is not my grandfather’s ocean out there,” as one commercial fisherman told me.

This only goes one way. There is no theory of how this magically gets better on its own. Every theory—and now most observations—all point to all this getting worse and perhaps very badly worse. The time for negligence and inaction has passed.

In the Senate we need to begin a conversation about this. We have to begin at the beginning. We have to agree on a baseline of facts, principles, and laws of nature that can then inform our judgments about what to do. I do not think it is asking too much of the new majority in the Senate to begin an honest conversation about carbon dioxide and climate change. I don’t think that it is too much to ask the new majority in the Senate that we undertake this conversation in a serious and responsible manner. I do not think that is extreme or unreasonable. We need to begin at the beginning in this conversation, and I will make every effort to see to it that we begin. But even as we begin, we can keep the end in sight. That end is a world where polluters pay the costs of their pollution. That in turn creates a world where market forces work properly in our energy markets. The end is a world where it is America that seizes the economic promise of these new energy technologies, where we are builders—not buyers—of the energy devices of the future. The end is a world that turns back from the brink of a plainly foreseeable risk where the consequences of negligence and inaction could well be dire for us and for the generations that follow us.

In sum, we in this Senate have a duty before us, and negligence and inaction will not meet what that duty demands. For those of you with a coal economy or an oil economy in your States, I understand and I want to work with you. There are answers to be found. But please, do not pretend that this problem doesn’t exist. That is false and unacceptable.

I must, on behalf of my State and on behalf of our future, insist that we in the Senate meet our duty, even under this new Senate majority—and I will.

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

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m. recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3:15 p.m. will be controlled by Senator HOEVEN or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to engage in a colloquy until 3:15 p.m.

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

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, along with Senator JOE MANCHIN—and actually a total of 60 sponsors—I have filed S. 1, which is the Keystone approval bill. It is a very simple, straightforward bill. This is legislation we have seen before in this body. What it does, under the commerce clause of the Constitution, is authorize Congress to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline project.

I have this map in the Chamber to show you the project. It runs from Hardisty in Alberta, Canada, all the way down to our refineries in Texas along the gulf coast.

This project will move 830,000 barrels of oil a day. Some of that will be oil from Canada. Some of that will be domestic oil from the Bakken region in Montana and North Dakota.

This is part of building the infrastructure so we can build a comprehensive energy plan for our country. We are producing more and more oil and gas in our country from shale from places such as the Bakken in North Dakota and Montana, the Eagle Ford in Texas, natural gas from places such as the Barnett and the Marcellus in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

What we are working toward is—some people refer to it as energy independence, but really energy security for our country.

What does that mean? It means we produce more energy than we consume. Obviously, energy has a global market. The market for energy is a global market. We know that. The market for oil and gas is a global market.

But the point is, working together with our closest friend and ally, Canada, we can have North American energy security where we produce more energy than we consume.

Why is that important? That is important because it is about creating jobs. It is important because it is about economic growth. It is important because it is a national security issue.

Why do we continue to rely on oil from the Middle East? Why are we con-

tinuing to send dollars to the Middle East where you have—look at what happened in Paris today with an attack by Islamic extremists. One of the ways we fight back, one of the ways we push back is we take control of our own energy destiny. We can do it. We are doing it. Why are gas prices lower today at the pump? Is it because OPEC decided to give us a Christmas present? I do not think so. It is because we are producing far more energy than we ever have before. But to continue to produce that energy, we have to have the infrastructure to move that energy from where it is produced to where it is consumed. That means pipelines. That means roads. That means rail. For electricity, that means transmission. But we cannot have an energy plan for this country that really works without the infrastructure to move that energy safely and effectively. That is what this project is all about.

So why are we here talking about it today? It seems like a pretty straightforward proposition. After all, I think there are something like 19 different pipelines that cross the border. In fact, there are millions of miles of pipelines in this country. Here is a map I have in the Chamber of just some of them. We have millions of miles of pipeline in this country. A lot of them, as you can see, cross the border.

So why are we standing here today talking about another pipeline project? Because for the past 6 years—for the past 6 years—the administration has held this project up. They keep saying: There is a process. As a matter of fact, Josh Earnest, just yesterday, said: Oh, we have a process. Congress should not intervene in the Keystone XL Pipeline approval issue because there is a process. Really, Mr. President, there is a process? Let's see. The TransCanada company filed application to build the Keystone XL Pipeline in September of 2008—September 2008. If you do the math, that is more than 6 years ago. And there is a process somehow to get to a conclusion?

So that company, which has invested hundreds of millions already, wants to build, ultimately, an \$8.9 billion project that will move 830,000 barrels of oil a day. And here they are 6 years later still waiting for approval. That is why today we are asking Congress to step forward and do what the American people want.

Keystone is not a new issue. The American people understand this issue. Poll after poll shows the American people, by a margin of about 70 percent to 20-some percent, support this project. Whom do we work for? We work for the people of this great country, and 70 percent of the people of this great country say: Approve the project. After 6 long years, where all of the requirements have been met, approve the project.

But the President, of course, continues to hold it up, and even yesterday issued a veto threat. Why? Why is he wanting to threaten a veto on a

project that 70 percent of the American people support? It is really hard to understand, isn't it? Because every time an objection comes up, we have worked to address that objection.

When there was an objection on the route, the company rerouted. So the President says: Well, it is an environmental concern. He says: Well, it is an environmental concern. Really? An environmental concern?

This is what his own study found. After 6 years of study, the State Department, in multiple environmental impact statements—three draft statements and two final environmental impact statements—this is what they found: no significant environmental impact, according to the U.S. State Department environmental impact statements.

That is not something I did. That is not something the company did. That is something the Obama administration did—repeatedly—and came to the same conclusion: no significant environmental impact. In fact, if you do not build the pipeline, you have to move that oil with 1,400 railcars a day.

Now, Canada is going to produce the energy. North Dakota, Montana, other States, are going to continue to produce the energy. So that energy is going to move. The question is, how and where? If we cannot build the pipeline, then it has to go by railcar. So do we really want 1,400 railcars a day moving that product around or do we want it to move more safely, more cost-effectively, with better environmental stewardship through a pipeline? Common sense.

Then there is this idea somehow: Well, Canada is not going to produce that oil if they do not have a pipeline. Wrong. They will move it by rail, and they will build other pipelines. Here are several that are already in the planning stages, as shown on this map. They will move it to the East Coast to refineries they have there or they will send it west and it will go to China.

Now, does that make sense? It does not make sense to the American public, which is why the American public wants to work with Canada as well as produce energy in our country to become energy secure. The idea that we would say no to our closest friend and ally, Canada: We are not going to work with you, we are going to continue to buy oil from the Middle East, and we are going to have you send your oil to China, makes no sense to the American people. And it should not. It should not. That is why they overwhelmingly support this project.

So here we are. We are starting the new Congress. I think, very clearly, in the last election, the people said: We support this project. You saw it time after time with candidate after candidate who supported this project who won their election. But on an even bigger issue, an even bigger message, the people of this great country said: We want the Congress to work together in a bipartisan way to get things done. We

want the Congress to work together in a bipartisan way to get things done.

So here we have legislation that has passed the House repeatedly with a bipartisan majority. Here we have legislation that has bipartisan support in this body. Here we have legislation that the American people overwhelmingly support, after clearly giving the message in the last election that they want us working together to get work done, and the President issues a veto message right out of the gates. Why? For whom? Whom is he working for?

So it is incumbent upon us to work together in a bipartisan way to get this legislation passed. The way we are approaching it—and I see my good friend and colleague from the great State of West Virginia is here. I want to thank him and turn to him, but I want to do it in the form of a question.

It was my very clear sense from the last election—and I think the very clear sense that we all got from the last election—that they want to see Congress working together in a bipartisan way, in an open process to get the important work of this country done.

So with this legislation, it is not just that it is about important energy infrastructure. It is also that we want to return to regular order in this body, offer an open amendment process, allow people to bring forward their amendments, offer those amendments, debate them, and get a vote on those amendments. If they have amendments that can add to and improve this legislation, great, let's have that process. Let's have that debate. Let's have those votes. Let's make this bill as good as we can possibly make it. Then the President needs to work with us. The President needs to meet us halfway and get this done for the American people.

So I would like to turn to my good colleague from the great State of West Virginia and say: Aren't we doing all we can here to try to make sure we are approaching this in a bipartisan way with an open, transparent process to try to build support for this legislation?

Mr. MANCHIN. I say to the Senator, he is absolutely correct. I thank him for this opportunity not only to work with him but also to bring the facts forward.

We have heard many times: We are all entitled to our own opinions, we are just not entitled to our own facts. If you start looking at what we are consuming today in America, at last count 7 million barrels of crude oil is purchased every day in America from other countries—7 million barrels of crude a day. So this line would possibly furnish 830,000 barrels of that dependency that we have.

Let's look and see where it comes from right now. Mr. President, 2.5 million barrels we are already purchasing from Canada—our best, greatest ally we could possibly have; the best trading partner and the No. 1 trading partner that 35 of the 50 States have. So it is not an unknown there.

But let's look at where we are purchasing some of the rest of the oil from. We purchase 755,000 barrels of heavy crude a day from Venezuela. Let's look at Venezuela, where it is an authoritarian regime. It impoverishes its citizens. It violates their human rights. It shows its willingness to put down political protests with horrific violence.

We also purchase 1.3 million barrels a day from Saudi Arabia. We all have our concerns about Saudi Arabia and a lot of the money we follow goes into the wrong hands. Forty-two thousand barrels a day from Russia—from Russia. We know their intent and what they have been doing with their energy policy. Their regime has invaded its neighbors and they armed pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine.

So when we start looking at what we are doing, those are the facts. This is not just hearsay. It is not just rumors. These are facts. We purchase 7 million barrels. When I first was approached on this 4 years ago when I came to the Senate, they said: What do you think about the Keystone Pipeline that will be bringing oil from Canada into America?

I said: Where I come from in West Virginia it is pretty common sense. We would rather buy from our friends than our enemies. I would rather support my friends, my allies, my trading partners more so than I would the enemies who use anything I buy from them—the money they receive from that product that I buy from them and use it against me.

It is pretty common sense, not real complicated. I know everybody is trying to make this complicated. Also, they talk about—we just had a caucus talking about what would happen to the oil. I know the Senator has been watching this very closely. But they said the Keystone Pipeline will strictly be just an avenue and a vehicle for exporting this oil out. They are just going to use America to bring that oil through.

We checked into that a little bit further. That is not true. Even the Washington Post gave it three Pinocchios that said it was untrue. We found out, basically, the crude oil from Canada is expected to be mixed with the domestic oil from the Bakken, from the Senator's region, North Dakota, and that the Canadian oil is a heavier crude, similar to Venezuelan oil. It will be mixed with the light crude from the Bakken, which enables it to flow much easier and be produced. Once it commingles, this oil is basically American oil. It lives and dies and basically is marketed with the policies of the United States of America. Our policy is not to export crude oil.

So I do not know why people are using this argument and scaring people that we will get no benefit. Then we talked about the jobs. They said there is not that many jobs. In West Virginia, you give us 42,000 jobs. We would be very appreciative. We will thank

you. These are all high-paying jobs. They said: Well, they are only contract jobs.

But yet I hear everybody talking, Republicans and Democrats, about building roads and building bridges. Those are also seasonal types of jobs. Those are also contracting jobs. They are not permanent jobs, but we are tickled to death to get them. That is the whole trade union. All the unions that I know of are supportive of this piece of legislation. Every working man and woman whom we keep talking about who supports themselves and their family supports this legislation.

Why we are running into such a roadblock I have no idea. Then when we put the map up—the other map we had. I said: When I first heard about this pipeline, I thought it was an anomaly that we did not have many pipelines in America. Then we put up this map. This is what we have in America today. So this is not foreign to any of us in any State we have pipelines, many in West Virginia and all through this country.

Then we look at public support. We think: Here we are Democrats and Republicans. We look at the polls, and we live and die by the polls, they tell us, or we should. But the bottom line is that if we do believe in the polls, this has been a consistent poll. It has not varied for over 5 years. We have not seen the numbers fluctuate that much.

Overwhelmingly, we have Americans in all aspects of the political realm—whether you are a Democrat, Republican or an Independent—who overwhelmingly support this pipeline. So I cannot see the objections to it. I was very disappointed when the President said he would veto it—or the White House once we said we would go through this process.

I think the Senator and I talked about this. We thought this is going to be an open process. I was encouraged by my colleagues on the Democratic side who have some good amendments, I believe, that should be considered and I believe would pass and enhance the bill. We only need four more—four more Senators on my side of the aisle who can see the benefit of a good bill, a good process with good amendments to strengthen this bill, to put us in a position that is veto-proof.

That should be our goal. Basically, we should not be deterred by the White House or the President saying already that they are going to veto this bill. Let's see if we can make this bill so good that when we are finished with this product and this process 2 or 3 weeks from now, we will have a product that basically we are all proud of, that the American people are proud of and will support, and maybe, just maybe, the White House will change its mind.

I am hopeful for that. I appreciate all the effort and work. We are working very well together. At last count, we had nine Democrats working with our Republican colleagues. That puts us at

63. I am hopeful to get four more at least that will look at the virtues of this and the assets and what it will do for our country.

My main goal is this: Energy independence makes a secured and protected Nation. Anytime we do not have to depend on oil coming from other parts of the world—and the resources we give them when we purchase their product, they use those resources against us time after time again. We can see now, with the oil prices dipping, the benefits the consumers in America receive, the strength that gives our country.

I am so thankful for that, that we are getting a break. I think we can continue to make that happen for many years to come if we are able to be smart strategically in what we do today. I think the Senator spoke about the environment. He might want to touch on that again. But most of this oil is being produced now, some way or another, and it is also getting transported in different ways and means.

The bottom line is there is no significant environmental impact. I think the State Department has even done five studies that show that to be true. I said also 2.5 million barrels a day are being purchased from Canada today. Refineries in Illinois are now refining this product. They said we should not do it. We have been doing it for quite some time. We are using this product. With technology we are using it better. It has helped us be more independent of foreign oil.

That is No. 1, the security of our Nation. Being an American, and for West Virginians, the security of our Nation is first and foremost what we support. That is why I think we see a tremendous amount of people from the Mountain State, I say to the Senator, who support this piece of legislation.

We are going to work diligently. We have a long way to go, but I think the facts are on our side. We are all entitled to our opinions, but we cannot change the facts.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from West Virginia not only for his support on this project but for his willingness to work hard, to work together to find bipartisan solutions, whether it is this legislation or other legislation. That is what it is incumbent upon us to do. It is not easy, but we have to be willing to engage in the hard work it takes to get to this legislation, to get these solutions in place for the American people.

I again thank the Senator for his leadership. I look forward to continuing to work with the Senator and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come to good solutions. That is what this effort is all about.

I want to turn to the Senator from the State of Montana. The pipeline project goes right through his State. Here is somebody who has dealt with the issue on the House side of Congress and who has the project in his home

State. So he is talking on behalf of people where the pipeline is right there.

I would like to turn to him and ask: What are the people in Montana saying? It is fine for somebody far removed from a project to say I am OK or I am not OK with it, but how about the people who are right there on the site? They are directly affected. Tell us what is the sense in the Senator's home State? What is the Senator hearing when he talks to people?

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I applaud, first of all, the Senator from North Dakota for his leadership on this most important issue and his commitment to making it a priority for this Senate, the first bill introduced into this Senate. I also applaud the Senator from West Virginia; one example of, as we sit in this Chamber today, Republicans and Democrats discussing and supporting the Keystone XL Pipeline.

I reiterate many of the comments expressed by my colleagues and convey the importance of this pipeline, because as the Senator from North Dakota mentioned and showed on his map, the very first State the Keystone Pipeline enters as it comes from Canada is the State of Montana. Let me tell you something. It is not just a pipeline. This is also changing the way of life and economic stimulus for our great State.

I spend a lot of time traveling around the State in my pickup. As I drive around Eastern Montana, where the Keystone Pipeline will travel, I recognize this is a lifeline for many of our rural communities. In fact, Circle, MT—Circle, MT, is a small town of around 600 people. It is located in McCone County. It is one of six Montana counties that the Keystone XL Pipeline will run through. Circle, similar to a lot of small communities in Montana, has experienced the same economic and population declines that other towns have faced in recent years.

In fact, the county has significant infrastructure needs that have gone unresolved in the wake of a shrinking tax base. For towns such as Circle, the Keystone XL Pipeline is not just about energy. It represents economic opportunity and hope for the future. You see, McCone County alone would see \$18 million in property tax revenue from the Keystone Pipeline construction. That is just in the pipeline's first year of operation. That is money for neighborhoods. It is money for roads, not to mention the influx of jobs for the area.

Another \$45 million would be distributed among five other Montana counties, and \$16 million would go to Montana's schools and university systems. You see, the Keystone XL Pipeline means lower energy costs for Montana families, for our senior citizens, and for small businesses.

In Glasgow, MT—I remember traveling in my pickup into Glasgow. I met with the NorVal Electric Co-op. They told me that if the Keystone Pipeline is approved, they will hold electric rates flat for their customers for the next 10

years. That is several thousand Montana families up in the northeast part of our State.

The reason for that is because they will supply electricity to these pump stations on the Keystone Pipeline. If the Keystone Pipeline is not approved, those ratepayers will see an approximate 40-percent increase in their utility rates over the next 10 years. That is a potential increase of \$480 per year for the average household in Montana.

As the Senator from North Dakota mentioned, 100,000 barrels a day of the oil traveling through the Keystone Pipeline will be Montana and North Dakota oil. That supports the Bakken formation. With the revolution of hydraulic fracturing, what it is creating now is lower gas prices at the pump today.

Montanans know this pipeline is not just a lofty idea or some kind of DC-based rhetoric. It is hope for the people of my State. It is a tangible result and a solution that Montanans deserve. I have to tell you, that is why it is so disappointing that once again we are seeing the President and some Senate Democrats playing political games and perpetuating the 6 years of gridlock that have held back this job-creating project.

Rather than putting the American people first, the President has threatened to refuse the people of Montana their right to determine their economic future. It took the Canadians just 7 months to approve their end of the Keystone Pipeline. It has taken this President more than 6 years. That is 6 years without the hundreds of good-paying jobs that will be created in Montana and thousands more across the Nation.

That is 6 years without millions of dollars in critical revenue for Montana schools, for infrastructure, for teachers. That is 6 years without the answers and actions that Montanans deserve. I think the pipeline checks every box of common sense. It is environmentally sound, it creates jobs, it is economic opportunity, and it is going to help us move toward North American energy independence.

So the question is: Why are we still waiting? The people of Montana, the people of this country have said they have had enough. That is why we are here today speaking in support of this important project. I am proud the Senate is taking steps to move forward with the Keystone XL Pipeline. I know the House intends to do the same shortly. President Obama can continue to obstruct progress on American jobs and American energy independence, but the American people have sent a strong message that they are ready to remove any roadblocks that President Obama intends to put in the way.

The time for partisanship, the time for political games is over. It is time the Congress and this government gets to work for the American people and starts getting results for this country.

The polls are clear. Sixty-seven percent of the American people want the Keystone Pipeline approved.

Seventy-five percent of Montanans want the Keystone Pipeline approved. Prior to serving in Congress, I spent 28 years in the private sector, where we were focused on getting results in the real world. It seems only in DC are we outside of the real world of doing something and getting results on behalf of the American people. That starts with approving the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mr. HOEVEN. I would like to thank the Senator from Montana again. We are hearing from somebody who is there, who is talking to people, where this project is going to be located, one of the States it would pass through. I thank the Senator for his perspective and for his hard work and commend him for being here and for his continued efforts not only to work with our caucus but to reach out to the Democratic caucus as well and find common ground on this important issue—something the Senator from West Virginia said a minute ago; that is, let's focus on the facts. I think the more understanding we create as to what the facts are, the more this gets done on the merits.

I turn to the Senator from Wyoming—somebody who has long experience with energy, somebody who comes from an energy State, a State that produces a variety of sources of energy, and pose the same question to him. In terms of focusing on the facts, whether it is the environmental aspect, whether it is the jobs, whether it is making our country energy secure, talk to us a little bit about the importance of this kind of vital infrastructure—projects such as Keystone—for our country.

Mr. BARRASSO. First let me thank and congratulate the Senator from North Dakota for his dogged determination in fighting for these American jobs and for energy security for our country. I am so grateful for his hard work. He has really been tenacious in this fight to get this bill past the Senate and to the President's desk.

I also congratulate my friend and colleague from Montana. Last fall the American people elected 12 new Republican Senators to work in this body, and he is one of them. I have had the opportunity to travel with him in Montana. He has a great background. He is innovative, and he is energetic. He is going to do a tremendous job not only for his State and the Rocky Mountain West but for the entire United States as a Member of the Senate. He just took his oath yesterday. We were able to hear from him today, and he is going to be a remarkable addition to this body.

I know that all of these dozen new Republican Senators are as eager as the rest of us in the new Republican majority to start fulfilling our obligation to the people we represent. Americans elected a Republican Congress because they wanted a change. They wanted to change the direction that

President Obama and Democrats have taken the country.

Under the Democratic leadership over the past several years, the Senate was a place of dysfunction and gridlock. More than 40 jobs bills passed by the House of Representatives in the last Congress never even came up for a vote in the Senate. Many of those bills had overwhelming bipartisan support, just like this one we are debating today. Those days are over. That is a completely unacceptable way to run the Senate.

All of us here in the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, have been given an opportunity to work together and to get things done. That is what the American people told us on election day, that is what they are expecting from us, and I believe that is what they are demanding of us.

The poster child for the gridlock and dysfunction of Washington has been the Keystone XL Pipeline. For more than 6 years it has been a symbol of out-of-control Washington bureaucracy. The State Department has absolutely refused to do its job and to make any kind of decision on the pipeline's application.

The Keystone XL Pipeline has also been a symbol of gridlock in the Senate. A small group of extreme environmentalists with deep pockets has bullied Democratic Members of the Senate to block a bill that would move this important jobs project forward.

According to the latest figures, America's labor force participation rate is woefully low; it is just 62.8 percent. Are Democrats in this body satisfied with that number? Is the President of the United States, President Barack Obama, satisfied with this pathetic participation in America's labor force? I can say that people in my State, Republicans all across the country—they are not satisfied. That is why we are determined to push job-creating legislation such as this Hoeven bill to advance the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The President said there is no benefit to this important infrastructure project. During a press conference last month, President Obama actually claimed that the project is “not even going to be a nominal benefit to U.S. consumers.” Apparently, that is what the President believes. Well, he is wrong. Just ask the Obama administration's own State Department. It says the pipeline would support more than 42,000 jobs. Some of those are construction jobs. Some of them are in the transportation field and the manufacturing field. It includes jobs at warehouses, restaurants, and motels along the route. Does President Obama think that a good job is not even a “nominal benefit” to the Americans who could get those 42,000 jobs from this pipeline?

According to the Congressional Research Service, there are already 19 pipelines operating across U.S. borders. Why is this the one that suddenly offers not even a nominal benefit, according to President Obama? Why does

President Obama refuse to make a decision about whether to approve the pipeline? Well, the President has taken a position on this bipartisan bill—according to the White House Press Secretary on Tuesday, the President will not sign this bill once Congress passes it.

The State Department has done one study after another showing that the pipeline would create jobs and that it would have no significant environmental impact. President Obama has been downplaying those benefits and threatening to veto the bill. That is not Presidential leadership.

Now Republicans are going to show the leadership that the American people have been asking for and that they voted for last November. We are going to bring a bill to the floor and force the President to finally do something by putting it on the President's desk.

Democrats have been playing politics with this pipeline bill. The Republican majority will now get it done. We are going to allow a vote on this project. We are going to allow Senators to offer amendments. What a unique situation in the Senate. We are going to let everyone say which side they are on. This will be a bellwether decision. Are Members of the Senate in favor of 42,000 jobs for American workers or are they in favor of more Washington delay? Democrats will have a chance to make their arguments. The extreme opponents of this project will make misleading claims to try to discount the pipeline's benefits, and they will try to stoke people's fears. We have seen it all before.

At the end of the day, here is what this all comes down to—four things:

No. 1, the Keystone XL Pipeline will support more than 42,000 jobs in the United States.

No. 2, it will be a private investment of \$8 billion—not taxpayer spending, private spending.

No. 3, it will have minimal effect on the environment.

No. 4, the pipeline is actually safer than other methods of getting that oil to market.

Congress should approve this pipeline and pass this bill and the President should sign it.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is a job creator. It has bipartisan support. It has been stuck in Washington's bureaucratic gridlock.

It is interesting. When I listen to and think of the President and his comments about jobs and what the impact is going to be, it makes me think of what the president of the Laborers' International Union of North America said in the summer 1 year ago. He was scheduled to testify today at the Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing—a hearing that now the minority, the Democratic acting leader, Senator DURBIN, objected to having yesterday. He objected to just a hearing and a discussion.

It is interesting. There was a press release from the president of the union,

who was quoted on the subject of the economic benefits associated with the construction of the pipeline. Terry O'Sullivan said:

The President [President Obama] seems to dismiss the corresponding economic opportunities that would benefit other laborers, manufacturers, small businesses, and communities throughout Keystone's supply chain.

He said:

The Washington politics behind the delay of the Keystone XL pipeline are of little concern to those seeking the dignity of a good, high-paying job. We renew our call to the President [President Obama] to approve this important, job-creating project without delay.

This is what a job is. It is about someone's dignity, their identity, and their self-worth. People take a lot of personal pride in their work and in their job. I think we ought to approve it. I am ready to vote for it.

The American people have been clear: They are tired of Washington's gridlock and delay, and they are tired of the direction President Obama has been taking this country. The American voters demanded change, they demanded action, and this Republican Congress is going to deliver just that.

So I say to my friend and colleague from North Dakota—and I see that the chairman of the Senate energy committee has arrived—thank you both for your leadership. To the Senator from North Dakota, former Governor there, thank you for your leadership on energy in North Dakota. And to the senior Senator from Alaska, the chair of the energy committee, thank you specifically for your leadership. I look forward to working with both of you specifically on this project and on additional issues that will bring American energy security and jobs to our Nation.

Mr. HOEVEN. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his comments today and for his continued hard work in support of the issue. I look forward to working with him again to get this done for the American people.

I turn to our leader on the energy committee, the chairman of the energy committee, the Senator from Alaska, who understands energy. She is from another State that produces a huge amount of energy for this country, wants to produce more, and can produce more but only with the infrastructure to do it. Isn't that what we are talking about here today? This country can have more jobs, more economic growth, and more energy that we produce right here at home. But, Senator, don't we need the infrastructure to move that energy as safely and as cost-effectively as possible?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. To my friend and colleague from North Dakota, it is all about infrastructure.

In Alaska, my home State, we have boundless supplies of oil and natural gas, but until we were able to build that 800-mile pipeline across two mountain ranges to deliver oil from Alaska's North Slope to tidewater in Valdez, that oil didn't do anybody any good.

Today, the oil pipeline in Alaska is less than half full.

So we are working to try to figure out how we can do more as a State to contribute more to our Nation's energy needs, to allow us as a State to be producing more for the benefit not only of our State but of the Nation as well, but we are held back by policies that limit us. So it is policies and it is infrastructure. It is absolutely infrastructure.

We are trying to move Alaska's natural gas to market as well. But, again, if we don't have the infrastructure, it sits. It stays. It doesn't benefit consumers, it doesn't create jobs, and it doesn't help any of us out.

So Keystone truly is about infrastructure. I thank my colleague from North Dakota for leading on this issue for years now and for reintroducing the legislation, S. 1, the first bill to be filed in the Senate this year. It will be among the first bills to pass in this new Congress and appropriately so. This is a measure that not only enjoys bipartisan support in the Senate, it enjoys broad support over in the House, and it enjoys support across our Nation for great reason. So why are we where we are? Why are we looking at this situation and saying there is so much frustration going on?

Senator MCCONNELL has promised to allow open and full debate on the Keystone XL Pipeline project, the legislation in front of us. I think we are looking forward to it. As the chairman of the energy committee, I am looking forward to robust debate on Keystone XL and what it will provide for this country in terms of jobs and in terms of opportunities.

We are all frustrated. We are all frustrated by a President's decision—or unwillingness, really, to make a decision about this pipeline. It has been 2,301 days and counting since the company seeking to build it submitted an application for this cross-border permit—2,301 days. That is more than 6 years ago.

Yesterday the President was finally able to make a decision. He issued his statement of administration policy. In his statement he says that by advancing this measure, it would cut short consideration of important issues.

Excuse me, Mr. President—cut short a process that has been underway for over 6 years? That is amazing to me. Again, when we talk about decisions, let's get moving with this.

The President seems to be advancing some pretty interesting things when it comes to the energy discussion. He was quoted in an interview just this morning in the Detroit News. He basically told Americans that we are enjoying lower energy prices right now, but we had better enjoy them fast because they are not going to last.

He said we have to be smart about our energy policy. I am with you there, Mr. President. We do have to be smart about our energy policy. But to think the suggestion is just enjoy low prices while they last, take advantage of the

sunshine—no. Mr. President, your energy policies need to make sense for today, for the midterm, and for the long term. For the long term and for the short term we need to make sure we have infrastructure that will allow us the energy supply that is so important to this country. It amazes me we would be so defeatist with this approach.

We have an opportunity in this Congress. We had an opportunity this morning in the energy committee. We had scheduled a hearing on the Keystone XL Pipeline. We were going to hear testimony on original legislation to approve Keystone XL as we did last year on a bipartisan basis. But as Members in the body know, there was objection to that unanimous consent. We had to postpone the hearing. I quite honestly was surprised. It would have been nice to know an objection was coming before we had organized the hearing, before we had invited witnesses, before we had completed all the preparation. We are going to do our best in our committee to adhere to regular order. I hope our colleagues will work with us.

I wish to introduce for the RECORD some of the testimony we received from the three witnesses who graciously agreed to participate in our hearing we had scheduled for this morning.

Andrew Black, president and CEO of the Association of Oil Pipe Lines, described pipeline safety issues and the gains Keystone XL would bring to the American economy in terms of jobs and payrolls. An excerpt from his testimony is as follows:

While there is much controversy associated with the Keystone XL Pipeline, the facts are that pipelines are the safest way to transport crude oil and other energy products. A barrel of crude oil has a better than 99.999 percent chance of reaching its destination safely by pipeline, safer than any competing transportation mode.

A second witness we had invited was David Mallino, legislative director of the Laborers' International Union of North America. In his testimony he explored the positive jobs impact of the pipeline and responded to some environmental concerns. Here is an excerpt from Mr. Mallino's testimony:

Regardless of characterizations by the project's opponents, it is indisputable that jobs will be created and supported in the extraction and refining of the oil, as well as in the manufacturing and service sectors.

We also invited Greg Dotson, vice president for energy policy at the Center for American Progress. He submitted his testimony in opposition. We made sure we had opposition testimony presented as well. He discussed climate change. He responded to the arguments in favor of Keystone. While he may be an opponent of the pipeline and as usual would have been outnumbered by the supporters of the project, I will still reference his testimony for the RECORD.

A copy of the testimony of Mr. Black, Mr. Mallino, and Mr. Dotson

may be found on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee Web site.

I do believe that had we been allowed to hold the hearing this morning, we would have heard very strong bipartisan statements in support of Keystone XL from many members of our committee. The majority of our committee supports this pipeline and is already cosponsoring this bill.

I will close my comments by assuring members of this body, we are in day 2 of this 114th Congress. This is not going to be our only debate on energy legislation over the years. I know it has been a long 7 years since we have had comprehensive energy legislation. A lot has changed. A lot of people have great ideas to improve and reform our policies, and I welcome those ideas. I am looking forward to the debate, to advancing these proposals through the energy committee. I think we can make significant progress on supply and infrastructure, on efficiency, on accountability. Those areas in particular should be the forum or the focus of an energy bill that we would hope to report out.

We are going to work hard on the energy committee. We are planning on legislating. Keystone XL is a natural point for this Congress because it has been delayed for so long, 2,301 days. It is clear this President is not going to make a decision on this, so the Congress needs to make it instead.

I look forward to coming back to the floor in a couple days when we have S. 1 officially in front of us. We are going to have good debate on it. I look forward to working with my colleague who has been so determined on this issue for so long. His leadership has been key in getting us here, but we need to finish it. We need to make the connects so we can move the resource and provide jobs for this country and for our allies and friends in Canada.

I again thank my friend and look forward to these next couple days and the next couple weeks where we will have an opportunity to put this before the American people on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Alaska for her leadership on the Energy Committee and also for her willingness to work in an open way on these important issues.

Across this body, on both sides of the aisle, there should be a deep appreciation for her willingness to bring these bills forward so we can debate them and we can offer amendments and we can build the kind of energy future for this country our people so very much want to have.

The Senator from Alaska is somebody who lives and breathes this topic when we talk energy—somebody who is truly committed to it but truly committed to an open dialogue on all types of energy, giving everybody an opportunity to weigh in and build the best energy plan for our country that we possibly can.

So I extend my thanks to her and also my appreciation, and likewise say

I look forward to working with her on this issue and on so many important energy issues.

I wish to turn to my colleague from the State of North Dakota and ask her for her perspective on why this project is so important for our country and for the energy future of our country.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota.

I rise to join my colleagues on the other side who represent States that know a little bit about energy and certainly my colleague from North Dakota who has led this effort from the first day he arrived in the Senate.

It is no big surprise because we know we can have much oil out there and we can know where the reserves are, but if we don't have the infrastructure to move that oil to market, what it does is drive up prices. I haven't checked today, but oil price is below \$40 a barrel. If someone doesn't think that is supply-demand economics 101, they don't understand what is happening. The fact is we have known reserves in places such as North Dakota and Alaska, we have produceable reserves in Canada, and we have an opportunity to continue to develop these resources in a way that benefits in an incredible way American consumers.

Think about what is happening for the average American family today when they fill up at the pump, and think what that means and how that will ripple through our economy as discretionary income grows. But that is only possible when we have a known supply that is moveable, it is transportable, it is in fact capable of reaching its market or reaching the refinery. That is what we are talking about when we are talking about North American crude oil.

We are going to hear a lot of stories about this debate about how this crude oil is more dangerous to the environment, how it is different than Bakken crude. Guess what. It is different than Bakken crude, but it is not different than the crude refined in refineries in Texas, where we will be displacing crude that is refined from Venezuela, and we are going to be replacing it with crude that is produced by our friends to the north, Canada.

So infrastructure is a huge part. In fact, that is why, when Secretary Moniz declared the Quadrennial Energy Review, he looked at not just where is the supply and the future of supply of energy, he focused on transportation of energy because that is a huge part of our challenge.

As we look at the Keystone XL Pipeline—and we say Keystone XL because a lot of people don't know we already have a Keystone Pipeline. We already have a pipeline that is bringing oil sands from Canada into the United States for refining. A lot of people don't realize this is the second pipeline that will be named Keystone, and it is a pipeline that has been in process for literally a decade, from their planning process to the time they actually ask for a permit.

I am going to address some of the concerns of some of my colleagues as we hear them so we can kind of lay the groundwork.

We frequently hear the Keystone XL Pipeline will be exporting, and all of the oil that is coming down will find its way directly into China. That gets said all the time, and guess what the Washington Post gave it: three Pinocchios. It is not true.

It is going to get refined. It is going to get refined in the United States of America, it is going to displace Venezuelan crude, and it is going to find its way into the American markets and continue to provide that supply that is in fact today driving down costs. So let's get rid of the first argument that this is going to somehow not benefit American consumers, that this is going to somehow find its way onto a barge immediately upon arrival into the gulf. That is the first thing we need to be talking about, which is let's actually have a fact-based discussion about what this pipeline is.

The second argument we will hear is that this somehow will have a huge effect on climate and on climate change, and for those reasons alone it ought to be rejected. Let's take a look at what the experts who have repeatedly looked at this very issue—because one thing we know that I think is beyond dispute when we talk to the officials in Canada, is that we are going to produce oil sands oil from Canada, regardless of whether we build a pipeline. That oil is going to find its way into the transportation system and quite honestly is going to burden our rail transportation system because we haven't figured out how to build a pipeline.

So all those who want to confuse the issue about the pipeline versus the development in Canada of the oil sands, let's separate it. Let's look at what in fact is the decision before the United States of America; that is, the decision of whether it is in our national interest to approve a permit for a pipeline.

I will say this over and over again as we pursue this debate: This is a pipeline and not a cause. So many people have talked about it, and I think in some ways this process has gotten exaggerated on both sides. I mean it is going to be a panacea and prevent all unemployment or it is going to be the worst thing—an Armageddon for the environment. And you know what, this is a pipeline. This is a transportation system. This is an essential part of the infrastructure to bring an important fossil fuel into our country so that it can be refined and utilized by the American people. And by the way, knowing those reserves are there, knowing that we have the reserves we have in the Bakken, and knowing that we are developing more untraditional sources of supply has driven the price down and has created the situation we have today that is saving consumers millions and billions of dollars in our country.

The second thing I want to say is people say we have to respect the process. I respect the process as part of what I have done my whole life—I am a lawyer. So you hear repeatedly about due process and having to go through due process. Occasionally, the process is broken—6 years to site a pipeline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The time reserved for the Senator from North Dakota has expired.

Mr. HOEVEN. I ask unanimous consent to exceed for 5 minutes to wrap up the colloquy.

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

Ms. HEITKAMP. Back to the process. When you look at 6 years, we fought World War II and defeated the greatest evil known to mankind, Adolf Hitler, in 4 years, and we cannot site a pipeline in 6 years. The process is broken.

The other issue that is raised is that the pipeline is somehow going to disrupt what is happening in Nebraska. I think the Senator from North Dakota was absolutely correct to put as part of this bill a provision in that says that all bets are off if Nebraska reverses the decisions that were made in Nebraska. But somehow that is getting forgotten in this debate.

So we are going to have a lot of hours of debate, I think, on Keystone XL Pipeline. We are going to have a lot of amendments.

I am grateful for the opportunity to go back to regular order. I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about amendments. But I want so badly for us to have a reasoned and fact-based debate—not an emotional debate but a debate that basically puts this pipeline issue in perspective.

I want to congratulate my colleague from North Dakota for the success in raising this issue and bringing this issue to an early debate. I hope that we will be able to move this along and that we will be successful in getting enough people to provide the momentum to achieve ready approval.

Finally, I want to say why it is so important that we do it now. Those of us who live in the northern tier, we know what construction season is, and you cannot put pipeline in the ground in September and October—not without a lot of additional costs with which we have already burdened this pipeline. We need to get this decision done, get this going in the spring as early as possible so plans can be made and people can begin their construction season and we can begin to rationally address the infrastructure needs for development of our energy resources in North America.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HOEVEN. I want to thank my colleague from North Dakota for speaking on the important points she made, and that is that the energy we are producing in this country is helping consumers at the pump by bringing down prices.

I want to turn to my colleague from Kansas who wants to close this colloquy and address the very point that we need this infrastructure to keep doing that, to benefit our consumers at the pump.

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank my colleague, Senator HOEVEN, for leading this colloquy and I thank the distinguished Senator from North Dakota for her remarks.

In the Washington Times today, Jack Gerard, the President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute said:

Falling oil prices have empowered the United States and weakened OPEC and Russia. The result is that increased U.S. production in North Dakota has “fundamentally reordered the world’s energy markets.”

This is a national security issue. This is an issue where Russia—I think the break-even point for them is about \$110 a barrel. Right now it is at \$48. They never dreamed this would happen. Their entire economy is at stake, and hopefully it will cause Mr. Vladimir Putin to start thinking about some of his adventuresome antics around the world.

In addition, the pipeline represents not only everything that the distinguished Senator has brought out but it is a symbol that says that we are going to go ahead with all of our energy production. We are going to go “all of the above” here. This is not either-or with green projects or fossil fuels or whatever. So if you vote for the pipeline you are voting for something that really affects our national security.

Think about potential exports to Europe. They could be less dependent on Russia and so Vladimir does not have his choke hold on them, if you will. There is a lot going on with regard to this issue that people haven’t thought about.

Additionally, the President told us at a meeting with a group of Republicans 2 years ago—2 years ago—that he would make a decision between 2 and 3 months and that it was just a matter of tying down some legal matters. Now he says he is not for it and obviously he will never be for it. You can make whatever conclusion you want to make about that, but it is not a good conclusion. I thank the Senator.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from Kansas, and with that we will wrap up the colloquy. I would like to thank my colleagues, and we will be back.

Again, we are looking to work with all of our colleagues here in an open process to offer amendments and pass legislation that is important for the American people.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and with that I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order the time until 4:15 p.m. will be controlled by the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. President. I take this time—and some of my colleagues will be joining me—to ex-

press concerns about the first major bill that has been brought to the floor under the Republican leadership dealing with the Keystone Pipeline.

I want to start first by talking about the so-called urgency for us to take this issue up and circumvent the normal process. The normal process would be for this matter to continue through the regulatory review, which is there to protect the public interest. To short-circuit that in an unprecedented way and for Congress to approve a site for a pipeline is not the way it is done.

In order to consider this there must be some urgency. First, let me just share with my colleagues what the American people are experiencing with the price of gasoline at the pump. It is at a historic low over the last 5 years, with \$2.19 the average price for gasoline at the pump. So there is certainly no urgency if we are talking about trying to get more oil in the pipelines for the cost of energy. By the way, I think we all understand that our actions here in this Congress will have very little to do with the availability of oil in the near term. It would take some time to construct the pipeline and for it to have an impact on the level of oil that is available.

The second issue that I find somewhat puzzling with regard to the urgency of this issue—and some of my colleagues have pointed it out on both sides of this issue—is that there is already a pipeline that is available that could be used. Admittedly, it is not as efficient as what they are trying to do with the Keystone, and that is to make tar sand, the dirty oil we have, more economically available and feasible to be transported. That makes little sense under today’s economics and the price of gasoline makes it even more hard to understand. Construction of this pipeline and the approval of this Congress will have very little to do with the consumer availability of energy here in the United States.

Now, compound the fact that we are talking about Canadian oil, the dirtiest oil—the tar sand oil—that is being transported through the United States because Canada doesn’t want to transport it through their own country because of their concerns on the environmental side and which ends up in Texas at the Port Arthur, TX, refinery. Now for those who are not familiar, that is a foreign tax zone which is tax-free. So, therefore, the oil can go into the international marketplace in a very easy manner. Valero, which is one of the potential users—consumers of this oil—is building export facilities in order to handle more exports to the international communities. None of us can speak with any definitive judgment as to how much of this oil will in fact end up in the United States, but the fact that they are transporting it to a southern port—they are not transporting it to a refinery in the Midwest, which would be a lot closer and a lot cheaper—is a clear indication this oil will end up in the international marketplace and will have very little to do

with energy security in the United States. I think we have to make that clear.

We are bypassing the normal process to allow Canadian oil to enter the international marketplace more efficiently with risk to the United States and very little benefit. Why are we doing this? We hear it will give us jobs. I am for job creation. I would like to see us work on a transportation bill where we could create millions of jobs in a far more harmonious way than we can with Keystone. I am for clean energy policies which will create great permanent jobs in the United States. But the job creation estimates for the Keystone Pipeline are that it will create literally a few thousand temporary construction jobs. They are not permanent jobs. There are only a handful of permanent jobs. So it isn't about creating jobs, and it is not about energy security in the United States.

What is this all about? There is very little benefit compared to the risk factors in the United States. Let me talk about the risk factors which give most of us concern. The environmental risk factors have us the most concerned. Tar sand is a multitype of product that is literally mined and processed into a crude oil which is very thick and dirty. There are different ways to get to the tar sand, but one way to get to the tar sand is to take the topsoil off the property and mine it through a strip mining process. That has been done in Canada, and it is still being done in Canada, causing tremendous environmental damage. It is, in and of itself, a process that most of us would want to avoid. Yet this legislation does nothing to prevent that type of processing of the tar sands. Tar sands produce a very thick oil product that can only make its way through the pipeline by it being processed, and it creates additional risk factors because of the way it is processed.

There have been oil spills of the tar sands product. We have seen it in Arkansas and we have seen it in Michigan. It caused devastating damage. It is not easy to clean up. It is not like normal crude. It causes permanent-type damage to a community, as we saw most recently in Michigan. So there are risks associated with taking Canadian oil in an effort to make it easier to reach the international marketplace, unlikely to end up in the United States, creating few permanent jobs. Frankly, a lot of us don't quite understand this.

As I said, it is dirty. The use of this tar sands oil produces a much larger carbon footprint than other crude oil, causing additional problems in dealing with climate change. We have a serious issue with what is happening to our environment. I am proud to represent the State of Maryland. Most of the people in my State live in coastal areas. They know the consequences of global climate change. They understand it. They know what is happening along the coast, and they know we are at risk.

They understand the fact that we have inhabitable islands in the Chesapeake Bay that have disappeared and are disappearing. They understand that our seafood crop, the blue crab, is threatened because the warming water affects the sea grass growth which is critically important for juvenile crabs to survive. They understand the risks and want us to be responsible in dealing with climate change. They also know that we are getting a lot more extreme weather in the east coast of the United States and throughout our country.

They know on the west coast. They are getting dry spells and wildfires. They understand the risks. They understand the cost to America of not dealing with climate change issues. The costs involve not only direct damage that is caused but also in the global consequences of climate change.

So we are worried about our carbon fingerprint. We are proud the United States is joining other countries in dealing with climate issues.

I applaud the work of President Obama, in the most recent international meetings, when he dealt with climate change issues. We need to do a better job.

Why are tar sands an issue? Because tar sands produce more carbon emissions than other types of oil. It is about 81 percent higher than the average use of crude oil and 17 percent higher than the well-to-wheels basis of producing oil. That is a concern. That translates into millions and millions of cars—the difference between that and having millions of cars on the roads. It is an important part of our leadership.

If we are trying to establish international credibility and then we facilitate more of this dirty tar sands oil, what message does that send? What type of cooperation should we expect to receive?

I am trying to figure out why this is the new priority of the leadership in the Senate. Why is this the very first bill to come to the floor of the Senate when, as I pointed out earlier, there seems to be no urgency. I have been told it has been delayed and delayed and delayed. The reason it was delayed is because the construction operating firm changed the routes of the pipeline. They had one route mapped out—and no alternative routes—but didn't check to make sure it didn't violate State laws. Now they are wondering why it is taking so long. It is taking so long because they had to change the route. It is not the governmental process that is slowing this down, it is the fact that the proposers of this route did not have their ducks lined up in a row before they submitted the route that could be approved. We are still not sure about that.

As I said earlier, for Congress to dictate where a pipeline should be is wrong. That is not our role. We should let the regulatory process, which is there to protect the public, go forward. It would also trample on States rights.

There are some serious legal challenges pending in State courts as to the actions of a Governor dealing with a location issue. That should be resolved by the courts, and we are pretty close to having that ruling. It is very unclear to me what impact this legislation would have on States rights as it is currently being litigated in the State court. Why are we doing that?

The delays have been caused because of the way this pipeline was suggested. The regulatory process that would protect the public safety is moving forward. Considering oil and gasoline prices at the pump there is no urgency. There are serious environmental risk issues.

I understand the State Department report has been mentioned frequently. Look at the State Department report and look at what it is saying about the price for oil. The per barrel price of oil was a lot higher when they did that report. Lower costs have a major impact on what we are talking about here.

I urge my colleagues to let the process go forward. I thank the President for spelling out his concerns and his desire to let the regulatory process reach its conclusion, let the State court decision go forward as to what the State believes is the right thing to be done here. I believe all of that will give us a much better process than us trying to substitute our judgment for what should be done through a regulatory process.

I am going to close by quoting from one of the individuals, Ben Gotschall, from Nebraska, who has been very active on this issue. He said:

The Cowboy Indian Alliance shows our cooperation and our working together in mutual respect. That shared bond proves that we pipeline fighters are not just a few angry landowners holding out, or environmentalists pushing a narrow agenda. We are people from all walks of life and include people who have been here the longest and know the land best.

I think that is pretty instructive. This is a broad coalition that is concerned about the actions that are being contemplated in the Senate—actions that would overrule landowner rights, actions that would take away State rights, actions that would shortcut regulatory process, actions that help private companies directly without taking into account the regulatory protections that are provided under law.

It seems rather unusual that this would be the very first issue where we could work together in a bipartisan way to expand opportunities for energy in the United States. Clean energy produces a lot more jobs, and we could be talking about incentives so we could have a larger production of clean energy in the United States. Democrats and Republicans would clearly work together to come up with ways we could have more efficient use of energy.

Democrats and Republicans could clearly work together in that regard. There are so many areas where we could work together and show the

American people that we understand their frustration with Congress's failure to deal with many of the issues in the last Congress, but instead it looks as though we are picking an issue that is more about special interest than it is one that will help deal with an energy problem in the United States and has the potential to broaden our environmental challenges in the United States.

For all of those reasons, I hope my colleagues will reject this approach and let us go back and work together to find a common way to help us deal with our environment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the issue we are going to be debating over the next 2 weeks in the United States is really a story about two gasoline stations.

In July of 2008, the average price of gasoline in America was \$4.11 a gallon. In January of 2015 in the United States of America the price is \$2.21 a gallon. That is great for every driver across our country, and that is great for Americans who buy home heating oil. They are saving a lot of money this winter and the predictions are that it will continue throughout the rest of this year. That is great.

However, it is not great for the oil companies. It is not great for the Canadians. It is not great for Wall Street. They are not happy with this incredible benefit that is now flowing to Americans all across our country who now have a gasoline station that has \$2.21, on average, as to what people will pay.

What does the Keystone XL Pipeline truly stand for? It truly stands for the Keystone "export" pipeline. That is right. What the Canadians want to do is to basically construct a straw through the United States of America, bring that straw down to Port Arthur, TX, which is a tax-free export zone, and then export the oil out of the United States.

Why would they want to do that since they advertise that it is all about North American energy independence? There is a simple reason. The price of tar sands oil in Canada right now is getting \$13 less per barrel than it would get in the United States, but it is \$17 less than if they can get it into ships and send it around the world. That is the very simple economic strategy of the Canadians.

How do I know this? Because during a hearing in the House of Representatives I asked the head of the pipeline for TransCanada: Would you accept an amendment to keep all of the oil here in the United States of America? He said: No.

By the way, I asked the same question of the head of the American Petroleum Institute. He said: No.

There is a lot of false advertising going on here. On one hand they say this is great for American energy independence. On the other hand, when we say let's have an amendment on the floor of the Senate that will keep the Keystone oil here in the United States, they say: Oh, no. They are absolutely opposed to that.

Logically, we have to reach the conclusion that their goal is to get the extra \$17 per barrel which they will get if they can start selling it to China, Latin America, and other parts of the world. That is the plan. There are no two ways about it.

By the way, that should be their plan. That is what their responsibility is—it is to the shareholders of their companies.

What is the strategy for the American driver? That is whom we have a responsibility to. We need to make sure they get the lowest possible price. My goodness. They have been tipped upside down and had their money shaken out of their pockets at gas stations all across our country for years, and finally the day of deliverance has arrived and they have \$2.21, on average, for the price of a gallon of gas, and now we are told the price of oil is too low. We have to get it back up again. Of course, the best way of accomplishing that is to start exporting oil because the less there is in North America, the higher the price will be for American drivers and for American home heating oil consumers. It is a very simple plan.

It is not about helping Americans at the pump. It is about pumping up the prices so oil companies will have new profits. It is very simple. If it is not that, then just accept an amendment that keeps all the oil here. It is a simple thing to do, and then the rhetoric matches with the reality of what is going to happen. The oil should stay here, but they will not accept that, and they have made that clear.

This is all part of a wish list we are going to see on the Senate floor for the rest of this year. This is the Big Oil wish list of 2015. We start with the Keystone "extra large export" Pipeline to take oil and send it out of the country. Then they want to lift the ban on the exportation of U.S. crude oil, which is now on the books—a ban on U.S. crude oil. This is Canadian oil. There are no laws against that. Then they want to begin exporting our natural gas, even as consumers and businesses and natural gas vehicle firms are enjoying record-low prices, which in turn is transforming the American manufacturing sector and our relationship with natural gas in America. They essentially want to declare war on the Environmental Protection Agency and their authority to protect Americans against pollution and to make sure the fuel economy standards of the vehicles which we drive continue to rise and rise.

Honestly, if we want to tell OPEC we are serious and keep them awake at night, then we should keep the oil here

so the prices will drop, and we also need to increase the fuel economy standards and consume and import less oil. But that is not going to be the agenda that comes out here on the Senate floor from the majority. It is going to be just the opposite. In a way, that is why this first debate is actually a preview of coming attractions of what will be happening out here on the floor of the Senate throughout the course of this entire year.

There is kind of a Keystone kabuki theater that is debuting this afternoon on the Senate floor. The reality is this bill will never become law. The President is going to veto this bill. There are not enough votes to override the veto. So instead what we have is just a preview of this entire agenda, notwithstanding the fact that they are not going to be supporting a national renewable electricity standard or dramatically increasing the energy efficiency laws in our country or making sure the Canadians finally have to pay their taxes for the oil liability trust fund which they are now exempt from. American oil companies have to have a trust fund—in the event there is an oil spill in the pipeline—but the Canadians don't have to have a trust fund. Over 10 years, that is \$2 billion that American companies have to pay, which Canadians don't have to pay, to make sure that something is done to protect against oil spills.

Back when the Democrats took over the House and Senate in 2007, we worked together to put together a comprehensive energy bill. What was in it? Dramatically increasing the fuel economy standards of the vehicles in our country, having a new biofuels law to expand that production, and making sure that energy efficiency in America was enhanced dramatically. We worked on a bipartisan basis, and President Bush, a Republican, signed that bill because it was done in a bipartisan, "all of the above" approach.

That is not what this is all about. This is not "all of the above"; this is "oil above all." That is the strategy the Keystone Pipeline embodies—shouts. It is not balanced. It is not where we should be as a country.

So I say let's have an amendment to the bill that keeps the oil here in the United States. Let's have this debate here on the floor. Let's match up the rhetoric of the oil stays here with protection of the American economy and the American driver within the reality that we voted for that to keep it here. Let's have that debate. I think it is important because otherwise the Canadians and the American Petroleum Institute will continue to engage in false advertising about where this oil is going to be used.

So from my perspective, this is the dirtiest oil in the world that is going to contribute mightily to an expansion of global warming. We know that 2014 was the warmest year ever recorded in history—notwithstanding the fact that it snowed here in Washington, DC, yesterday—the warmest year in history. That

is what I think the green generation out there knows as they look at this issue. What are we going to do to make sure we avoid the catastrophic consequences of a dangerously warming planet?

We have to engage in preventive care of this planet. There are no emergency rooms for planets. We have to engage in preventive care to make sure we do not pass on this ever-increasing danger to future generations. We are going to get a chance here to debate this. The Keystone Pipeline is a good example of how there is not, in fact, a balanced policy.

I asked for an amendment on the floor so that we can debate whether the oil goes through a pipeline from Canada—the dirtiest oil in the world—like a straw, potentially causing environmental catastrophes across our country, and then gets exported around the rest of the planet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. MARKEY. I think this is the kind of debate the American people expect the Senate to engage in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the truth is that despite our rather big egos, much of what we do in the Senate is pretty quickly forgotten. People have a hard time remembering what we did 2 months ago or yesterday, let alone last year. But I have a feeling that the Keystone Pipeline bill we are now discussing and decisions that will be made about that bill will not soon be forgotten—not by our children or our grandchildren and not by people throughout the world and, in fact, not by history. I believe that decades from now our kids and our grandchildren will scratch their heads and they will say: What world were these people—Members of Congress—living in in 2015 when they voted for this Keystone Pipeline? How did it happen that they did not listen to the overwhelming majority of scientists who told us we have to cut greenhouse gas emissions, not increase them? I think our kids and our grandchildren will be saying to us: Why did you do that to us? Why did you leave this planet less habitable than it could have been?

The issue we are dealing with today is of huge consequence. I fear very much that a majority of the Members in the Senate and in the Congress are poised to make a very dangerous and wrong decision. In that light, I am more than delighted that President Obama has indicated he will veto this Keystone Pipeline bill if it is passed.

Climate change is one of the great threats not only facing our country but facing the entire planet. It has the capability of causing severe harm to our economy, to our food supply, to access to water, and it raises all kinds of international national security issues.

Let me read an excerpt from a letter sent to the Senate back in October 2009:

Observations throughout the world make it clear that climate change is occurring, and rigorous scientific research demonstrates that the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are the primary driver. These conclusions are based on multiple independent lines of evidence, and contrary assertions are inconsistent with an objective assessment of the vast body of peer-reviewed science.

Moreover, there is strong evidence that ongoing climate change will have broad impacts on society, including the global economy and on the environment. For the United States, climate change impacts include sea level rise for coastal states, greater threats of extreme weather events, and increased risk of regional water scarcity, urban heat waves, western wildfires, and a disturbance of biological systems throughout the country. The severity of climate change impacts is expected to increase substantially in the coming decades.

This statement was signed by virtually every major scientific organization in this country, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Meteorological Society, and many other scientific organizations.

Scientists are not the only people warning us about the danger of climate change. Hear what the Department of Defense has to say about the impact of climate change on international and national security. What they point out—and I think what every sensible person understands—is that when people are unable to grow the food they need because of drought, when flood destroys their homes, when people throughout the world are forced to struggle for limited natural resources in order to survive, this lays the groundwork for the migration of people and international conflict. That is what the Department of Defense tells us.

Now, given all of the scientific evidence and given the concerns raised by our own Department of Defense and national security experts all over the world and given the fact that the most recent decade—the last 10 years—was the Nation's warmest on record, one would think that when the National Climate Assessment warns us that global warming could exceed 10 degrees Fahrenheit in the United States by the end of the century—can we imagine this planet becoming 10 degrees Fahrenheit warmer and what this means to the planet? When sea levels have already risen by nearly 7 inches over the last century and are expected to rise another 10 inches to 2.6 feet by the end of the century—when all of that is on the table, one would think this Senate would be saying: All right, we have an international crisis. How do we reverse climate change? Instead, what the debate is about is how we transport some of the dirtiest oil in the world and thereby cause more carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

I suspect our kids and our grandchildren will look back on this period and say: What world were you living in? Why did you do that to us?

It would seem to me that what we should be debating here is how we impose a tax on carbon so that we can break our dependence on fossil fuel. That is what we should be discussing, not how we increase carbon emissions. We should be discussing what kind of legislation we bring forward that moves us aggressively toward energy efficiency, weatherization, and such sustainable energies as wind, solar, and geothermal. That is the kind of bill that should be on the floor. We should be having a debate about legislation that makes our transportation system far more efficient, that expands rail and helps us get cars and trucks off the road. We should be having a debate about how we can create the kind of automobiles that run on electricity and make them less expensive and how we can get cars running 80 to 100 miles per gallon. Those are the kinds of debates and that is the kind of legislation we should be having on the floor, not how do we expand the production and the transportation of some of the dirtiest oil on the planet.

In my view, the U.S. Congress in a very profound way should not be in the business of rejecting science because when we reject science, we become the laughingstock of the world. How do we go forward? How do we prepare legislation if it is not based on scientific evidence? And to say to the overwhelming majority of scientists that we are ignoring what they are telling us and we are going to move in exactly the wrong direction I think makes us look like fools in front of the entire world. How do we go forward and tell China and India and Russia and countries around the world that climate change is a huge planetary crisis at the same time as we are facilitating the construction of the Keystone Pipeline?

So I am delighted the President will veto this legislation if it happens to pass the Congress. Our job now is not to bring more carbon into the atmosphere; it is to transform our energy system away from coal, away from oil, away from fossil fuel, and toward energy efficiency and sustainable energy. That should be the direction of this country, and we should lead the world in moving in that direction.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BURR, and Mr. KING pertaining to the introduction of S. 108 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MEDICARE/MEDICAID ANNIVERSARY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in his first legislative message to the 89th Congress in 1965, 50 years ago I believe this month, President Johnson laid out what would become a key marker in the legislative fight for Medicare and Medicaid. Ultimately, the bill was passed in July 1965. President Johnson signed it in Independence, MO, I believe at the home of former President Truman.

President Johnson, in his legislative message to the House and Senate in 1965 said:

In this century, medical scientists have done much to improve human health and prolong human life. Yet as these advances come, vital segments of our population are being left behind—behind barriers of age, economics, geography or community resources. Today, the political community is challenged to help all our people surmount these needless barriers to the enjoyment of the promise and reality of better health.

Fifty years later we have made historic improvements to our health care system, thanks in large part to a couple of things: No. 1, medical research, funded both by taxpayers and often by drug companies, foundations, universities, and others; and No. 2, because of social insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Before the passage of Medicare—listen to these numbers—30 percent of our Nation's seniors lived below the poverty line, only half our Nation's seniors—at this time 50 years ago, early in 1965, had health insurance, and insurance usually only covered visits to the hospital in those days.

Now, thanks to Medicare, 54 million seniors and people with disabilities have access to guaranteed health care benefits.

Let me share a letter a constituent named Donald, from Toledo, OH, wrote to me last Congress, when the House of Representatives threatened to turn Medicare into a voucher program as part of its budget proposal. Donald wrote:

Thank you for your efforts to keep Medicare from being privatized. At the age of 63, I am going to be eligible for Medicare before too long and looking at the affordability of health care is critical. If Medicare is privatized, we will not be able to afford it any more than we can afford private insurance today.

That is the whole point. The reason there is a government health care program, the reason there is social insurance, is because people, as in 1965, only half the people in the country had any kind of health insurance.

It is a little disconcerting to know that after working all our lives and living comfortably, that in our retirement years we will either have to try to find full-time employment to be in a position of affording Medicare, privatized Medicare. I am sure I don't need to tell you how difficult finding a

job is these days when you are an older citizen.

I know normally I am writing you from the opposing side, but this time we definitely see eye to eye.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 150 or 160 years ago, said that history has always been a fight between conservators and innovators. There is a legitimate place in society for both, creating the tension that moves our country one way or the other. Conservators want to protect the status quo. They want to preserve privilege and want to hold on to their wealth. Conservators fundamentally don't believe the government should be involved in ensuring a decent standard of living. Innovators—what we might call today progressives—understand our society is only as strong as its most vulnerable members.

If we go back to the key congressional votes—the key congressional votes, not necessarily final passage—to advance debate of a Medicare bill in 1965, most Republicans voted no. Then it was the John Birch Society that opposed it. Today, 50 years later, it is the tea party that opposes social insurance.

Some of the most privileged interest groups in Washington opposed the creation of Medicare. But they were wrong. As I said earlier, 30 percent of seniors lived below the poverty line prior to Medicare. Medicare helped to cut the poverty rate in half by 1973, only 8 years after its passage.

We see the same attacks today. Budgets proposed in the House of Representatives over the past several years have tried to dismantle Medicare, by and large by privatized vouchers, to help offset the cost of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. They would privatize the program and undermine its guaranteed benefits.

Ohio's seniors have worked hard, they have paid into Medicare, and they deserve a program that truly meets their health care needs. They deserve better than the underfunded voucher that would put them at the mercy of the private insurance industry. Thankfully, we have been able to block this plan in the Senate. We will continue to do that.

Interestingly, the Affordable Care Act has provided significantly enhanced benefits for Medicare beneficiaries. In my State alone more than 1 million Ohio seniors have gotten free—meaning no copay, no deductible—preventive care benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

If you are on Medicare and your doctor prescribes an annual physical or asks that you be given an osteoporosis screening, a diabetes screening—all the things doctors order for their patients for preventive care—those are provided under the Affordable Care Act and under Medicare, no copays, no deductible.

Many of the efforts to privatize and voucherize Medicare mean taking away preventive care, taking away prescription drug protections added to Medi-

care under the Affordable Care Act. Others want to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67.

I was in Youngstown, OH, a couple of years ago at a townhall. A woman stood up and said: I hold two jobs, and I am barely making it.

I think the two jobs were close to minimum wage, so she was probably making \$8 an hour in one and \$8.50 in the other. She was a home care worker and doing something else. She had tears in her eyes.

She said: I am 63 years old. I need to stay alive until I can get health insurance.

This was maybe 5 years before we passed the health care law. Imagine being 63 years old and your goal in life is just to find a way to stay alive so you can have health insurance.

Some geniuses in the House and maybe in the Senate think it is a good idea to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67. Just because we dress like this and have jobs that aren't all that physical other than walking back and forth from our offices to the floor, just because we have this kind of lifestyle and just because we are privileged enough to get to dress like this and get paid well and get to do these incredibly privileged jobs as Members of the Senate—there are a whole lot of people in this country whose bodies won't last until they are 67. They can't work until they are 67 to get Medicare. They are working at Walmart, standing on floors all day, they are home care workers, they are working at fast food restaurants, they are construction workers.

Both my wife's parents died before the age of 70 in large part because of the work they did, the kind of heavy, strenuous work, and the chemicals they were exposed to and all that. So when I hear my colleagues propose to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67—and I know they say we can't sustain these entitlements, whatever that means. What they really want to do is raise the eligibility age. To raise the eligibility age for Medicare to 67, they need to take Abraham Lincoln's advice. His staff wanted him to stay in the White House and win the war, free the slaves, and preserve the Union. President Lincoln said: No. I need to go out and get my public opinion bath.

What did he mean by that? He meant: I have to go out and talk to people. So when I hear Senators say they want to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67—whether they are in Gallipolis or Troy or Zanesville, OH—when I hear people say they want to raise the retirement age or the Medicare eligibility age—what I think when I hear Senators say that is they are not out talking to real people.

We know we can do a number of things to improve and strengthen these programs so future generations can continue to move into retirement years with a sense of security.

Last Congress I was an original co-sponsor of the Medicare Protection

Act, which would make it difficult for Congress to make changes that would reduce or eliminate guaranteed benefits or restrict eligibility criteria for Medicare beneficiaries. With several of my Senate colleagues, I will submit a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, a reminder that these programs must be protected, not weakened, not rolled back, not undercut, not privatized, not voucherized—if that is a word—a reminder that all these programs must be strengthened.

As we move forward in protecting social insurance, we should remember President Johnson's words when speaking to the House and the Senate 50 years ago: Whatever we aspire to do together, our success in those enterprises—and our enjoyment of the fruits that result—will rest finally upon the health of our people.

TRIA

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I think it is important to understand that TRIA is legislation that we need, which is the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act. We passed a bill with only two or three “no” votes in the Senate last year. But what the House of Representatives has done looks like what they will probably do in the future: They have taken legislation which is really important to the country, which passed the Senate on a bipartisan basis, and they have loaded on to that legislation extraneous provisions.

Frankly, that is what people in this country are tired of—when legislation that must pass and has overwhelming support is about to pass, special interest groups come and add their language to it. That is exactly what happened here. If the House of Representatives gets its way, if Wall Street gets its way, it is the first step to begin to slice away at the Dodd-Frank legislation.

When I hear a number of my colleagues in this body and down the hall in the House of Representatives say they support progrowth policies and deregulation, what they are saying is they want to roll back the protections for consumers in Dodd-Frank, the Wall Street reform bill, and they want to weaken the provisions in the rules that govern Wall Street behavior. I don't quite understand it because what I do understand is less than a decade ago, because of Wall Street greed, because of Wall Street overreach, because this body and the body down the hall weakened the rules on Wall Street, and because the previous administration appointed regulators who would really look the other way, we had terrible damage done to our economy. About a mile north of the ZIP Code I live in in Cleveland had the highest number of foreclosures of any ZIP Code in the United States of America because of deregulation, because of Bush appointees to many of the bank regulatory bodies.

So I caution my colleagues, as we accept this legislation, the TRIA legisla-

tion—and I assume we will—to understand that is not going to be behavior that we are going to sanction in the Senate, where they take must-pass legislation and they find ways to attach to this legislation rollback of consumer protections and weakening of Wall Street rules. That is what got us into this. We can't let these special interests who have so much power in the House of Representatives, who have so much influence in the House of Representatives—we can't let them have their way on legislation like this.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MEDICARE/MEDICAID ANNIVERSARY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to highlight a Presidential message that was delivered to the Congress 50 years ago today. But before I go into the importance of Medicare and Medicaid—facts that I think all my colleagues and I can agree to—I would like to take a brief look back at where America has been and recall what life was like for so many of those who were poor, disabled, vulnerable, and uninsured or unlucky before these programs, which today are a lifeline, Medicare and Medicaid, were in place.

Those were the days of the “poor farm” and the “almshouse.” These were the places where the poor and uninsured would go for care, very often on the outskirts of town—out of sight, out of mind. It was not a happy choice, and more often than not for seniors and the poor it was the only choice.

These were places that provided care and was often very basic and very often it carried a stigma. The accommodations were sparse at best. In return for health care and housing, residents were expected to work on an adjoining farm or do housework or other chores to offset the costs of their stay. This was the primary option for someone whose extended family could not offer care—or didn't want to offer care. This was not thousands of miles away from the shores of our country, it was right here in the United States. Not very many Americans remember those days. In fact, I think it is fair to say hardly anybody under 50 remembers those days.

President Johnson submitted his message to the Congress 50 years ago today, and fewer than half of America's older people even had any health insurance. In that era, it was not uncommon for older people who got an illness to be treated like second-class citizens, and many older people without family to care for them and no health care

coverage ended up destitute and would often end up on our streets.

It was a time no one wants to revisit. It is a time sociologists described as another America—where 40 to 50 million Americans were poor and lacked adequate medical care and were socially invisible to a majority of the population.

I bring this up because I wish to spend a few minutes this evening talking about how far America has come. I want to make sure that we in the Congress—as we look to this anniversary of these critical programs, Medicare and Medicaid, and the vivid difference they made in the daily lives of Americans, we should all spend just a few minutes talking about the health care advances we have seen over the years.

Here are a couple of facts: Today with rock-solid essential medical services, 54 million Americans—or virtually every senior and those with disabilities—now has access to what we call—and I remember this from my days as director of the Gray Panthers—the Medicare guarantee. It is a guarantee of secure Medicare benefits for our old people.

Medicaid has made a critical difference for 68 million of the Nation's most vulnerable, including more than 32 million kids, 6 million seniors, and 10 million individuals with disabilities. Because Medicare and Medicaid made health care possible for millions of people, they have also been the catalyst for innovation in treatment that benefits people of all ages. I emphasize that fact because it is often not appreciated that Medicare, as the flagship Federal health care program, often is the spark, the catalyst for innovations that get copied in the private sector.

For example, in the first 30 years of Medicare alone, the Medicare Program helped to reduce deaths from heart disease by one-third for people over age 65. By providing coverage and access for millions, these programs became catalysts for change in how medicine is practiced and paid for Americans across the age spectrum and helped us to find the root causes of disease and perfecting better therapies to treat. As time has marched on, these programs evolved and improved and the rest of the health care system followed.

In 1967, Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment programs, comprehensive services for all Medicaid youngsters under age 21, was created, and that has helped to improve our country's health, starting with our children. In 1981, home and community-based waivers were established so States could provide services in a community setting, allowing individuals to remain in their home for as long as possible.

Every State uses this option to facilitate better care and services to the Medicaid population, and I think it is fair to say that every single senior—and this is something I heard again and again and again in the those Gray Panthers days—would say: Why can't we

have the option to have good, quality, affordable care at home because it will also save money compared to the alternative, which is institutional care.

In 1983, Medicare took one of many big leaps away from fee-for-service with the advent of a new reimbursement system for hospitals. It was called prospective payment—a system that pays hospitals based on a patient's illness and how serious it is and not solely on how much it costs to treat them. This was a radical change at the time. Today it is commonplace and acceptable.

In 2003, the prescription drug coverage benefit was added to Medicare, providing access to necessary medications to those most likely to need them. As a result of greater access to prescription drugs, senior health has dramatically improved.

In 2010, as a result of health care reform, preventive services became free to patients, prescription drugs became cheaper for beneficiaries who fell into what was known as the doughnut hole, and again Medicare moved further away from fee-for-service, volume-driven care and on to paying for quality and value. Not only was that good for seniors, it was good for taxpayers because it helped to extend the life of the Medicare trust fund.

Finally, in 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid began releasing for the public to use actual claims data. Access to this information, in my view, is a key element of the challenge with respect to understanding the costs of care, the variations and the way medicine is practiced across the country. Clearly, access to Medicare claims data is part of the path to improving quality and holding down the costs of health care in our country.

These examples are easy to forget—the most recent ones—because now they are commonplace, but that makes them no less remarkable.

I will close with one last point that I hope will be part of what guides the work of the Senate in this session.

I see the distinguished Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN. He is to be joined by the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, shortly.

I will just close my remarks with respect to these critical programs by pointing out—and I hope it will be remembered frequently as big issues are tackled in this Congress—Medicare and Medicaid were bipartisan efforts, and the enactment of these programs shows that the Congress can craft bipartisan solutions to complex and politically difficult problems. That is what happened in 1965 when the Senate passed a legislation creating Medicare and Medicaid by a 68-to-32 vote after the House approved it 3 months earlier on a 313-to-115 vote.

As this Congress gets underway, and as the leaders come to the floor to discuss a critical aspect of how we move ahead, I hope all of us take a page from that particular playbook. Let us recognize that with Medicare and Medicaid there was an opportunity to come together to tackle a big issue, and my

hope is that this Congress will not use partisan tactics when the solutions have to be bipartisan, and that is the lesson.

Despite sharp differences and partisanship, the Congress of the days I have been speaking of was able to rise above the culture and those challenges to find agreement and make our country a better place.

As this new Congress begins, I hope we can use that 50-year-old spirit to strengthen, protect, and improve Medicare and Medicaid to keep that guarantee strong, ensure health care to those who need it most, and protect a program that has been a lifeline to millions of Americans.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The acting minority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Oregon for reminding us of this 50th anniversary of President Johnson's recommendation to Congress to create Medicare and Medicaid. Today, as we witness 54 million people benefitting in America from Medicare—in my State some 2 million—and 68 million from Medicaid—in my State 3 million—we understand the importance of this program. Almost half the people who live in Illinois are covered with health insurance by Medicare and Medicaid. When we add in the Affordable Care Act, we have literally half the population of my State.

It is a testament to the fact that when we made a commitment and followed through on a bipartisan basis, as the Senator from Oregon said, we created programs that had vibrancy and really served people for a long time.

I read something the Senator from Oregon is, I am sure aware, of, which is that because Medicare was a complete Federal payout, it was implemented throughout the United States almost within a year. It took 17 years for every State to join the Medicaid Program. It wasn't until 1982 that the last State joined into Medicaid—Arizona—because there was a State contribution. Look at the experience we have now with the Affordable Care Act, where some States are reluctant to join in. So that is part of it.

The point I wish to get to and which the Senator made so well is how it changed life for senior citizens and for those who were poor. It gave them a chance for quality health care that didn't bankrupt them in the process.

Medicaid has been a dramatic success. For critics of government health programs and critics of Medicaid, the 2011 survey found that 70 percent of physicians across America accept Medicaid patients. People would believe from some of the critics that the opposite is true. Seventy percent accept Medicaid patients. So it is a good program. The reimbursement attracts 70 percent of physicians willing to treat them.

The last point I will make to the Senator from Oregon particularly, if he happens to know a good bookstore, I would suggest he consider the new

book by Dr. Gawande entitled "Being Mortal." I am virtually through it, and he really challenges us to look beyond health care for the elderly to where they are living, how they are living, and how they are being treated.

So I am hoping we can rise to another level of conversation beyond Medicare and Medicaid, celebrating this anniversary but accepting a new responsibility to that generation of seniors who served America so well.

I thank the Senator from Oregon for reminding us of this anniversary.

I am proud to stand with my colleague Senator WYDEN today in support of his resolution honoring President Johnson's commitment to creating the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

Fifty years ago today, President Lyndon Johnson sent a message to the Congress which he titled "Advancing the Nation's Health."

In that message the Johnson quoted President Thomas Jefferson who in 1787 wrote, "without health there is no happiness. An attention to health, then, should take the place of every other object." Those words were true then, true in 1965, and true now.

President Johnson was concerned about the health of our nation because of the staggering effect that no insurance and chronic disease had on the elderly. At that time, 80 percent of people over 65 were disabled or lived with a chronic disease. Unfortunately, 50 percent of people over 65 did not have health insurance.

From his concern and effort came the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Both programs created a social safety net that has improved the lives of millions of Americans.

Today more than 54 million people are enrolled in Medicare, 2 million in Illinois. The vast majority of Medicare enrollees are seniors. They receive quality, affordable, care and access to prescription drugs because of the President Johnson's commitment. In this new Congress, we should work together to ensure this highly successful program remains in place for future generations.

Medicaid has been a lifeline for millions of people, especially for children. Sixty-eight million people are enrolled in Medicaid, 3 million in Illinois. And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 600,000 became newly eligible for the program last year. Medicaid makes it possible for more than half of the babies born in Illinois to be delivered with medical care. Some argue that Medicaid isn't working because physicians refuse to see people in the program. But the data says that isn't true. 2011 data shows that 70 percent of office-based physicians nationwide were willing to see new Medicaid patients. I call that a success.

As we remember President Johnson's tireless effort today, we should also keep in mind our commitment to these vital programs and work together to strengthen them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the 50th anniversary of Medicare as well. I commend the remarks of both the senior Senator from Oregon and the senior Senator from Illinois about this 50-year anniversary since President Lyndon Johnson first sent his message to Congress that would later become both the Medicare and Medicaid Programs. As was referred to earlier, there are 100 million Americans benefitting, including over 4.8 million in my home State of Pennsylvania, when we consider both programs together.

When President Johnson sent this message, he said:

Our first concern must be to assure that the advance of medical knowledge leaves none behind. We can—and we must—strive now to assure the availability of and accessibility to the best health care for all Americans, regardless of age or geography or economic status.

So said President Johnson all those years ago, and how prescient he was and how knowledgeable he was as well to be thinking about the future and to be considering advances in technology and holding all of us to the highest possible standard when it came to health care for older Americans or health care for the poor and for children.

We know that in the ensuing 50 years we have strived to make that vision of President Johnson a reality, first, of course, with Medicare and Medicaid; and then more recently—“recently” meaning the last 20 years or so—with the Children’s Health Insurance Program, known by the acronym CHIP; and then followed by, a number of years after that, the Affordable Care Act, which included an expansion of the Medicaid Program, providing coverage to millions more Americans.

We know that when Medicaid was created in 1965, the U.S. Government put forth a promise to ensure that the most vulnerable members of society would have access to health care. Whether it is our children or whether it is frail, elderly members of our family living in nursing homes or individuals with disabilities, Medicaid ensures they have access to health care. So we have made great strides.

Let me quote again from President Johnson:

Poor families increasingly are forced to turn to overcrowded hospital emergency rooms and to overburdened city clinics as their only resource to meet their routine health care needs.

Again, President Johnson was way ahead of his time in dealing with what was then a problem and still remains a problem but less so a problem because of Medicaid.

This important lifeline—Medicaid—to health care, having been created 50 years ago, was strengthened in 2010 and helps ensure that millions of Americans have access to quality, comprehensive health care.

We must continue to make sure that we guarantee Medicaid remains strong

and provides such needed care to those in our society who often get overlooked. We must never forget that Medicaid is the program that many middle-class families and lower income older citizens who are on assistance and people with disabilities turn to when they need extended nursing home care, sometimes referred to as long-term care. So when it comes to long-term care for poorer families as well as long-term care for middle-class families, often millions of Americans are turning and have turned for their long-term care to Medicaid, and we should remember that.

As we celebrate this 50th anniversary, let’s always ensure that both Medicare and Medicaid remain strong programs that so many Americans can turn to. We must do our best to be true to Lyndon Johnson’s vision “that the advance of medical knowledge leaves none behind.” It is a very important anniversary, and it is a good reminder about our obligations in the Senate to protect both Medicare and Medicaid.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR SENATE COMMITTEES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with Senator DURBIN on behalf of the Democratic leader.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in the 112th Congress the Senate adopted a new funding allocation for Senate committees. This approach has served the Senate for the past two Congresses when the Democrats controlled the majority. I believe this approach will continue to serve the interests of the Senate and the public, regardless of which party is in the majority, by helping to retain core committee staff with institutional knowledge. This funding allocation is based on the party division of the Senate, with 10 percent of the total majority and minority salary baseline going to the majority for administrative expenses. However, regardless of the party division of the Senate, the minority share of the majority and minority salary baseline will not be less than 40 percent, and the majority share will not exceed 60 percent. It is my intent that this approach will continue to serve the Senate for this Congress and future Congresses.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this approach met our needs for the last two Congresses, and I too would like to see it continue. In addition, last Congress, special reserves was restored to its historic purpose. We should continue to fund special reserves to the extent possible in order to be able to assist committees that face urgent, unanticipated, nonrecurring needs. Recognizing the tight budgets we will face for the foreseeable future, it is necessary to continue to bring funding authoriza-

tions more in line with our actual resources while ensuring that committees are able to fulfill their responsibilities. I look forward to continuing to work with the majority leader to accomplish this.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a joint leadership letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, January 7, 2015.

WE MUTUALLY COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS: The Rules Committee is to determine the budgets of the committees of the Senate. The budgets of the committees, including joint and special committees, and all other subgroups, shall be apportioned to reflect the ratio of the Senate as of this date, including an additional ten percent (10%) from the majority and minority salary baseline to be allocated to the chairman for administrative expenses.

Special Reserves has been restored to its historic purpose. Requests for funding will only be considered when submitted by a committee chairman and ranking member for unanticipated, non-recurring needs. Such requests shall be granted only upon the approval of the chairman and ranking member of the Rules Committee.

Funds for committee expenses shall be available to each chairman consistent with the Senate rules and practices of the 113th Congress.

The division of committee office space shall be commensurate with this funding agreement.

The chairman and ranking member of any committee may, by mutual agreement, modify the apportionment of committee funding and office space.

MITCH MCCONNELL.
HARRY REID.

REMEMBERING EDWARD BROOKE

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a former member of this Chamber, and note with pleasure the passage of S. Res. 19.

Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts passed away on January 3, 2015 at the age of 95. I was deeply saddened by his loss. I had the privilege of hosting an event last year celebrating America’s Black Senators. We invited Senator Brooke, but he was unable to attend. We did honor him that day, because as one of the two African Americans to currently serve in this great body, I know that I stand on the shoulders of giants like Senator Brooke and those who have come before me in public service. Senator Brooke was a true trailblazer, and those of us who followed cannot thank him enough. As the first African American Senator to be popularly elected to serve, he was a true inspiration.

From his service to our Nation beginning as a captain in the U.S. Army during World War II, to his service as chairman of the Finance Commission for the city of Boston and then as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ attorney general before coming to the Senate, Senator Brooke was a committed public servant. Having served

for two terms in the Senate, he was a powerful voice for housing reform and advancing issues like economic opportunity for all Americans. Recognized with both the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2008, our Nation was truly blessed by his life and accomplishments, and his place in history will stand the test of time.

May God bless the family of Senator Brooke.

REMEMBERING MARIO M. CUOMO

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the life and extraordinary legacy of former New York State Governor Mario M. Cuomo.

Governor Mario Cuomo inspired a generation of Americans to be unafraid of idealism. He was a role model for Americans with big dreams, and he was a champion for the causes and values that we cherish in this country.

He was a tenacious competitor on the baseball diamond, the basketball court, and in the halls of the capitol in Albany, but it wasn't merely the abstract desire to win that drove him. The quest for justice and fairness in our country motivated him to act, and he used his pulpit as a public servant to push for a better world for all Americans.

Throughout his career, he spoke powerfully to us about the value of equality, and the visionary words of his most famous speech, the Tale of Two Cities, still hold true today, decades later.

Governor Cuomo was a brilliant and generous mentor, and I was honored that he took a risk and helped me when I was an untested Congressional candidate a decade ago. Whenever we met, he was always kind, thoughtful, and always generous.

I know that Mario Cuomo's most cherished title wasn't Governor—it was husband and father. He took these roles as seriously as his governorship, and it is clear that he succeeded in both. He loved his wife and children, and he instilled in his sons and daughters an unwavering commitment to service.

Mario Cuomo was one of the great, motivating, and inspirational leaders of our time, and I will always be grateful to him for his leadership, his service, and his inspirational mentorship. He was a friend that my family and I truly admired.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations

which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:31 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 22. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution regarding consent to assemble outside the seat of government.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 1, resolving that Karen L. Haas of the State of Maryland, be, and is hereby, chosen Clerk of the House of Representatives, and that Paul D. Irving of the State of Florida be, and is hereby, chosen Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives, and that Ed Cassidy of the State of Connecticut be, and is hereby, chosen Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives, and that Father Patrick J. Conroy of the State of Oregon, be, and is hereby, chosen Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 2, resolving that the Senate be informed that a quorum of the House of Representatives has assembled; that JOHN A. BOEHNER, a Representative from the State of Ohio, has been elected Speaker; and that Karen L. Haas, a citizen of the State of Maryland, has been elected Clerk of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to H. Res. 4, resolving that the Clerk be instructed to inform the President of the United States that the House of Representatives has elected JOHN A. BOEHNER, a Representative from the State of Ohio as Speaker, and Karen L. Haas, a citizen of the State of Maryland as Clerk of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

The message further announced that pursuant to House Resolution 3, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to join a committee on the part of the Senate to notify the President of the United States that a quorum of each House has assembled and that Congress is ready to receive any communication that he may be pleased to make: Mr.

MCCARTHY of California and Ms. PELOSI of California.

At 11:41 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 2001, and the order of the House of today the Speaker appoints the following Members to the House Office Building Commission to serve with himself: Mr. MCCARTHY of California and Ms. PELOSI of California.

At 5:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 26. An act to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1. A bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

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-1. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0449)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Helicopters (Type Certificate Currently Held by AgustaWestland S.p.A.) (Agusta)" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0472)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0425)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0132)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-29. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64

(Docket No. FAA-2013-1064)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-30. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0192)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-31. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0288)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-32. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (130); Amdt. No. 3611" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-33. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (67); Amdt. No. 3612" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-34. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (101); Amdt. No. 3614" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-35. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (124); Amdt. No. 3613" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-36. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (60); Amdt. No. 3617" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-37. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (19); Amdt. No. 3616" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-38. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (60); Amdt. No. 3615" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-39. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (296); Amdt. No. 3618" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-40. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Aviation Training Device Credit for Pilot Certification" (RIN2120-AK62) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-41. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Multiple Air Traffic Service (ATS) Routes; North Central and Northeast United States" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0986)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-42. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Roanoke Rapids, NC" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0792)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-43. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Class D and E Airspace; Hammond, LA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0600)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-44. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class D Airspace; MacDill AFB, FL" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0541)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-45. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Lakeport, CA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0309)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-46. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Class E Airspace; Apalachicola, FL" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0831)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-47. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airspace Designations; Incorporation by Reference Amendments" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0540)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-48. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment and Amendment of Class D and E Airspace; Santa Rosa, CA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0305)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-49. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0174)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-50. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0232)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-51. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0483)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 16, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-52. A communication from the General Counsel of the National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Credit Union Ownership of Fixed Assets" (RIN3133-AE05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-53. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security Annual Report

for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-54. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a semiannual report relative to the status of the Commission's licensing activities and regulatory duties; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-55. A communication from the Executive Secretary, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Representation—Case Procedures" (RIN3142-AA08) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-56. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)" ((RIN0578-AA62) (Docket No. NRCS-2014-0007)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-57. A communication from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's fiscal year 2013 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-58. A communication from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2014 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-59. 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 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-60. A communication from the President and CEO of the African Development Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to 2014 grant audits; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-61. A communication from the Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions from the Unanticipated Needs Account for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-62. A communication from the Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-63. A communication from the Special Counsel, United States Office of the Special Counsel, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Office of Special Counsel's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-64. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, the President's Pay Agent, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of locality based comparability payments; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-65. A communication from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report

relative to the ongoing negotiations of the Environmental Trade Agreement (ETA); to the Committee on Finance.

EC-66. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a section of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14-4160); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-67. A communication from the Senior Counsel, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Instant Criminal Background Check System Regulation" (RIN1110-AA27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. THUNE (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 38. A bill to ensure that long-term unemployed individuals are not taken into account for purposes of the employer health care coverage mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 39. A bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 40. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that prohibit certain preferential treatment or prioritization of Internet traffic; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 41. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a deduction for travel expenses to medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with examinations or treatments relating to service-connected disabilities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 42. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to address certain inconsistencies between the self-attested information provided by an applicant in enrolling in a health plan on an Exchange and being determined eligible for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions or in being determined to be eligible for enrollment in a State Medicaid plan or a State child health plan under the State Children's Health Insurance Program and the data received through the Federal Data Services Hub or from other data sources; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 43. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a Federal income tax credit for certain stem cell research expenditures; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 44. A bill to provide for the expedited processing of unaccompanied alien children illegally entering the United States, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 45. A bill to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 46. A bill to reduce the amount of financial assistance provided to the Government of Mexico in response to the illegal border crossings from Mexico into the United States, which serve to dissipate the political discontent with the higher unemployment rate within Mexico; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 47. A bill to prohibit the implementation of any program that grants temporary legal status to, or adjusts the status of, any individual who is unlawfully present in the United States until the Secretary of Homeland Security certifies that the US-VISIT system has been fully implemented at every land, sea, and air port of entry; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 48. A bill to prohibit discrimination against the unborn on the basis of sex or gender, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 49. A bill to include a question to ascertain United States citizenship and immigration status in each questionnaire used for a decennial census of population, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 50. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit certain abortion-related discrimination in governmental activities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 51. A bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 52. A bill to close the loophole that allowed the 9/11 hijackers to obtain credit cards from United States banks that financed their terrorist activities, to ensure that illegal immigrants cannot obtain credit cards to evade United States immigration laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 53. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify eligibility for the child tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 54. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to confirm the scope of the authority of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to deny or restrict the use of defined areas as disposal sites; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 55. A bill to extend the seaward boundaries of certain States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 56. A bill to prohibit universal service support of commercial mobile service through the Lifeline program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 57. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to prevent the illegal trafficking of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits by requiring all program beneficiaries to show valid photo identification when purchasing items with program benefits; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 58. A bill to ensure orderly conduct of Nuclear Regulatory Commission actions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 59. A bill to reject the final 5-year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for fiscal years 2012 through 2017 of the Administration and replace the plan with a 5-year plan that is more in line with the energy and economic needs of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 60. A bill to prohibit aliens who are not lawfully present in the United States from being eligible for postsecondary education benefits that are not available to all citizens and nationals of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 61. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain National Forest System land in the State of Louisiana; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 62. A bill to amend section 1951 of title 18, United States Code (commonly known as the Hobbs Act), and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 63. A bill to require all public school employees and those employed in connection with a public school to receive FBI background checks prior to being hired, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 64. A bill to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to implement a drug testing program for applicants for and recipients of assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 65. A bill to authorize the Moving to Work Charter program to enable public housing agencies to improve the effectiveness of Federal housing assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 66. A bill to prohibit any regulation regarding carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the United States until China, India, and Russia implement similar reductions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 67. A bill to amend the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 to confirm that a customer's net equity claim is based on the customer's last statement and that certain recoveries are prohibited, to change how trustees are appointed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 68. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make voting in a Federal election by an unlawfully present alien an aggravated felony and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 69. A bill to require that the Government give priority to payment of all obligations on the debt held by the public and payment of Social Security benefits in the event

that the debt limit is reached; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 70. A bill to direct the General Accountability Office to conduct a full audit of hurricane protection funding and cost estimates associated with post-Katrina hurricane protection; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 71. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 72. A bill to allow for the portability of funds under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 73. A bill to prohibit the Federal Government from mandating, incentivizing, or coercing States to adopt the Common Core State Standards or any other specific academic standards, instructional content, curricula, assessments, or programs of instruction; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 74. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for dependent care savings accounts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 75. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require the social security number of the student and the employer identification number of the educational institution for purposes of education tax credits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 76. A bill to provide tax relief with respect to the Hurricane Isaac disaster area; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 77. A bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 78. A bill to impose admitting privilege requirements with respect to physicians who perform abortions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 79. A bill to impose a fine with respect to international remittance transfers if the sender is unable to verify legal status in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 80. A bill to prohibit appropriated funds from being used in contravention of section 642(a) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 81. A bill to authorize preferential treatment for certain imports from Nepal, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 82. A bill to suspend sales of petroleum products from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve until certain conditions are met; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. KING, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 83. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to improve nonretaliation provisions relating to equal pay requirements; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. COONS):

S. 84. A bill to provide grants to better understand and reduce gestational diabetes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. WARNER, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 85. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish a simplified income-driven repayment plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 86. A bill to amend title 44 of the United States Code, to provide for the suspension of fines under certain circumstances for first-time paperwork violations by small business concerns; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 87. A bill to require the disclosure of determinations with respect to which Congressional staff will be required to obtain health insurance coverage through an Exchange; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 88. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to clarify the definition of accidental release, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 89. A bill to repeal the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 90. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to authorize hunting under certain circumstances; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. VITTER):

S. 91. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow refunds of Federal motor fuel excise taxes on fuels used in mobile mammography vehicles; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 92. A bill to reaffirm the importance of community banking and community banking regulatory experience on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, to ensure that the Federal Reserve Board of Governors has a member who has previous experience in community banking or community banking supervision, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 93. A bill to withhold United States contributions to the United Nations until the United Nations formally retracts the final report of the "United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 94. A bill to prohibit the provision of Federal funds to State and local governments for payment of obligations, to prohibit the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System from financially assisting State and local governments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 95. A bill to terminate the \$1 presidential coin program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 96. A bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to provide consumers with a free annual disclosure of information the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection maintains on them, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 97. A bill to clarify that the anti-kick-back laws apply to qualified health plans, the federally-facilitated marketplaces, and other plans and programs under title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 98. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to promote innovation, investment, and research in the United States, to eliminate the diversity immigrant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 99. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to allow workers who attain age 65 after 1981 and before 1992 to choose either lump sum payments over four years totaling \$5,000 or an improved benefit computation formula under a new 10-year rule governing the transition to the changes in benefit computation rules enacted in the Social Security Amendments of 1977, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 100. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax deduction for itemizers and nonitemizers for expenses relating to home schooling; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 101. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the Coverdell education savings accounts to allow home school education expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 102. A bill to amend the public charter school provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 103. A bill to appropriate such funds as may be necessary to ensure that members of the Armed Forces, including reserve components thereof, and supporting civilian and contractor personnel continue to receive pay and allowances for active service performed when a funding gap caused by the failure to enact interim or full-year appropriations for the Armed Forces occurs, which results in the furlough of non-emergency personnel and the curtailment of Government activities and services; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 104. A bill to provide for full and open competition for Federal contracts related to natural disaster reconstruction efforts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 105. A bill to permit management of the red snapper by Gulf Coast States and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 106. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to permit removal to United States district courts of certain civil actions filed in State courts; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 107. A bill to amend the Financial Stability Act of 2010 to repeal certain designation authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council, to repeal the Payment, Clearing, and Settlement Supervision Act of 2010, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BURR, Mr. KING, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 108. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve access for students to Federal grants and loans to help pay for postsecondary, graduate, and professional educational opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 109. A bill to prohibit the consideration of any bill by Congress unless the authority provided by the Constitution of the United States for the legislation can be determined and is clearly specified; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 110. A bill to rescind funds made available to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency if the Administrator fails to meet certain deadlines; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 111. A bill to prohibit a Federal agency from establishing or implementing a policy that discourages or prohibits the selection of a resort or vacation destination as the location for a conference or event, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 112. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require the Secretary of the Interior to publish and make available for public comment a draft economic analysis at the time a proposed rule to designate critical habitat is published; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 113. A bill to ensure that Federal Register notices submitted to the Bureau of Land Management are reviewed in a timely manner; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 114. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide the public with access to research of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 115. A bill to increase oversight of small business assistance programs provided by the Small Business Administration; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 116. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communications services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 117. A bill to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, to relocate to Jerusalem the United States Embassy in Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 118. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to address certain inconsistencies between the self-at-tested information provided by an applicant in enrolling a health plan on an Exchange and being determined eligible for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions or in being determined to be eligible for enrollment in a State Medicaid plan or a State child health plan under the State Children's Health Insurance Program and the data received through the Federal Data Services Hub or from other data sources; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. Res. 21. A resolution making majority party appointments for the 114th Congress; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. REID):

S. Res. 22. A resolution to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. Con. Res. 1. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that a carbon tax is not in the economic interest of the United States; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 12

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 12, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 16

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 16, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to apply the provisions of the Act to certain Congressional staff and members of the executive branch.

S. 23

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 23, a bill to amend title 17, United States Code, with respect to the definition of "widow" and "widower", and for other purposes.

S. 29

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 29, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 30

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Idaho (Mr.

CRAPO), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 30, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 31

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 31, a bill to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 40. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that prohibit certain preferential treatment or prioritization of Internet traffic; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for nearly a year now, Americans across the country have made their voices heard on the critical issue of how we protect an open Internet. Their message has been loud and clear—they want meaningful rules that protect the Internet as a platform for free expression and innovation. Consumers want to see the online space as we have always known it, as a place where the best ideas and services can reach users on merit rather than based on a financial relationship with a broadband provider. Last Congress I joined with my friend in the House, Representative DORIS MATSUI of California, to introduce bicameral legislation requiring the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, to ban “pay-to-play” deals on the Internet. Today, I am pleased to once again join with her to reintroduce this important bill.

When we originally introduced this legislation last June, nearly 300,000 Americans had commented on FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler’s open Internet proposal. That number alone would have been an impressive level of public

engagement. Since that time, however, the number of public comments filed at the FCC has swelled to nearly 4 million. As the comments show, consumers are concerned that without meaningful rules the Internet will become a place where broadband providers charge tolls to websites or applications for them to reach end users. This would represent a fundamental departure from the way in which consumers and entrepreneurs interact with the Internet. A two-tiered Internet based on ability to pay would harm the innovative and competitive environment we have all come to expect in the online world.

Like an overwhelming number of the public, I have grave concerns that a pay-to-play Internet would allow larger companies to squeeze out their competitors, stifling competition online. A small web company in Vermont that develops an idea to rival the largest Silicon Valley titans should not have to worry that its access to consumers could be blocked because its competitors have a paid arrangement with broadband providers. The next generation of Internet companies and retailers should have the same protections that allowed a company like the Vermont Country Store to become a thriving online success.

Pay-to-play arrangements would also harm consumers, who would not have the assurance that the service they are paying for will provide the speed that they want. Too many Americans currently lack real choice in broadband providers, particularly those in rural areas. A pay-to-play Internet could result in whole swaths of the Internet becoming functionally inaccessible to the customers of certain Internet providers. This is not the Internet we know today, and the FCC or Congress must act to ensure that it does not come to pass.

The Online Competition and Consumer Choice Act is straightforward. It requires the FCC to establish rules preventing providers from charging websites for priority access. It also requires rules to prevent providers from prioritizing their own affiliated content or services. These are simple rules to preserve the equal platform we know online today.

This legislation should not be used by opponents of meaningful open Internet rules to undermine the FCC’s important work to craft open Internet rules that will protect consumers and innovators. To the contrary, this bill sets out important policy positions that the FCC should adopt in its current consideration of open Internet rules. The FCC should not hesitate to act at its February meeting to ban these deals outright.

The importance of an open Internet is an issue that resonates in homes and businesses across the country. I spent significant time last year listening to voices outside of Washington, particularly those of Vermonters, so that I could hear firsthand about the impact

the Internet has had on small businesses and consumers. The Judiciary Committee held two hearings on this issue, including one in Vermont, where I heard exactly these kinds of stories. These are not people looking for a handout or special treatment—these are entrepreneurs and consumers who simply want the Internet to remain an equalizing tool regardless of where you live or how deep your pockets are.

There should be widespread agreement to prevent special deals that harm consumers and dampen online innovation. The FCC and Congress should rightly focus on this timely and significant issue to protect innovation and competition online.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 40

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Online Competition and Consumer Choice Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. FCC REGULATIONS PROHIBITING CERTAIN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OR PRIORITIZATION OF INTERNET TRAFFIC.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall promulgate regulations that—

(1) prohibit a broadband provider from entering into an agreement with an edge provider under which the broadband provider agrees, for consideration, in transmitting network traffic over the broadband Internet access service of an end user, to give preferential treatment or priority to the traffic of such edge provider over the traffic of other edge providers; and

(2) prohibit a broadband provider, in transmitting network traffic over the broadband Internet access service of an end user, from giving preferential treatment or priority to the traffic of content, applications, services, or devices that are provided or operated by such broadband provider, or an affiliate of such broadband provider, over the traffic of other content, applications, services, or devices.

(b) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) CERTAIN TRAFFIC NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as superseding any obligation or authorization a broadband provider may have to address the needs of emergency communications or law enforcement, public safety, or national security authorities, consistent with or as permitted by applicable law, or as limiting the ability of the provider to do so.

(2) CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting the authority of the Commission under any other provision of law, including the authority to promulgate regulations prohibiting or limiting preferential treatment or prioritization of the traffic of an edge provider by a broadband provider under GN Docket No. 14-28 (relating to the matter of protecting and promoting the open Internet).

(c) ENFORCEMENT.—For purposes of sections 503(b) and 504 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 503(b); 504), this section shall be considered to be a part of such Act. With respect to enforcement under this section only, the following modifications of such section 503(b) shall apply:

(1) Paragraph (5) shall not apply.

(2) Paragraph (6) shall be applied by substituting the following: "No forfeiture penalty shall be determined or imposed against any person under this subsection if the violation charged occurred more than 3 years prior to the date of issuance of the required notice or notice of apparent liability."

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AFFILIATE.—The term "affiliate" has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

(2) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—The term "broadband Internet access service" has the meaning given such term in section 8.11 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) BROADBAND PROVIDER.—The term "broadband provider" means a provider of broadband Internet access service.

(4) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Federal Communications Commission.

(5) EDGE PROVIDER.—The term "edge provider" means an individual, institution, or other entity that provides—

(A) any content, application, or service over the Internet; or

(B) a device used for accessing any content, application, or service over the Internet.

(6) END USER.—The term "end user" means an individual, institution, or other entity that uses a broadband Internet access service.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 81. A bill to authorize preferential treatment for certain imports from Nepal, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Nepal Trade Preferences Act.

This legislation is simple and straightforward. It grants duty-free status to imports of Nepalese garments for a ten year period.

I have been a friend of Nepal and the Nepalese people for over 25 years. I have witnessed its political struggle and sadly the deterioration of its ready-made garment industry.

The Nepal Trade Preferences Act bill will promote much-needed economic development and contribute to lasting political stability in one of the world's poorest countries.

Allow me to go over some basic facts of everyday life in Nepal.

Nepal has a per capita income of \$730.

Approximately 25 percent of the Nepal's 24 million people live in poverty.

The unemployment rate in Nepal stands at a staggering 47 percent; and most Nepalese live on \$2 a day.

The 2005 phase-out of the Micro-Fiber Arrangement, which established export quotas from developing nations, has deeply damaged Nepal's apparel industry.

Instead of continuing to import garments from Nepal, U.S. importers have shifted their orders to China, Bangladesh and other low-cost labor markets.

In fact, the number of people employed by the Nepalese garment industry dropped from over 90,000 people to less than 5,000 today; textile and apparel exports from Nepal to the United States fell from approximately \$95 mil-

lion in 2005 to \$45 million in 2013; and the number of garment factories plummeted from 212 to 30.

Despite Nepal's poverty and the near-collapse of the garment industry, Nepalese garment imports are still subject to an average U.S. tariff of 11.7 percent and can be as high as 32 percent.

In essence, we are unfairly taxing the imports of a highly impoverished country that cannot afford it. Taxing textile and apparel imports from Nepal, which constitute .01 percent of all U.S. imports, makes no sense.

I would point out that U.S. tariffs on Nepalese garments stand in contrast to the policies of the European Union, Canada, and Australia, which all allow Nepalese garments into their markets duty free.

It should come as no surprise, then, that while the U.S. share of Nepalese garment exports has fallen, the European Union's share has risen from 18.14 percent in 2006 to 46 percent in 2010.

The purpose of the "Nepal Trade Preferences Act" is to ensure that we provide Nepal with the same trade preferences afforded to it by other developed countries. No more, no less.

Humanitarian and development assistance programs should be critical components of our efforts to help Nepal. I was proud to support the President's budget request of \$77 million for Nepal in fiscal year 2015.

But assistance is no substitute for organic economic development. We should help the Nepalese people help themselves by reopening the U.S. market to a once thriving export industry.

In the end, economic growth and prosperity can be best achieved when Nepal is given the chance to compete and grow in a free and open global marketplace.

With this legislation, the United States can make a real difference now to help revitalize the garment industry in Nepal and promote economic growth and higher living standards.

There is no doubt that Nepal has struggled to draft a new constitution and coalesce around a governing majority.

While only Nepal can chart its political course, passing this measure would undoubtedly help regenerate Nepal's stagnant economy.

Let us show our solidarity with the people of Nepal by passing this commonsense measure.

I urge my colleagues to support the Nepal Trade Preferences Act.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BURR, Mr. KING, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 108. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve access for students to Federal grants and loans to help pay for postsecondary, graduate, and professional educational opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask consent that the Senator from Col-

orado, Mr. BENNET, and I, along with the Senator from Maine, Mr. KING, the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. BOOKER, the Senator from Georgia, Mr. ISAKSON, and the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR, be able to engage in a colloquy on higher education for the next half hour.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I further ask unanimous consent to use a piece of demonstrative evidence in my remarks.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. The Senator from Colorado, MICHAEL BENNET, and I have been working for 1 year to make it easier for the 20 million American families who fill out the Federal application form each year in order to receive grants and loans for college.

The piece of demonstrative evidence that Senator BENNET and I have been carrying around in Tennessee and Colorado is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA. This is the form that 20 million Americans fill out. It is familiar to many families as it has 108 questions, and it is important to them because about half of the American families who have students in college have a Federal grant or loan to help pay for college.

The problem with the 108 questions is that they are generally unnecessary. Senator BENNET and I were at a Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing. We heard four witnesses representing different perspectives in our country saying that we only need two questions to know whether we could make a Federal grant or loan to a student from Wisconsin who wanted to go to community college with roughly 95 percent accuracy.

So today we are introducing legislation which is named the Federal Aid Simplification and Transparency, or FAST, Act. It will turn these 108 questions into two—one about the amount of family income and one about the size of family. It will free students and their families from the dreaded FAFSA. It will eliminate thousands of hours of busywork by guidance counselors, college administrators, parents, and accountants.

I will use a specific example. On Friday I am going to Tennessee with President Obama, who has been attracted to our great State because we have become the first State to say to all of our high school graduates that community college is tuition-free. How can we do that in Tennessee? Tuition at community colleges, like in some places in the country, is about \$3,600 per year, and the Pell grant can pay up to \$5,700, but on average needy students receive about \$3,300. So for about half the students, there is only a small gap between the amount the Federal Pell grant pays and what tuition costs. Tennessee has committed to make up the difference.

But here is the catch: The major obstacle to Tennesseans who want to

take advantage of the new Tennessee Promise Program is the 108-question form. The president of the community college in Memphis, Southwest Tennessee Community College, tells me he thinks he loses 1,500 students a semester because of the complexity of the form. They just don't fill it out.

So it is a terrific example of how the Federal Government, with good intentions, has built up over the years an enormous amount of paperwork that is getting in the way of the single greatest need our State has, which is to have more of our students better trained. This will help the businesses that are attracted there offering good jobs will be able to hire people who are properly trained.

In addition to that, our bill does the following things:

It not only eliminates the 108 questions and replaces them with 2, it tells families the result earlier in the process. For example, if you have a daughter who is a junior in high school, now you will be able to go online and find out—answering two questions—how much money you are eligible for in grants and loans. Now you have to wait until the second semester of your senior year.

The next thing it does is it streamlines the Federal grant and loan programs by combining two Federal programs into one Pell Grant Program and reduces the six different Federal loan programs into three—one undergraduate loan program, one graduate loan program, and one parent loan program—resulting in more access for students.

Fourth, it enables students to use a Pell grant in a manner that works for them. They can use it year-round—now they cannot use it for three straight semesters—or at their own pace.

Next, it discourages overborrowing. Too many students borrow extra money they do not need to go to college. For example, under the Federal rules a student is entitled to borrow the same amount of money if they go full time as they are if they go half time. That makes no sense. It saddles students with debt they cannot pay back.

Finally, it simplifies the repayment options. Now there are nine different ways to make repayments. We suggest two.

Senators KING and BURR have their own bill, which they will be introducing today and talking about a little later, that streamlines repayment options.

I have been delighted to work with Senator BENNET. I congratulate him. His background as the Denver school superintendent and as a father has made him a very effective advocate for this effort. We have listened to educators and parents in our own States. The bill has been out there now for more than half a year. We have attracted other sponsors, including Senator BOOKER and Senator ISAKSON. We hope other Senators will want to join us.

Finally, I would say before going to Senator BENNET that as chairman of the Senate committee that handles education—the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee—we are ready to move on this. As soon as we can finish our work on fixing No Child Left Behind, which we have been working on for 6 years and have held 24 hearings. In addition, almost all of the members of the current committee were there last year when we reported a bill—as soon as we can finish that work, we will be ready to move to reauthorize the Higher Education Act to deregulate higher education starting with the FAST Act and the legislation Senators KING and BURR have promoted.

I thank the Senator from Colorado for his partnership on this. I salute him for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am delighted to be on the floor today with, among others, Senator ALEXANDER, who has worked so hard on the bill we are talking about today. Through the Chair, I want to wish him well in his new role as chair of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on which I serve. He is quite right to have said this bill came to us as a result of testimony in front of that committee by a variety of witnesses but all of whom agreed that the current system is completely unwieldy. I would also like to thank the other cosponsors—Senators BURR, BOOKER, ISAKSON, and KING—for joining the efforts and for being here today as well.

I first became aware of this problem when I was superintendent of the Denver public schools. We had a couple who very generously donated \$50 million for scholarships for kids who were graduating from the Denver public schools and who had applied to college. One of the things we learned in that process was how terrible the process was for filling out the financial aid forms for the Federal Government. That was a requirement we had for people to be able to be eligible for this scholarship. We literally had to put new rooms in our schools, in our high schools, and staff them with people in order to fill out these forms.

Every year tens of thousands of students and parents in Colorado and millions more across the country fill out the FAFSA as part of the college application process. It is the gateway to financial aid. By some estimates, over 2 million people who are eligible for financial aid and Pell grants do not get it simply because of the complexity of the form.

I ask unanimous consent to show some demonstrative evidence.

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

Mr. BENNET. Here is this year's form. It is a different color than the one we had last year. This is the form a student has to fill out—108 questions. This is the instruction manual that

goes with the form, which is something in the neighborhood of 66 pages long. It is very tiny print.

To be honest, the ridiculousness of this form would be funny if it were not for the lost time, money, and energy our country spends on it. Here are some of the examples of the questions families have to put up with on this form. Several times there are questions about income. We have been told by the witnesses we had that we only need two questions. There are a number of questions about income, investments, and assets. Each requires notes and instructions which are contained in here.

Question 36: What was your and your spouse's adjusted gross income for 2014?

Question 37: Enter your and your spouse's income tax for 2014.

Question 39: How much did you earn from working in 2014?

Question 40: How much did your spouse earn from working in 2014?

It is ridiculous.

The questions become even more complicated.

Question 42: As of today, what is the net worth of your and your spouse's investments, including real estate but don't including the home you live in?

That is the kind of reaction we get all over the country when we talk about this at home.

The instruction form here says, for question No. 43, the net worth of businesses and/or investments.

Business or farm value includes the current market value of land, buildings, machinery, equipment, inventory, et cetera. Do not include your primary farm. Do not include the net worth of a family-owned and controlled small business with more than 100 full-time or full-time equivalent employees.

Just to make it really clear, in dark print, bolded print, it says: business/farm value minus business/farm debt equals net worth of business. This is as complicated as any tax form.

At a time when the demands of the global economy require us to have more college access, not less, it is a shame that this bureaucratic piling up of questions is making it harder and harder for people to go to college.

So I think this is going to be great for our students, to get it down to a postcard that has two questions. The estimate is that the time saved by moving away from this existing form is the equivalent of 50,000 jobs that could be spent actually providing college guidance to young people who will now have the benefit of knowing, as Senator ALEXANDER said so eloquently, what financial aid they will be eligible for in their junior year before they apply to college rather than waiting until their senior year, until they have already been admitted to college. That makes no sense to the people we represent, and there is a reason for it—it is because it makes no sense.

My hope is that this is a bill we will be able to move this year. Again, I thank Senator ALEXANDER for his tremendous leadership.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank Senator BENNET.

I would like to send to the desk the FAST Act that Senator BENNET and I are introducing, with the cosponsorship of Senator BOOKER, Senator BURR, Senator KING, and Senator ISAKSON.

In this colloquy, I would like now to recognize the Senator from New Jersey for 5 minutes to comment on the bill, if he would like.

Mr. President, following that—the Senator from North Carolina and the Senator from Maine, who are cosponsors of this bill, are here, but they also have a separate bill on income repayments which they will discuss.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. I wish to thank Senators BENNET and ALEXANDER for their work on this legislation. It is going to help our Nation's students make better, smarter, and more-informed decisions about higher education.

Historically, the United States has been the leader globally in expanding college opportunity. We understand that an educated workforce is essential to our Nation's economic competitiveness. Without highly skilled workers, America will not be able to compete in the global economy.

The average price of a college degree in the United States is climbing—about \$13,856. Please put that in perspective with our competitor nations, nations that are keeping the cost of college low, knowing that their long-term competitiveness as a country depends on the education of their children, nations such as the United Kingdom, where a college education costs less than half of ours, and Germany, where kids pay a mere \$933.

The average American student now is graduating from college with around \$29,000 in loans. In New Jersey, that is up from an average of \$27,000 in 2011 and \$23,000 and change in 2010. This is unacceptable. Mounting debt is undermining not only the success of our individual young people in our country, but it is undermining the long-term competitiveness our Nation has in a global knowledge-based economy. That is one reason why it is important that we work to make the process of obtaining financial aid simpler and more straightforward.

We saw the ridiculousness which Senator BENNET held up in the length of the form and the explanation document. Well, this has to change. This is something I recognized when I was mayor of the city of Newark. We had classes. Literally we called it, I think, Financial Aid University, where we brought experts in just to try to help students navigate all of that. We spent so many resources knowing that for our kids from Newark to be competitive, we had to help them navigate this labyrinth of challenging questions and documents that it takes perhaps a college degree or even more to figure out.

When I first came to the Senate about 13 months ago, one of the first pieces of legislation I offered, having had that experience, was a way of sim-

plifying these forms. There is an urgency here because the College Board estimates that 2.3 million students do not fill out the FAFSA form, the free application for financial aid. Because the form is a gateway to financial aid, having 2.3 million being deterred from actually filling it out is a harm to our Nation, not just to those individual students. Many students who qualify for Federal aid skip the form because they find it—as we obviously saw—too complex.

Because eligibility is currently based on income information for the year immediately preceding enrollment, financial aid deadlines mean that tax data is not yet available. As a result, students must determine how to fill out financial aid questions on the FAFSA form and take additional steps then to submit later the tax documents.

We know more can be done to make this process simpler and accessible, which is why I am pleased. I was really rejoicing when Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BENNET showed me there was a way we could work—even further than the legislation I introduced in the last Congress—to reduce it to two questions—saving time, saving energy, saving stress but even more importantly empowering students to get their education and contribute to our economy so that we can compete with those other countries that seem to be doing a much better job than we are in keeping the cost of college low.

This bill streamlines the financial aid system, simplifies the FAFSA form, discourages overborrowing—which is a problem—and, most importantly, gives students and families better information earlier in the process to enable them to make better decisions for them. This bill is a good step.

This bill is a great step. I am looking forward to working with the higher education community as well as students and families in New Jersey on how we can be successful in simplifying this process, increasing access to college and boosting not only enrollment but the economic output of our citizenry.

Again, I thank Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BENNET for their work and leadership. I am pleased to be with them in this effort, and I look forward to continuing the conversation this year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. The Senator from New Jersey is known in his State and across the country as a pioneer in education, putting children first.

Having his support and advice on this bill will be a great advantage in helping it go from the Senate floor through the House to the President's desk and into law.

In 2013 the Congress and President Obama made significant steps forward in improving the student loan program—a \$100 billion per year Federal program to help students go to college. That law created a market-based, mar-

ket-pricing system, and it had the effect in that year of reducing the rate for undergraduates, cutting it about in half.

The two Senators who led that were the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR, and the Senator from Maine, Mr. KING. Senator BURR and Senator KING have continued to work on student loans, making it easier for students to go to college, easier for them to pay their loans, and easier for them to pay them back.

We are proud to have them as cosponsors, but they have their own legislation on student loan repayments, which I am pleased to cosponsor and which will be a top priority in the Senate HELP Committee as soon as we finish fixing No Child Left Behind.

I now yield in this colloquy to Senator BURR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. I thank Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BENNET, and I thank them for what they propose in the FAST Act.

As a parent who went through two kids going to college, when I was presented that form, I realized I wasn't capable of doing it.

I remember a story still today of a dear colleague of mine in the House of Representatives—many know Sonny Bono. We asked Sonny one day: Why did you come to Congress? How did you get into politics?

He said: Well, I became mayor of a city for one reason—because I opened a restaurant. When I went to get a sign permit, they gave me 50 pages to fill out. I didn't graduate from high school, but I figured out it was easier for me to run for mayor, win, and make the sign permit 1 page than it was for me to fill out 50 pages.

That is how he got his start in politics.

I might say, as a parent, to be able to—on a post card—apply and know whether I was eligible for my children's student aid would be a tremendous thing for all parents.

Senator KING and I are on the floor to talk specifically about the Repay Act.

As we have looked at student loans and as the government has become the primary loan component for student loans, what we have seen is that the consolidation of one's loans has dramatically increased in an incoherent way. Now, some might say that is exactly what government does. We say we are going to fix a problem, and we fix it in a way that you don't understand it; it is way too cumbersome.

What we have tried to do is we have made an effort to provide more avenues for or options for children to choose or parents to choose how to pay back student loans. What we have done is we have made it as complicated as the form that Senator BENNET showed, which determines eligibility.

Currently, the Federal Government offers 12 repayment options for students. Among these 12 options, students are offered a series of terms and

conditions that often overlap amongst several other programs with very similar sounding names and stated benefits. The problem gets worse annually.

The administration continues to do new regulations every time we see a problem, and those regulations then overlap with existing regulations on student loans to where individuals don't know exactly what their options are—what Senator KING and I want to do.

We will introduce, hopefully later today, the Repay Act. It provides two options that kids choose from: a fixed-rate option for repayment and an income-based option for repayment.

We also realize that under the income-based options that are out there today an individual who is married could file as married—filing an individual tax form—and their household income isn't considered for the amount they are going to repay on a monthly basis. That is not how we designed it.

We designed it so what their income capability was, their repayment would reflect it. In other words, we have people who are gaming the system today because their one spouse makes a lot of money and one spouse doesn't make much, and they pay a minimal amount of monthly student loan repayments. When they do that, they cheat the other students behind them because they take money out of the system that can be used for those individuals who desperately need it.

The Repay Act streamlines a multitude of loan programs and creates a fixed-base and income-based repayment. It does it by consolidating all income-based repayment programs into one repayment program that caps borrowing at \$57,500 for 20 years and limits to 25 years the repayment period for loans over \$57,500, while ensuring the monthly payments rise at a reasonable rate based upon that annual income level—again, the household income level.

The benefit for students is they will up front have the knowledge they need of what they will expect to pay based upon the amount they borrow.

We believe this will drive smarter borrowing decisions and will lead students to limit the amount of debt they take prior to going to school. Behavioral economists argue that when an individual's options are less complex and straightforward, individuals are more likely to make rational decisions.

Senator KING and I believe the changes included in the Repay Act will promote those rational decisions that will ultimately lead to smarter borrowing that leads to repayment and ultimately healthier financial situations for our Nation's graduates.

Why are we here? It is because only 80 percent of our student loans are being repaid. That means 20 percent is in default.

What we want to do is we want to see kids get a great education. We want to see the ability for that to be paid for, and we want that money to be repaid

based upon their success in the marketplace. I believe this act will put us on that road to do it.

Now, I don't want to pretend, and I don't think Senator KING will pretend, this isn't something that we crafted and created. This is the result of ideas that were put forward by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Education Finance Council, the American Council on Education, the Young Invincibles, the Institute for College Access and Success, the New America Foundation, and many other groups.

This is truly Congress, the Senate at its best, reaching out to organizations that do this day in and day out, just as I think the chairman did on the application-card student aid form.

We have tried to search the best ideas. From that we have gleaned them and put them into the Repay Act. We will introduce this bill. I thank the chairman. It does complement very much the FAST Act.

I thank my colleague, Senator KING, for his help on the introduction of this bill.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from North Carolina. No one was more instrumental in the work in 2013 that reformed student loans to reduce the interest rate for undergraduates by nearly half that year.

In his State of North Carolina there are many of the best universities and 2-year colleges in the country, and I know education has been and is foremost for him.

I look forward to working with him, the members of our committee and every Senator on the floor, as we go through the process with a full and honest debate on important issues using an open amendment process. Then I hope we are able to work with President Obama again this year in the same way we were in 2013 to achieve a result.

A forceful advocate for that result in 2013 was the Senator of Maine who has the advantage of having been a Governor, Senator KING, and we will let him have the final say in this colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Economic development and jobs is what unites us in this body. That is what we all want. That is what everyone here is striving to achieve—jobs and opportunity for the people of this country.

There are many factors that contribute to that, and we can discuss and debate all of them this year. I suspect that we will. There is infrastructure, tax policy, smart regulation, and regulatory reform. But the one about which there is very little dispute is education.

The single greatest job creation and economic development act in the history of the United States was the GI

bill, subsequent to World War II, which opened the doors of college and higher education, to millions of Americans and literally built the middle class in this country. Education is what it is all about and education is even more important now than it was then.

There was a time in this country when you could graduate from high school and get a pretty good job in a mill, make good money, have two cars in the garage, and lead a successful life. That is much more difficult today. Even those jobs in those mills require more education.

In my State of Maine we did a survey a few years ago that showed 70 percent of the jobs had people touching a computer every day. That is what takes an education, and to get an education takes access.

I will share one rather chilling statistic in terms of the competitive nature of the 21st century. We are engaged in competition. We are engaged in competition with the entire world and they want our jobs.

A little statistic is the top 8 percent of high school graduates in China are equal in number to all the high school graduates in the United States. Think about that for a minute—the top 8 percent in China are equal in number to all the high school graduates of the United States.

We are going to have to work to compete, and the only way we are going to be able to do that is if we work smart, and the only way we are going to be able to work smart is with education and expanded opportunity and access to education. Higher education in the 21st century, I would submit, is more important than ever.

There has been attention to this over the years by State governments, local governments, by parents, by students, and by the Federal Government, going back to the midst of the Civil War, when one of the great education bills of all time was passed, the land grant college system in 1864. Support for research at our great universities has been a Federal effort.

Student loans have been a part of what we have tried to contribute to this system for many years. Then, of course, we have Pell grants, which have enabled millions of students to find opportunity in higher education. But, ironically, the very programs that are designed to increase access to higher education have, themselves, become inaccessible.

Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BENNET made a dramatic showing today with these ridiculous forms. When you read the forms the conclusion is: I guess my kid isn't going to go to college.

We have created a system where you need an accountant, a lawyer at your shoulder in order to fill out a form for financial aid, and the people who need it the most are the least likely to have the resources to bring those experts to bear on the process. Programs designed to promote access have themselves become inaccessible.

So that is what today is all about. That is what our discussion is all about. It is about accessibility and simplification. Senators ALEXANDER and BENNET and BOOKER have brilliantly articulated the power of the idea behind the FAST Act: reduce the questions to just a few simple questions to get the necessary information. You don't need 80 pages of instructions to answer two questions. It will open the doors to literally millions of students whom we need. This isn't nice to have; this is need to have. This is an economic security and a national security question. We need these people. The current form is discouraging the very people we want: those who may or may not take the plunge into higher education. The simple fact is you shouldn't need an accountant to figure out whether you can get financial aid to go to college.

The complementary bill Senator BURR and I are introducing today, along with Senator RUBIO and Senator WARNER, is called the Repay Act. The bill Senator ALEXANDER is speaking to is about accessibility and simplification on the front end. Our bill is accessibility and simplification on the back end, dealing with the issue of repayment. It basically reduces eight current options—and I have a chart that would make Rube Goldberg blush in terms of the complexity of the current options—to two. One is a 10-year fixed repayment plan, which certain students can select if it makes sense for them, and the other is a variable income-driven plan.

As Senator BURR pointed out, the ideas for this bill came from across the spectrum—from students, financial aid offices, financial aid administrators, Republicans, Democrats, and President Obama in his most recent budget.

By the way, one of the groups Senator BURR mentioned is the Young Invincibles. I would like to be a Young Invincible. I would like to see where I can join that group because sometimes I don't exactly feel that way. But this is an idea I think is invincible because it just makes so much common sense.

Borrowers can switch between the fixed payment and the variable payment depending upon their circumstances, but they never pay more than 15 percent of their disposable income.

I think another important provision is if a borrower is totally and permanently disabled and the loan is forgiven, they do not have to pay tax on the loan that is forgiven. Under current law, they have to pay an income tax on the phantom income of the loan that is forgiven.

I particularly thank Senators WARNER and RUBIO for joining us on this bill. They had their own bill on this repayment structure last year, and they have generously decided to join forces with us on this bill, and I believe that will add substantial weight to our work. They have already made contributions to the drafting of the bill,

and I think that will help us considerably as we move forward with this legislation.

Quite often around here we talk about things we can't do—we can't do—problems we can't fix. This is something we can do. This is a human problem of our making by layering programs over one another and having the bureaucratic rules build over the years to the point where, as I said, it has created an accessibility problem for the very program designed to give access.

These are important bills. They are not necessarily the bills that are going to get the headlines or cause all the fights and the friction, but these are the quiet kinds of changes that will change our country. They will provide opportunity for our students, for our families, and for our country. I am proud to join Senator ALEXANDER, the chair of the HELP Committee, and Senator BURR particularly, who has worked so hard on this bill. I think we have a combination of bills that will make a difference in people's lives and in the future of this country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, as the colloquy is concluding, I want to thank the Senators from Maine and New Jersey for their leadership and the Senator from North Carolina. I can assure them the King-Burr bill, with the support of Senator RUBIO and Senator WARNER, will be combined with our bill and be front and center on the agenda of the HELP Committee as early as we can this year. As far as I am concerned, it is the next priority after we fix No Child Left Behind. I am hopeful we can bring it to the floor by the spring, give the full Senate a chance to consider it, combine it with action of the House and work with the President, just as we did in 2013.

I am going to turn to Senator BENNET for just a minute to let him have a concluding word, but I wanted to say this. As I mentioned, President Obama is going to Tennessee on Friday. He is going to celebrate an initiative Tennessee has taken by itself to say to all high school graduates: Two years of community college education is tuition free. Of course, that is based upon the Pell grant. The State just makes up the difference, which isn't that much.

I am going to have an opportunity to say to the President: Mr. President, the one thing the Federal Government can do to make it easier for more Tennesseans to take advantage of Tennessee Promise is to get rid of the FAFSA. Because the President of Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis says 1,500 students a semester are not enrolling in community college, who ought to be going, just because they and their families are intimidated by this form or can't fill it out.

There is no excuse for that, and we are going to fix that. Maybe the solution is three questions, maybe it is four

questions, but surely it is not 108 questions, and 70 or 80 pages of instructions, wasting the time of administrators, guidance counselors, parents, accountants, students, and discouraging Americans from taking advantage of education.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a one-page summary of the FAST Act.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

FINANCIAL AID SIMPLIFICATION AND TRANSPARENCY (FAST) ACT

A Bill introduced by Senators Alexander and Bennet to simplify the federal financial aid programs and application process.

What the Bill Does:

Eliminates the Free Application for Financial Student Aid, or FAFSA, by reducing the 10-page form to a postcard that would ask just two questions: What is your family size? And, what was your household income two years ago?

Tells families early in the process what the federal government will provide them in a grant and loan by using earlier tax data and creating a look-up table to allow students in their junior year of high school to see how much in federal aid they are eligible for as they start to look at colleges.

Streamlines the federal grant and loan programs by combining two federal grant programs into one Pell grant program and reducing the six different federal loan programs into three: one undergraduate loan program, one graduate loan program, and one parent loan program, resulting in more access for more students.

Enable students to use Pell grants in a manner that works for them by restoring year-round Pell grant availability and providing flexibility so students can study at their own pace. Both provisions would enable them to complete college sooner.

Discourages over-borrowing by limiting the amount a student is able to borrow based on enrollment. For example, a part-time student would be able to take out a part time loan only.

Simplifies repayment options by streamlining complicated repayment programs and creates two simple plans, an income based plan and a 10-year repayment plan.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Presiding Officer for the time, I thank my fellow Senators, and I yield for the final words of the Senator from Colorado.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I again say thank you to the chairman of the HELP Committee for all his leadership and his work dealing with this form. We have been after this for about 1 year.

This might be a quiet bill, as Senator KING said earlier, but in my travels around the State I can't find anybody who is unhappy with this legislation except for the people who have already filled out the form, who are asking: Where were you 5 years ago when I was having to do this for my students or where were you when I was having to fill this out for my college education?

It makes absolutely no sense. I am sure many of these questions are well intentioned, but what we have learned in the hearings we have had, in the testimony, is they are not necessary. If

they are not necessary, we shouldn't be asking them. Our students would be a lot better off spending their time figuring out what college they want to attend, figuring out what course of study they want to undertake than spending their time with this bureaucratic nightmare.

I am enormously optimistic that we are going to get this passed with the chairman's leadership, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on that. I would like to thank the Senator from New Jersey again for signing on as one of the original cosponsors.

With that, I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 21

Resolved, That the following be the majority membership on the following committees for the remainder of the 114th Congress, or until their successors are appointed:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Perdue, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Thune.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Alexander, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Moran, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Boozman, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. McCain (Chairman), Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Ms. Ayotte, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Lee, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cruz.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Shelby, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Corker, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET: Mr. Grassley, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Graham, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Corker, Mr. Perdue.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Thune, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Moran, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Heller, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Murkowski (Chairman), Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Risch, Mr. Lee, Mr. Flake, Mr. Daines, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Portman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Alexander, Mrs. Capito.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Barrasso, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Hatch, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Thune, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Coats, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Corker, Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Flake, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Mr. Barrasso.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Enzi, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Scott, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Cassidy.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. McCain, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Paul, Mr. Lankford, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Sasse.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Hatch, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Flake, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Alexander, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Wicker.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Vitter, Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Paul, Mr. Scott, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Ernst, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Isakson, Mr. Moran, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. McCain, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Roberts, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Risch.

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Burr, Mr. Risch, Mr. Coats, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Collins, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Cotton.

COMMITTEE ON AGING: Ms. Collins, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Flake, Mr. Scott, Mr. Corker, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Mr. Coats, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Cassidy.

SENATE RESOLUTION 22—TO CONSTITUTE THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. DURBIN (for Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 22

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the minority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Ms. Stabenow (Ranking), Mr. Leahy, Mr. Brown, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Casey.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Ms. Mikulski (Ranking), Mr. Leahy, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Reed, Mr. Tester, Mr. Udall, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Coons, Mr. Schatz, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Reed (Ranking), Mr. Nelson, Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Manchin, Mrs. Shaheen, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King, Mr. Heinrich.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Brown (Ranking), Mr. Reed, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Tester, Mr. Warner, Mr. Merkley, Ms. Warren, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Donnelly.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Nelson (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mrs. McCaskill, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Schatz, Mr. Markey, Mr. Booker, Mr. Udall, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Peters.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Cantwell (Ranking), Mr. Wyden, Mr. Sanders, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Franken, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Warren.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mrs. Boxer (Ranking), Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Merkley, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Booker, Mr. Markey.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Wyden (Ranking), Mr. Schumer, Ms. Stabenow, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Casey, Mr. Warner.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Menendez (Ranking), Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Cardin, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Coons, Mr. Udall, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Kaine, Mr. Markey.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mrs. Murray (Ranking), Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Casey, Mr. Franken, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Whitehouse, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Warren.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Carper (Ranking), Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Tester, Ms. Baldwin, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Booker, Mr. Peters.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mrs. Feinstein (Ranking), Mr. Wyden, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Warner, Mr. Heinrich, Mr. King, Ms. Hirono and Mr. Reed (ex officio).

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Leahy (Ranking), Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Whitehouse, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Franken, Mr. Coons, Mr. Blumenthal.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Sanders (Ranking), Mrs. Murray, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Warner, Mr. Merkley, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Schumer (Ranking), Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Udall, Mr. Warner, Mr. Leahy, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. King.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Cardin (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mrs. Shaheen, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Markey, Mr. Booker, Mr. Coons, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Peters.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Blumenthal (Ranking), Mrs. Murray, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tester, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Manchin.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Mrs. McCaskill (Ranking), Mr. Nelson, Mr. Casey, Mr. Whitehouse, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Warren, Mr. Kaine.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Ms. Klobuchar (Ranking), Mr. Casey, Mr. Heinrich, Mr. Peters.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mrs. Boxer (Co-Chair), Mr. Coons, and Mr. Schatz.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Tester (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Udall, Mr. Franken, Mr. Schatz, and Ms. Heitkamp.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT A CARBON TAX IS NOT IN THE ECONOMIC INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VITTER submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 1

Whereas a carbon tax is regressive in nature and would unfairly burden those vulnerable individuals and families in the United States that are already struggling with increasing electricity rates and a slow economic recovery;

Whereas a carbon tax would increase the cost of every good manufactured in the United States;

Whereas a carbon tax would harm the entire United States manufacturing sector;

Whereas European nations that have adopted carbon policies and regulatory regimes have forced energy poverty on their citizens and undermined their economies;

Whereas the increase in production of domestic fossil energy resources on private and State-owned land has created significant job growth and private capital investment; and

Whereas affordable and reliable energy sources are critical to maintaining the United States global competitiveness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to families and businesses in the United States, and is not in the interest of the United States.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted to my science policy fellow, Adria Wilson, through the end of the session.

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

MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 21, submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 21) making majority party appointments for the 114th Congress.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to 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 resolution (S. Res. 21) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 21

Resolved, That the following be the majority membership on the following committees for the remainder of the 114th Congress, or until their successors are appointed:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Perdue, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Thune.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Alexander, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Moran, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Boozman, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. McCain (Chairman), Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Ms. Ayotte, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Lee, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cruz.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Shelby, Mr. Crapo, Mr.

Corker, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Grassley, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Graham, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Corker, Mr. Perdue.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Thune, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Moran, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Heller, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Murkowski (Chairman), Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Risch, Mr. Lee, Mr. Flake, Mr. Daines, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Portman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Alexander, Mrs. Capito.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Barrasso, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Hatch, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Thune, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Coats, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Corker, Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Flake, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Mr. Barrasso.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Enzi, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Scott, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Cassidy.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. McCain, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Paul, Mr. Lankford, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Sasse.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Hatch, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Flake, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Alexander, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Wicker.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Vitter, Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Paul, Mr. Scott, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Ernst, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Isakson, Mr. Moran, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. McCain, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Barrasso, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Moran.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Roberts, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Risch.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Burr, Mr. Risch, Mr. Coats, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Collins, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Cotton.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Ms. Collins, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Flake, Mr. Scott, Mr. Corker, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Mr. Coats, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Cassidy.

Mr. MCCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, we are designating the full membership of each committee, plus the chairmen of the Armed Services and Energy and Natural Resources Committees tonight. We will appoint the rest of the chairmen tomorrow once we have had a quick meeting of the Republican conference to ratify the names.

CONSTITUTING THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 22, submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 22), to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to 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 resolution (S. Res. 22) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 22

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the minority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Ms. Stabenow (Ranking), Mr. Leahy, Mr. Brown, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Casey.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Ms. Mikulski (Ranking), Mr. Leahy, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Reed, Mr. Tester, Mr. Udall, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Coons, Mr. Schatz, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Reed (Ranking), Mr. Nelson, Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Manchin, Mrs. Shaheen, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King, Mr. Heinrich.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Brown (Ranking), Mr. Reed, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Tester, Mr. Warner, Mr. Merkley, Ms. Warren, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Donnelly.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Nelson (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mrs. McCaskill, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Schatz, Mr. Markey, Mr. Booker, Mr. Udall, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Peters.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Ms. Cantwell (Ranking), Mr. Wyden, Mr. Sanders, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Franken, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Warren.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mrs. Boxer (Ranking), Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Merkley, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Booker, Mr. Markey.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Wyden (Ranking), Mr. Schumer, Ms. Stabenow, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Carper, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Casey, Mr. Warner.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Menendez (Ranking), Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Cardin, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Coons, Mr. Udall, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Kaine, Mr. Markey.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mrs. Murray (Ranking), Ms.

Mikulski, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Casey, Mr. Franken, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Whitehouse, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy, Ms. Warren.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Carper (Ranking), Mrs. McCaskill, Mr. Tester, Ms. Baldwin, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Booker, Mr. Peters.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mrs. Feinstein (Ranking), Mr. Wyden, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Warner, Mr. Heinrich, Mr. King, Ms. Hirono and Mr. Reed (ex officio).

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Leahy (Ranking), Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Whitehouse, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Franken, Mr. Coons, Mr. Blumenthal.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Sanders (Ranking), Mrs. Murray, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Warner, Mr. Merkley, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Kaine, Mr. King.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Schumer (Ranking), Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Udall, Mr. Warner, Mr. Leahy, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. King.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Cardin (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mrs. Shaheen, Ms. Heitkamp, Mr. Markey, Mr. Booker, Mr. Coons, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Peters.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Blumenthal (Ranking), Mrs. Murray, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tester, Ms. Hirono, Mr. Manchin.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Mrs. McCaskill (Ranking), Mr. Nelson, Mr. Casey, Mr. Whitehouse, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mr. Blumenthal, Mr. Donnelly, Ms. Warren, Mr. Kaine.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Ms. Klobuchar (Ranking), Mr. Casey, Mr. Heinrich, Mr. Peters.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mrs. Boxer (Co-Chair), Mr. Coons, and Mr. Schatz.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Tester (Ranking), Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Udall, Mr. Franken, Mr. Schatz, and Ms. Heitkamp.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would just say for the RECORD, following the comments of the majority leader, these are the minority committee assignments and ranking member positions for all of the standing committees.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 95-277, as amended by the appropriate provisions of Public Law 102-246, and in consultation with the majority leader, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board for a 5-year term: George Marcus of California.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 70-770, the appointment of the following individual to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission: the Honorable Martin Heinrich of New Mexico.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the

Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, January 8, 2015; 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 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.

PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Tomorrow the energy committee is scheduled to mark up the Keystone bill so that we can move to that bill next week. We anticipate a full and robust debate on that bill, with a fair and open amendment process.

In addition, the House sent us the TRIA bill a few moments ago. That bill passed the House 416 to 5. We will look to vote on it tomorrow and send it to the President for signature as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 5:56 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 8, 2015, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ASHTON B. CARTER, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE CHARLES TIMOTHY HAGEL.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

ALLAN R. LANDON, OF UTAH, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2002, VICE SARAH BLOOM RASKIN, RESIGNED.

ALLAN R. LANDON, OF UTAH, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR THE TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2016. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LORETTA E. LYNCH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL, VICE ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.

THE JUDICIARY

JEANNE E. DAVIDSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, VICE DONALD C. POGUE, RETIRED.

ARMANDO OMAR BONILLA, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE EDWARD J. DAMICH, TERM EXPIRED.

NANCY B. FIRESTONE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS. (REAPPOINTMENT)

THOMAS L. HALKOWSKI, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE LYNN JEANNE BUSH, TERM EXPIRED.

PATRICIA M. MCCARTHY, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE EMILY CLARK HEWITT, RETIRED.

JERI KAYLENE SOMERS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE GEORGE W. MILLER, RETIRED.

LUIS FELIPE RESTREPO, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT, VICE ANTHONY J. SCIRICA, RETIRED.

KARA FARNANDEZ STOLL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT, VICE RANDALL R. RADER, RETIRED.

ANN DONNELLY, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE SANDRA L. TOWNES, RETIRING.

DALE A. DROZD, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE ANTHONY W. ISHII, RETIRED.

LASHANN MOUTIQUE DEARCY HALL, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE NICHOLAS G. GARAUFI, RETIRED.

GEORGE C. HANKS, JR., OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, VICE NANCY FRIEDMAN ATLAS, RETIRED.

ROSEANN A. KETCHMARK, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI, VICE GARY A. FENNER, RETIRING.

TRAVIS RANDALL MCDONOUGH, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE, VICE CURTIS L. COLLIER, RETIRED.

JOSE ROLANDO OLVERA, JR., OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, VICE HILDA G. TAGLE, RETIRED.

JILL N. PARRISH, OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH, VICE DEE V. BENSON, RETIRED.

ALFRED H. BENNETT, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, VICE KENNETH M. HOYT, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MICHAEL GRECO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JOSEPH R. GUCCIONE, TERM EXPIRED.

RONALD LEE MILLER, OF KANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WALTER ROBERT BRADLEY, RETIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COLONEL TONY D. BAUERNFEIND
COLONEL VINCENT K. BECKLUND
COLONEL STEVEN J. BLEYMAIER
COLONEL RICHARD A. COE
COLONEL WILLIAM T. COOLEY
COLONEL BARRY R. CORNISH
COLONEL CHRISTOPHER E. CRAIGE
COLONEL ANDREW A. CROFT
COLONEL ALLAN E. DAY
COLONEL TRENT H. EDWARDS
COLONEL ANDREW J. GEBARA
COLONEL GERALD V. GOODFELLOW
COLONEL JOHN R. GORDY II
COLONEL STACEY T. HAWKINS
COLONEL CAMERON G. HOLT
COLONEL KEVIN A. HUYCK
COLONEL JAMES A. JACOBSON
COLONEL DARREN V. JAMES
COLONEL DAVID J. JULAZADEH
COLONEL KEVIN B. KENNEDY
COLONEL CHAD T. MANSKE
COLONEL MICHAEL A. MINIHAN
COLONEL WAYNE R. MONTEITH
COLONEL DANIEL J. ORCUTT
COLONEL LENNY J. RICHOUX
COLONEL CARL E. SCHAEFER
COLONEL JOHN E. SHAW
COLONEL BRAD M. SULLIVAN
COLONEL BILLY D. THOMPSON
COLONEL PAUL A. WELCH
COLONEL WILLIAM P. WEST

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

BRYAN K. ANDERSON