

Remember, our Members worked very hard on these bills. Nearly all of the appropriations measures passed committee with support from both parties. We obviously want to process all of them.

If Democrats hadn't wasted literally months blocking every last one as part of some political game, we could have passed all 12 appropriations bills a long time ago, but since they did, it has forced Congress up against a December 11 deadline of the Democrats' own creation. We are going to work within that deadline to get as much done as we possibly can. With bipartisan cooperation, we can get a lot more accomplished. With more political games, we can get a lot less done.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in 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.

EPA CLEAN WATER RULE

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I was pleased to vote today in support of S.J. Res. 22, which would nullify the Environmental Protection Agency's recently finalized clean water rule. Just yesterday, I voted in support of a bipartisan bill, S. 1140, authored by my colleague, Senator JOHN BARRASSO, which would have forced EPA to pull the rule. Unfortunately, that bill did not receive the 60 votes necessary under Senate rules that are needed to pass.

The resolution passed by the Senate today is supported by hundreds of national and local organizations, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Homebuilders Association, to name a few. While I understand that the White House has threatened to veto this resolution if it reaches the President's desk, it is still important that a majority of Congress voice their opposition to the EPA rule as Federal courts continue to weigh its legality.

Americans around the Nation are lining up against the EPA clean water rule because of its economic cost, the regulatory impact, and the uncertainty it engenders among State and local governments, businesses, and consumer alike. The rule itself bypassed Congress by redefining the types of water bodies under the Clean Water Act that EPA has the authority to regulate. EPA pushed forward without regard for State and local environmental protection laws, which is partly why about a dozen State attorneys general, including from my home State of Arizona, have won injunctions in Federal court against the EPA rule.

The EPA claims that the rule only allows the Agency to halt activities

that disturb small, environmentally sensitive streams and wetlands. But when you dive into the rule's lengthy publication, you will find that EPA is proposing to expand its jurisdiction over roughly 60 percent of all waters of the United States and can also capture certain irrigation ditches, stock ponds, and even dry desert washes. Farmers, housing, construction jobs, and other activities will all suddenly find themselves under the thumb of EPA bureaucrats. The EPA will claim it has written waivers into the rule for these industries, but there is growing consensus that the waivers are so unclear and conflicting that nobody believes they hold any water. The EPA's rule-making process itself was so closed off from outside input and peer-reviewed science that it is clear to any reasonable observer that EPA had misjudged the economic damage their rule will inflict on small business, farms, and local governments around the country.

The EPA rule is especially bad news for Arizona agriculture and homebuilding sectors which, combined, account for most of all economic activity in my State. If a farmer wants to build or repair a canal, the EPA rule could block it. A community that wants to build a school or a church near a dry wash will have to beg EPA for a permit. Under the rule, the EPA can even fine a private property owners tens of thousands of dollars if the Agency thinks water historically flowed across their land even when there is no visible evidence.

Regardless whether or not the President vetoes this resolution, I will continue to oppose the EPA clean water rule. I am a proud cosponsor of Senator JEFF FLAKE's similar bill, S. 1179, the Defending Rivers from Overreaching Policies Act, DROP Act, which would direct the EPA to pull its rule over its poor, nonscientific definition of "navigable" water bodies. We will continue to push forward with this and other legislative initiatives and will watch closely to see how the courts handle the EPA rule.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT PARK

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and congratulate Mr. Robert Park, director of the Portage County Veterans Service Commission, on his retirement after more than two decades of service to Ohio veterans.

Mr. Park served 26 years in the naval service, retiring in 1997 as a chief aviation electronics technician, Aircrew. He flew more than 2,000 hours in a P-3 Orion aircraft, predominantly as a radio operator with Combat Aircrew 6 in Patrol Squadron 93, where he was selected as "Gold Wing Sailor of the Year."

During his time with the Portage County Veterans Service Commission, VSC, Mr. Park worked directly with

staff to help maintain a high-quality standard of service to veterans. Mr. Park advocated to significantly increase VA benefits for Portage County veterans. According to the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, for every dollar Portage County spends related to the VSC, veterans in Portage County receive \$93.20 in benefits thanks to the work of Mr. Park.

Mr. Park's dedication to veterans and military families in Portage County extends beyond his position at the Portage County VSC. Mr. Park also served as a board member for the Family and Community Services Freedom House, which is an organization that serves homeless veterans. Mr. Park is also a member of many veterans organizations, including the local Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans chapters.

Mr. Park also served statewide as second vice, first vice, and finally as president of the Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers. He also worked for many years as an instructor for the Ohio Department of Veterans Services.

Nationally, Mr. Park advocated for veterans as an executive board member, judge advocate, and instructor on the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

Beyond his dedication to veterans, Mr. Park continues to support his community through involvement in organizations that help develop young people as future leaders. Mr. Park currently serves on the board of Access to Independence and the Rootstown Local School District. He also volunteers as an assistant coach for both baseball and soccer, as well as Cub Master and Scout Master for local Cub and Scout Troops.

Mr. Park and his wife, Rebecca, have three children: David, Jonathan, and Rachel.

Bob will be truly missed not only by his VSC family, but by the veteran community in Portage County and throughout the State of Ohio. Bob always gave his best to the veterans and families he served. I would like to thank Mr. Park for all his years of service, as a sailor and later as an advocate for veterans. I wish him all the best in his retirement.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

S. 2232. A bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated: