Under Secretary of State, Political Affairs.

I will object because the Department of State has still not responded to almost a dozen investigative letters dating back to 2013. In addition, on August 20, 2015, my staff met with Department officials in an effort to prioritize material for production. The Department has failed to comply with its commitments, producing material late, failing to provide all requested material, and even failing to provide material to the Senate Judiciary Committee contemporaneously with providing the same documents to Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, requestors. These are the same complaints that I raised on September 30, 2015, when I placed a hold on Brian James Egan of Maryland to be legal advisor of the Department of State. Apparently, the Department simply does not understand its obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

Two and a half years ago I began a broad inquiry into the government's use of special government employee programs. I did not single out the State Department on this issue. To the contrary, I wrote to 16 different government agencies.

Two and a half years have passed since I began my inquiry, and the State Department has still not produced the materials I have requested or certified they do not exist.

In addition to the investigation of the Department's special government employee program, I am also investigating the Department's compliance with the FOIA as it pertains to Secretary Clinton's private server that was used to transit and store government information.

The Minority Leader has questioned whether the Judiciary Committee's jurisdiction extends to these matters. I would note that the special government employee designation is an exception to Federal criminal conflict-of-interest laws. Those laws are within the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee, as is FOIA.

During the course of my investigation, a former State Department employee—Mr. Bryan Pagliano—declined to speak to the Judiciary Committee about his work on Secretary Clinton's email server.

He pled the Fifth Amendment.

We keep hearing that the FBI's inquiry is just a security review and not a criminal inquiry; yet this witness cited his Constitutional right against self-incrimination to avoid talking about his work on the email server. And he is relying on the Fifth Amendment to withhold his personal emails as well.

So naturally we are searching for other ways to get information before deciding whether it might be appropriate to seek an immunity order for his testimony. The most likely source of information without forcing the witness to testify would be his emails.

Yet the Department has failed to produce any in response to my request and the request of Chairman JOHNSON of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

As a further example of the Department's continued intransigence, I requested all SF–312 ''Classified Non-Disclosure Agreements'' for Secretary Clinton, Ms. Huma Abedin, and Ms. Cheryl Mills on August 5, 2015. My staff met with Department personnel three times since that letter and participated in dozens of emails and phone calls in an effort to acquire these documents. In addition, after the Department complained that it had received too many requests from me, my staff produced a prioritized list of requests to assist the Department in producing responses. At number three on that list were the SF–312 forms, and at number one are the official emails of Mr. Pagliano.

Notably, during conversations with my staff on the subject, Department personnel stated that they could not locate those forms with the exception of only page 2 of Ms. Abedin's SF–312 exit form. On November 5, 2015, the Department produced SF–312 entrance forms for Secretary Clinton, Ms. Abedin, and Ms. Mills to a FOIA requestor but failed to provide the same to the Committee. Clearly, the documents exist.

In addition, I am also looking into several State Department inspector general and whistleblower reports that suggest that the State Department does not hold its own employees accountable for human-trafficking and prostitution violations.

Earlier this year, the Judiciary Committee led the effort to pass the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and I have sent letters to DOJ and DHS—and not just the State Department—to ensure that Federal employees are held accountable for soliciting prostitutes.

Last week, the minority leader questioned my use of Judiciary Committee resources to conduct these investigations, suggesting that my work in this area is somehow taking away from the committee's other work.

Back in September, the Justice Department sent me a letter complaining that I have sent them almost 100 oversight letters containing more than 825 questions and document requests—in 2015 alone.

Since then, my office has sent 11 additional oversight letters to the Justice Department, containing more than 65 questions and document requests. So perhaps the minority leader should ask the assistant attorney general for legislative affairs at DOJ whether my committee is not doing enough DOJ oversight.

The continued intransigence and lack of cooperation make it clear that the Department did not care enough about their Foreign Service officer candidates to ''get in gear'' and begin to produce responses to my oversight letters. Accordingly, I have released my hold on these officer candidates and have escalated to Mr. Shannon.

The Department of State's refusal to fully cooperate with my investigations is unacceptable.

As I have noted before on the floor of the Senate, the Department continues to promise results, but there has been very little or no follow-through. The Department's good faith will be measured in documents delivered and witnesses provided.

My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Shannon in any way. However, the Department must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

REMEMBERING NOHEMI GONZALEZ AND THE VICTIMS OF THE PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Nohemi Gonzalez, a 23-year-old senior at California State University, Long Beach who was tragically killed during the recent terrorist attacks in Paris.

Nohemi grew up in Whittier, CA with her mother, Beatriz, who described her as ''very strong and independent,'' even graduating high school early because she couldn't wait to go to college. At Cal State, she chose to study industrial design—recently taking home a second place prize in an international design competition. She was thrilled to be achieving one of her dreams of studying at the Strate School of Design in Paris this semester.

Nohemi's professors laud her as a very gifted student—curious, determined, and incredibly caring. She took on a leadership role as a teacher's aide and shop technician for the department of design. Classmates remember Nohemi as a mentor and tutor, someone who encouraged everyone around her to strive to be the best versions of themselves. Friends say she was a blessing and always had an upbeat, cheerful attitude. She always looked on the bright side.

I want to send my deepest, heartfelt condolences to Nohemi's mother, Beatriz, her stepfather, Jose Hernandez, and to all who loved her. While there are no words to express how sorry I am at this tragic loss, I hope they can take comfort knowing that Nohemi's beautiful legacy will serve as an inspiration for us all.

I also want to send my thoughts and prayers to the members of the Palm Desert-based band, Eagles of Death Metal, who were playing at the Bataclan concert hall the night of the attacks. As they grieve the death of their British merchandise manager, Nick Alexander, and representatives from their record company, Thomas Ayad, Marie Mosser, and Manu Perez, I know there has been an outpouring of love and strength from the caring Desert community. I hope that brings them some comfort in this very difficult time.

The people of France have suffered tremendously, and I want them to know that Americans mourn with them. They stood by our sides after the attacks on September 11, 2001, and we stand with them now in the face of these horrific attacks.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to bring attention today to the 108,000 foster children in our country who right now are waiting to be adopted. Of these, more than 14,000 are in California.

These are children who cannot safely be reunited with their biological families and are without a permanent place to call home through absolutely no fault of their own. These are children who are waiting for a family, wanting to belong, and needing our help. Of these children, more than 20,000 age out of the foster care system every year. They are sent on their way and expected to make it on their own. This is unacceptable.

What do we know about their outcomes? It isn't good. Around half of foster youth graduate high school, and less than three percent earn a college degree. Around a quarter will become homeless after aging out of the foster system. Many will find their way into the justice system.

Now, imagine a different outcome. Children are meant to be in a family. All children deserve love, safety, and permanency. No child is unadoptable.

November marks National Adoption Month, and November 21st is National Adoption Day. This highlights not only the need to find loving homes for children who are waiting, but celebrates those who have opened their hearts and chosen to build their families through adoption. Children in foster care are not just in need, they are waiting for a family to give their love and to share their joy.

In 2014, more than 50,000 children were adopted from foster care. What adoption means to youth who have been through foster care is best said in their own words.

From Athena, a young lady in Pasadena, CA, who was adopted from foster care: ''Adoption is very dear and important to me. As an older youth in the system, you expect to have no support, let alone adoption as an option. But being a part of a family was all I ever wanted and deep down it is what most foster youth want because it means love, stability and a place for one to grow and excel in.''

And from Cassidy, an adopted teenager in California: ''If you take a chance on a foster child by adopting them, you give them a chance to be who they were born to be. Let's make 'aging-out' a term no longer needed in the English language.''

Darnell, an older teen adopted in California, explains what finding a permanent family means to him: ''Adoption means I have a second chance at life, I know I am loved and have a safe place to call home. When strangers take you into their home and love you just for who you are; you can relax and live a regular life.''

All children in foster care deserve this second chance at having their forever family and a safe and loving home. I encourage those who are interested in learning more about adoption from foster care to visit www.adoptuskids.org.

This is also a time to celebrate the many volunteers and mentors who provide a positive, stable relationship for a child going through a time of vast uncertainty. There may not be a simple solution, but we do know what gets us closer.

Programs that provide comprehensive resources—tutoring, mentoring, mental health services, and adults that build meaningful relationships with youth leads to improved outcomes, including higher rates of permanency.

Focused family finding efforts that reach out to extended family members and others who have played a role in the life of the child gets results. That means fewer youth who age out of the system.

We can and must do better because 20,000 of our Nation's foster children aging out of the system each year is simply unacceptable. These are our most vulnerable, the ones recovering from trauma, abuse, and neglect. The ones who are at high risk of being sold into child sex trafficking and a number of other terrible outcomes.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure a better future for foster youth in our country and, as Cassidy, a teenager who was adopted from foster care in California says, make the term ''aging out'' one that we no longer need to use. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO JAY S. FISHMAN

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a distinguished and outstanding business leader, Mr. Jay S. Fishman, as he steps down as chief executive officer of The Travelers Companies on December 1, 2015.

I met Jay during my first term as chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. Jay reached out to the committee in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. After handling claims and helping people rebuild their homes and businesses, Jay was interested in shaping public policy for how this country handles natural catastrophes. He proposed many innovative and thoughtful ideas on how to protect policyholders and taxpayers from what he called ''the next big one.'' I then watched as Jay deftly managed his company during the financial crisis, not merely weathering the storm, but thriving while many of his competitors were seeking help from the government in the form of taxpayer bailouts. Jay never asked what the government could do to help Travelers; he always asked how Travelers could help us to develop better public policy based on the expertise that he and his colleagues could provide.

Jay will continue to serve Travelers as executive chairman as he contends with the challenges that come with the diagnosis of ALS. He has handled the diagnosis with great dignity and a steadfast resolve to engage, which will surprise no one who knows him. I know he will work relentlessly to promote research that will extend and eventually save lives of people who are stricken with this terrible disease.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this exceptional man, a man who passionately engaged in business and public policy, who has led a truly remarkable career and left an indelible impact on those people who were lucky enough to work for him and with him during his long career.

NOMINATION OF DR. ROBERT CALIFF

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

NOMINATION OF DR. ROBERT CALIFF

Today we are reviewing the nomination of Dr. Robert Califf to serve as Commissioner of Food and Drugs. Dr. Califf, congratulations on your nomination. Welcome to you and to your family members who are here. I enjoyed having the opportunity to visit with you in my office.

If confirmed to lead the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as its Commissioner, you will be in charge of steering the agency responsible for assuring the safety and effectiveness of our nation's medical products and protecting our country's food supply. That is a huge job. The FDA affects nearly every single American and regulates about a quarter of all consumer spending in the United States—over $4 trillion annually. It is responsible for product areas as diverse as prescription drugs for humans and animals, medical devices, biologics, cosmetics, over-the-counter medications, food, and tobacco. That is a vital mission, and we all want to make sure that the right person is leading it.

The president has nominated you to do that job, and like every full-time nominee, you've been through an exhaustive process to make sure that you do not have any conflicts of interest or other problems in your background.

Before the president even announced your nomination, there was an extensive vetting process by the White House and the FBI. You also submitted paperwork to the Office of Government Ethics, which carefully reviewed your financial information and found that, with several recusals which you have committed to do, there would not be any remaining conflicts of interest that would prevent you from doing your job. The form you submitted is public and includes every source of income over $200 and every asset worth more than $1,000, and every potential conflict that the Office of Government Ethics determined would require a recusal.

You answered 37 pages of questions from our committee, including some confidential questions on financial information, and responded to written follow-up questions. Your responses included over 3,000 pages of articles and lectures my staff reviewed and that any member of the committee could review.