

this Court, the Senator from Iowa is undermining years of his own hard work in pushing for more open government. All that he has done talking about transparency is gone.

Senator GRASSLEY should take his own medicine and stop retreating behind closed doors with private conversations that shut the American people out of the important confirmation process. If the senior Senator from Iowa truly believes in transparency, he should simply do his job and give Merrick Garland a hearing and a vote.

Mr. President, there appears to be no one seeking the floor. Will the Presiding Officer announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING THOMAS EATON STAGG, JR.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise in support of designating the Shreveport Federal Building as the "Tom Stagg Federal Building and United States Courthouse." The Honorable Thomas or "Tom" Eaton Stagg, Jr., of Shreveport passed away last June. He was an inspirational figure.

He graduated from Byrd High School in Shreveport and joined the U.S. Army preparing for World War II. He rose to the rank of captain, earning the Combat Infantryman Badge, a Bronze Star for valor, another Bronze Star for meritorious service, the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster.

At one point, he was saved from death when a German bullet was stopped by a Bible he carried in his pocket. It was as if he was fated to live. After World War II, Tom attended Cambridge and then LSU Law Center and then served in private practice.

Tom's reputation was described as a combination of "intelligence, spirit, patriotism, wisdom and wit" and resulted in his nomination to serve on the Federal bench for the Western District of Louisiana in 1974. He was named chief judge in 1984, a position he

held until 1991. Many testimonials, one of which a close colleague said of Judge Stagg:

Without a doubt he was the finest trial judge I have ever met. Without ever knowing it, he had served as my silent mentor, a role model. . . . To have served the job with Judge Tom Stagg on the federal bench for 12 years is a singular honor. A giant has fallen . . . this remarkable man left a legacy of love of family, of duty and honor and love of this nation, its judicial system and the rule of law.

The colleague continues:

Tom Stagg loved being a federal judge. We will all miss him.

Judge Stagg assumed senior status on the court in 1992, but he didn't retire. He maintained a full caseload, serving on Federal circuit courts of appeals panels. Judge Stagg loved being a judge, but his love for the job also came second after his love for his family. Judge Stagg married the former Mary Margaret O'Brien in 1946 and is survived by her and their two grandchildren, Julie and Margaret Mary.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 636, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell (for Thune/Nelson) amendment No. 3679, in the nature of a substitute.

Thune amendment No. 3680 (to amendment No. 3679), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to speak briefly to the legislation before us, the FAA reauthorization.

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, which I chair, was instrumental in bringing this bill to the floor. Our committee has a long and proud history of bipartisan cooperation on important matters under its jurisdiction. This extends to the bill before us today, the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2016, which I, along

with my colleagues, introduced and marked up in front of our committee.

The legislation before us today includes the most passenger-friendly provisions, the most significant aviation safety reforms, and the most comprehensive aviation security enhancements of any FAA reauthorization in recent history. This bill helps passengers and Americans who use the national airspace for many different transportation needs.

For example, since the last reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration in 2012, the use of drones has increased dramatically. According to its most recent aerospace forecast, the FAA estimates that annual sales of both commercial and hobby unmanned aircraft could be 2.5 million in 2016—a number they estimate may increase to 7 million units annually by 2020. But the FAA has an outdated legislative framework being used to shape the use of this rapidly growing technology for both hobbyists and commercial operators. This is slowing down innovation and advancements in safety. Our bill gives the FAA new authority to enforce safe drone usage. This includes efforts to make sure drone users know and follow basic rules of the sky to avoid dangerous situations.

To support job growth in the aerospace industry, our legislation reforms the process the FAA uses for approving new aircraft designs. Our goal is to shorten the time it takes for U.S. aerospace innovations to go from design boards to international markets while maintaining safety standards.

For the general aviation community, we are also streamlining redtape and adding safety enhancements for small aircraft by including provisions from the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.

Finally, we increase authorized funding for the Airport Improvement Program, which pays for infrastructure like runways, by \$400 million with existing surplus funds. This allows us to help meet pressing construction needs without raising taxes or fees on the traveling public.

We developed this bill through a robust and open process that allowed every member of the Commerce Committee to help guide the content of this critical aviation legislation. Last year the Commerce Committee held six hearings on topics that helped inform our legislation. At the committee markup last month, we accepted 57 amendments, 34 of which were sponsored by Democrats and 23 of which were sponsored by Republicans.

Since debate began on the bill last week, we have successfully included an additional 19 amendments here on the floor of the Senate. Ten of these amendments are sponsored by Democrats and nine by Republicans.

This bill deserves the Senate's support. I urge Members to remember all of the important improvements this legislation puts in place for aviation security, consumer protection efforts, American innovation, safety, and job

creation. I hope we will be able to send this bill to the House soon. We are on a pathway that will enable us to do that. As I mentioned before, we have had a number of amendments that have been disposed of, processed here on the floor already. Nineteen amendments have been added to the bill since it came to the floor, in addition to the 57 we adopted at the committee level.

I want to credit the hard work that has been done by the staffs on both sides. The Commerce Committee staff obviously has been very involved on the majority side as well as the minority side in helping to shape this as it came out of the committee and to the floor. Lots of hours were put into getting us to where we are today. I think where we are is we have a bipartisan bill which has been broadly supported coming out of the committee, which has numerous safety enhancements in it—the most we have seen in a decade—and a bill which is worthy of all Senators' support.

Having said that, there are other amendments that have been filed. I am not sure what the number is today, but we had 198 amendments filed to the bill, and we are continuing to work with the sponsors of those amendments to try to get additional amendments adopted. We obviously have to have cooperation from Members on both sides in order for that to happen. We have a list of another 10 or a dozen amendments we think could be cleared and could be added to the legislation, but we are going to need Members who currently have holds on that process to lift those holds.

We are on a glidepath to getting this bill to votes coming up tomorrow, so we have today and perhaps part of tomorrow in which to process additional amendments. I hope Members will decide to work with us. We think this bill has obviously been very well vetted. As I said, it was debated heavily at the committee level, and we have now had opportunities to offer amendments on the floor. But there are always ways in which it can be improved. There are a lot of worthy amendments that Members have interest in adding to this legislation, some of which are germane to the legislation, some of which are not. Obviously, once we get to cloture on the bill, only those amendments that are germane will be able to be voted on, but we would like to get other amendments processed.

So what I am saying is that throughout the day today, if Members will work with us, and for those who currently have holds on that process moving forward, if you would lift those, it will enable us to process a lot of amendments Senators are interested in having added to the bill.

We will continue throughout the day to negotiate with Members and hopefully have an additional list of amendments that we can adopt. I would say again that my colleague, the ranking Democrat on the Commerce Committee, Senator NELSON and I have

worked very carefully throughout this process to make sure it is an open process and incorporates the best ideas from both sides. Today we have in front of us a bill which I think does that, and that is the reason I think it is very worthy of our Members' support.

We have had a lot of participation. Members of our committee on both sides have had ample opportunities to get amendments considered and voted on, 57 of which were adopted during the committee deliberations on this. It is the product of a lot of work.

I think we are at a place that when we report this out, it is a product we can be proud of, and we can send it to the House of Representatives in hopes that they will pick it up or, if they decide to pass their own version of this legislation, meet us in conference where we can work out the differences but get these important safety measures—these important measures that will support jobs and innovation in our economy—onto the President's desk where they can be signed into law and can be implemented and put into effect.

That is where we are at the moment. Again, I thank all of our colleagues for their cooperation to date and hope that we can see more of that moving forward because it will enable us, in my view, to continue to strengthen this bill before it gets to its ultimate passage, which I hope will be sometime later this week. We have been on it now for a couple of weeks, and it is time to get it off the floor, get it to the House, and, hopefully, eventually onto the President's desk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TERRORISM

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, as I traveled all over Oklahoma during the State work weeks in March, I heard the concerns over and over from families in my State about terrorism. I talked with a gentleman in Coalgate, OK, who absolutely could not understand how the United States could release \$1 billion to Iran the same month that rural hospitals across our State and across America were facing new cuts from CMS in new criteria there. That \$1 billion that was sent by the United States to Iran could have bailed out every single rural hospital in America.

I talked to a mom in Lawton who did not understand why there was a conversation in DC about closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and bringing those individuals into the United States.

I talked to a dad in Tulsa, a dad of a soldier, who wanted to know what is happening with terrorism and what is America's response.

I talked to an Oklahoma business owner who is very concerned about cyber security and the threat of foreign governments attacking his network and other networks and businesses around the country.

As details come out about what happened in Brussels in that terrorist attack, every American has their security and their family in mind. I continue to pray for the victims of those awful attacks and work to determine the best way our great Nation can confront this threat.

As the only Member of this body who serves on both the Homeland Security and the Intelligence Committees, I have the privilege to ensure that Oklahomans and Americans have a strong voice in the discussion over our Nation's national security priorities. There is no simple solution, though, and there is no single method to confront terrorism. But we must be absolutely clear that terrorists will find no quarter in the land of the free, in the home of the brave.

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I walk behind a heavy door several times a week to hear the sobering details about foreign threats and the amazing work that Americans do to confront them. I wish we could talk about all those things here because I believe Americans would be very proud of the work that is going on.

We can talk about disrupted terrorist plots and insight into adversaries' plans that allow us to adjust and to prepare and to confront those terrorists before they bring the fight here. There are hard questions behind those closed doors. Oversight should be expected, and open discussions should be expected.

Let me say today how incredibly grateful I am for the people in the intelligence community who work hard every single day. Members of our military and members of law enforcement around the country wear uniforms, and we get a chance to say thank you to them personally when we see them. But members of the intelligence community are patriotic Americans who are working to protect their families and our families every day. We don't get to say thank you to them because we don't know who they are. But let me say thank you to them today from our country.

Right now, members of radical Islamic groups around the world are calling out on social media, through encrypted messages and in public forums around the world, for the small minority of Muslims who believe as they do and who believe in their hate-filled doomsday mission. They tell people that if they believe as they do, they should kill as they do. ISIS is enraged by our views about free speech, freedom of religion, girls attending school, equal pay, equal opportunity, and even voting in elections. It is almost impossible for Americans to imagine their hatred for the modern world and for freedom and basic human rights.

How do you win against an enemy like that? You confront them is how you do it, not ignore them. You deal with their ideology that spreads like a cancer around social media platforms around the world.

Some people say poverty and lack of education creates radicalism. There are billions of people in the world who live in poverty, and most of them do not practice this particular form of radical Islam. The shooters in San Bernardino, CA, weren't living in poverty or lacking in education. The killers in Paris and Brussels were not isolated and poor. While refugees and isolated communities in poverty are undoubtedly breeding grounds for anger and frustration, that is not the primary cancer of terrorism. There are millions of people living as refugees in the world right now who are not extremists. They are not terrorists; they just want peace so they can go home and have a normal life again.

We do have a moral and national security obligation to help the vulnerable when we can. The refugee crisis is immense, and it is affecting millions worldwide. Many countries are at the brink, and we need to stay engaged. But America has already given billions of dollars in aid. No country—no country has done more for the refugees than the United States. Our logistics, our support, and our financial aid have sustained most of the refugee communities there either through direct aid or what we are doing through the United Nations right now. But the people living as refugees need access to education and training so their children will grow up with skills and opportunity. We can help them have a second chance. But that is not the primary source.

We need to engage with religious leaders around the world. We cannot and we will not define faith for them, but we can challenge any faith that promotes the death of people because of their race, their belief, or their gender. We should work to shut off terrorists' financing around the world, their illegal energy trade, their drug trafficking, their extortions, and persons in wealthy countries who send money with the implicit promise that those terrorists will not bring terrorism to their country if only they will send them money to do terrorism in other places.

We must also fight and confront those individuals militarily. We must learn the lesson of 9/11. They are not just a group of radical thugs over there who we can ignore. They hate us, and they will find every way possible to attack us here and to attack our allies. No one wants war, but we cannot stand by and watch terrorists beheading Egyptian Christians on the beaches of Libya, killing Shia Muslims because of their faith in Iraq, blowing themselves up in an airport in Brussels, shooting people at a rock concert or a synagogue in Paris or just people enjoying a party at work in California. We can't put our heads in the sand and ignore what is really happening and assume it will just go away if we do nothing.

As long as they hold territory, they call out to people worldwide to come join them in their caliphate to come

fight for them or to fight where they are. We are Americans. We lose track of that at times, I am afraid. No one in the world has the same logistical capability as the United States of America. No one in the world has the most moral, most powerful military in the world like the United States of America. No one has our intelligence capability. No one in the world has our Tax Code planning capability. So the whole world is waiting on America to decide what we are going to do so they can decide if they are going to join us in this fight against this radical Islamic terrorism. It is not about massive troops on the ground; it is about a clear plan and a clear strategy to carry it out. It is why the Russians currently look more mobile and more capable than us all of a sudden.

So the "now what" question rises large in this body.

No. 1, there are multiple proposals in State and foreign operations for how we can engage in peaceful activities: helping refugees, helping those in poverty, helping to bring education to places, helping engage diplomatically with religious leaders around the world and with other countries to deal with terrorist financing. Those are things we could and should do and should do more aggressively.

No. 2, the national defense authorization is coming, and it is coming soon. We need to give great military clarity—not only rules of engagement in the battlefield, but what is the clear purpose militarily for the United States in this battle against radical Islam?

No. 3 is tougher for this Nation, apparently: Believe and understand that Iran is one of the key areas in this fight. I believe this administration has been too eager to believe good news about Iran and is ignoring the concerns that many of us hold. I have stood here several times in the past year to speak out against the President's reckless nuclear deal with the Iranian Ayatollah. I didn't like it then, I still don't like it, and I still don't believe Iran can be trusted to be able to carry out its end of bargain.

I recently authored a resolution that clearly outlines to the administration how the United States should respond if Iran—and I believe when Iran—breaches the nuclear agreement. We should reapply waived sanctions and U.N. Security Council resolutions and limit Iran's ability to import defensive equipment so they can stop fortifying their nuclear capabilities over the next 10 years. When all the enrichment limitations are lifted, they will be well prepared to defend those facilities they have now created.

As I have said many times, until Iran proves it is a peaceful, responsible player in the Middle East, the international community must be vigilant in pushing back against Iran's harmful and destructive influence among its neighbors.

Last week I spoke with Adam Szubin, Acting Under Secretary of the Treas-

ury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, and he communicated to me exactly what everyone already knows and fears—that Iran has become even more of a destabilizing factor in the region after the nuclear deal was signed.

This is clearly evident in Iran's continued, unabashed support for terrorism and terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, their propping up of the Assad regime in Syria—a government that continues to blow up its own people and butcher its own people—and Iran's shipments of weapons to rebels in Yemen to be able to fuel their civil war there, right on Saudi Arabia's southern border.

We haven't even discussed Iran's testing of ballistic missiles in direct violation of international law. If Iran can't be trusted to uphold the law now, how can it be trusted to be able to uphold some agreement which it hasn't even signed? That is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Congressionally imposed sanctions on Iran is what brought the Ayatollah to the negotiating table. Let's be honest about this. Regardless of what some people may say about the momentum of the moderates and the reformists inside of Iran, Iran's foreign policy, especially in dealing with the United States, runs through the Ayatollah Khamenei. He has made it crystal clear that his regime is built on radical Islamist views, and this particular view of Shia Islam—though it is opposed to ISIS—is supportive of spreading their views around the world. It is absolutely anti-American.

It is essential that the Treasury continue to completely shut down Iran's access to the U.S. dollar, and it is essential that Treasury rigorously enforce the still-standing human rights and terrorism-related sanctions on Iran.

I spoke with DNI Clapper in this administration just a few weeks ago. When I asked the Director of National Intelligence if there has been any change in Iran's focus on being the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, this administration's Director of National Intelligence said there has been no change in Iran's behavior since the nuclear deal was signed in relation to terrorism.

We should not release known terrorists or bring them to U.S. soil. I can't believe I have to even raise this as an issue in this Nation. We should keep Guantanamo Bay, known as Gitmo—that detention facility—open and operational rather than releasing known terrorists back into the battlefield or bringing them to the United States.

In this era of growing threats, why would we irresponsibly release these individuals? Senator KIRK and I, along with four other members of this body, introduced a bill last week to prohibit the President from transferring terrorists detained in Guantanamo Bay to any other state where they may go and actually sponsor terrorism. It is not a hard decision; it is common sense.

Our bill is very clear: If those individuals are transferred out of Guantanamo to some other state and then they later commit some act of terrorism, that state's foreign aid is cut off. The expectation is if these individuals go to that location, that location is actually going to monitor them. Americans assume that at this point, but it is not happening.

Senator INHOFE and I will introduce a bill later today which prohibits the transfer to the United States or release of terrorists held in Guantanamo Bay. It also goes further than what we do with Senator KIRK's bill, and it actually prohibits the President from closing the facility entirely. The President should not risk our Nation's national security just to fulfill some campaign promise that makes absolutely no sense and puts our country at risk.

The executive branch occasionally laments congressional engagement in foreign policy, but this is the way the American people speak out because the people in Oklahoma are absolutely concerned about what is happening in national security and they want this administration to hear it loud and clear. There seems to be no clear plan, and the plans that are clear seem to weaken our resolve on national security.

Today I simply ask my colleagues to join me and do what the people who we represent sent us here to do—to assume the mantle of responsibility as leaders and to show them that we are not afraid to work with this administration or any administration. We need to take responsibility for setting the Nation's national security agenda. It must be done.

It can't be done just militarily. It must be done in a broad method by reaching out, not only strategically and diplomatically through our State Department but also militarily with a clear focus to make sure we protect the Nation and that we don't release terrorists and actually do what we are supposed to do—guard this Nation's security.

With that, I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The 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.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if we ask most Americans: What is the difference between a for-profit college and university and a not-for-profit college and university, a private university, most of them would say: I am not sure I can tell you.

Well, certainly for-profit, by definition, is a business. It is primarily a business that generates a profit for the company if it is successful. It pays for the salaries and compensation of those who work for the company, and if there

are shareholders, it tries to increase the value of shares and maybe even pay a dividend.

The others—the not-for-profits—by definition don't do that, and most private universities are not for profit. Examples: University of Illinois, a public university, the University of Maryland. Private universities: Georgetown University, George Washington University. For-profit universities: The University of Phoenix—people have probably heard of it—DeVry University out of Chicago, IL; ITT Tech; Kaplan, these are for-profit colleges and universities. Are they different? They are dramatically different.

Let me give my colleagues three numbers that define the difference between for-profit colleges and universities and all the others. Here are the numbers: Ten percent of all of college students in America go to for-profit colleges and universities, like the University of Phoenix. These, many times online, universities including Kaplan and DeVry, 10 percent of the students go to them.

Twenty percent of all of the Federal aid to education goes to for-profit colleges and universities. Why is it twice as much as the percentage of students? They are darned expensive. They have tuition that is usually much more costly than other colleges and universities.

So that is 10 percent of the students, 20 percent of the Federal aid to education, and the next number is 40. Forty percent of all the student loan defaults in the United States of America are students attending for-profit colleges and universities—10 percent of the students, 40 percent of the student loan defaults. Why? The answer is obvious. They are very expensive and the education they provide often isn't worth much.

Students who enroll and start courses at for-profit colleges and universities get in over their heads and drop out—the worst possible outcome. Now they are deep in debt with no degree, and they default on their loan. Some finish, and for many of them, it is even worse. After they have stacked up all of this debt, they graduate from a for-profit college and university and find out the diploma is worthless. That is the reality of higher education in America today.

For quite a long time I have come to the Senate floor and talked about these for-profit colleges and universities. I got into this by meeting a young woman from a southern suburb of Cook County. She went to a place called Westwood College, a for-profit college and university based out of Colorado. She had been watching all of these CSI shows and the rest of them. She was just caught up in law enforcement. She wanted to get into law enforcement. So she enrolled at this for-profit college—Westwood—and started attending classes. Well, it turned out to be expensive, and then it turned out to be a disaster.

Five years later, she graduated and received her diploma from Westwood.

She took the diploma to police departments and sheriffs' offices all around the region and they looked at her and said: Sorry, but that is not a real university. You have gone to school there for 5 years, and I know you have the diploma, but we don't recognize Westwood. Westwood College is not a real university.

So she found out her diploma was worthless, she couldn't get a job, but here is the worst part: At that point, she had \$95,000 in student debt—\$95,000 in debt—and a worthless diploma. Where do you turn?

Well, let me tell you what happened to her. She moved back in with her parents, living in the basement. Her dad came out of retirement, took a job to try to help her pay off her student loans at Westwood, and she started to think about: How do I go to a real school now—a community college or something—so I can get an education. She wasted 5 years of her life, and her decisions from that point forward will reflect the fact that she had this terrible experience.

There are things which these for-profit colleges and universities do which other universities wouldn't do. I want to talk about one of them today. The abuses of this industry are clear. Hundreds of thousands of students have been deceived, misled, and harassed into enrolling in these schools where they end up with a mountain of debt and a worthless diploma. Every day seems to bring news about another for-profit college scam, and I have been giving these speeches for a while, and it keeps unfolding day after day. Here is the latest: the complaint the attorney general of Massachusetts filed recently against ITT Tech for abusive recruitment tactics. I know this ITT Tech because in my hometown of Springfield, IL, at White Oaks Mall, they have a big sign. They look like the real thing, but when Massachusetts took a look at their recruiting tactics, it turned out they were lying to the students. You see, they need to lure in students to sign up at ITT Tech, they make promises they can't keep, and many times they lure in students who are not ready for college. Why do they do that? Because the minute a low-income student signs up at ITT Tech, the Pell grant, which goes to low-income college students, flows through the student to ITT Tech. There is \$5,800 just for being low income and signing up, not to mention what follows—the college student loans.

If a student is lucky—if they are lucky—the for-profit college will lead them to the college loans originated by the government. Those are more reasonable. If they are unlucky, they get steered by these for-profit colleges to private loans with dramatically higher interest rates and terms which are not the least bit forgiving.

We say to ourselves: These students ought to know better. Well, how smart were you when it came to the ways of the world when you were 19 years old?

How much did you know about borrowing \$10,000 when you were 19 or 20 years old, when they shoved across the desk a stack of papers and said: If you will sign these for your loan, you will be able to start classes Monday. You know what happens. The students sign up. They have been told their whole lives: This is what you need to do. When you finish high school, you go to college.

Here is another part of it that is very important. Right now, the Department of Education is working on new Federal regulations so that when the students go to these for-profit schools—or any school for that matter—and the school engages in unfair, deceptive, or abusive conduct, there is some protection. The Department has set up a rule-making, but because the negotiations with outside stakeholders haven't reached a consensus, they are still working on the rule.

Let me talk about one issue that I think is critical that is under consideration by the Department of Education when it comes to these for-profit colleges: mandatory arbitration clauses. You are going to find at for-profit colleges—and at virtually no other college—a little paragraph stuck in that enrollment agreement, stuck in your enrollment contract, which says that if you have any grievance with that for-profit school, if you think they deceived you, defrauded you, lied to you, if you think that you got in debt for a promised degree that was going to lead to a job, you can't plead your case in court after you sign this agreement.

You have to go to mandatory arbitration. Mandatory arbitration, for those not familiar with it, is a closed-door process. The company or school, in this case, sets standards about who will decide your fate and about what of anything that happened to you ever becomes public. Why do the for-profit schools do this? They don't want to be taken to court—no company does. They certainly don't want to face a class action lawsuit by students who have been defrauded by these for-profit schools, and they certainly don't want the Department of Education to know that a certain number of students of for-profit schools have a grievance about the way they were treated. So they have come up with a mandatory arbitration clause in documents a student has to sign to go to class. Students by and large don't even see them. They are buried in the document. If they did see them, they would find it hard to even explain. These clauses require students to give up their right to a day in court. It means, for example, that if a student is misled or deceived by the school's advertising or Web site and the student goes into debt and then can't find a job or can't qualify for a job that they promised you could, the student doesn't get a day in court. Instead, the student is forced into the secret arbitration proceeding where the deck is stacked against them. It allows schools to avoid accountability for

misconduct. It prevents prospective students from knowing that there were an awful lot of other students at the same school that had the same bad experience.

It is fine for schools to give students the choice of arbitration, but to say it is mandatory and that you have no other choice is wrong. Mandatory arbitration clauses are not used by legitimate not-for-profit colleges and universities. Not-for-profit colleges, public and private, are comfortable with being held accountable to the students. They don't require mandatory arbitration in order for the students to sign up for classes. The Association of Public Land Grant Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Association of Community College Trustees, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers all confirmed what I just said. Unfortunately, mandatory arbitration clauses are a hallmark of the for-profit industry, used by nearly all major companies—DeVry, the University of Phoenix, and ITT Tech, just to name a few.

These same clauses were used by a for-profit school called Corinthian, which went bankrupt. What happens when a for-profit college goes bankrupt? They have received the money through the student from the Federal Government. They have received all those Pell grants. They have received the money for government loans, and now they are officially out of business.

Where does that leave the student if the school closes? Well, we give them a pretty tough choice. The first choice is to keep the credit hours they earned at the for-profit school and transfer to another school—too often another for-profit. Is that worth the effort? Well, the student has to decide or drop those credit hours of the for-profit school and get what is called a closed school discharge. You don't have to pay it back. Who loses in that deal? The taxpayers. The taxpayers who have sent thousands of dollars to these worthless for-profit schools.

I am hoping the Department of Education will promulgate a rule that protects students and their families when it comes to these for-profit schools. There is one last thing I want to say about college loans, and it probably is the most important. If someone borrows money for a car or a home or a piece of property somewhere or to buy some goods and then they fall on hard times—somebody in the family gets sick, there are big medical bills, someone loses a job, or there is a divorce—and they are forced into bankruptcy court to clear their debts, they are going to find out if they have a student loan, they can't discharge a student loan in bankruptcy. It means, frankly, that it is with them for a lifetime. When grandma decides to cosign her granddaughter's college loan and her granddaughter defaults on the loan, the collection agency calls her grandmother. We have cases that have been

reported where grandmothers have their Social Security checks basically garnished to pay off the granddaughter's student loan. It is a debt, frankly, that will be with them for a lifetime. That is why this conversation is so important.

A few years ago, the for-profit colleges and universities ended up with the same treatment as every other college and university, and they, too, when it comes to student debt, have their investment protected because the student cannot discharge it in bankruptcy.

This Senator thinks the Department of Education has the authority to clean this up.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a legal analysis put together by Public Citizen outlining the authority the Department of Education has to ban mandatory arbitration.

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

PUBLIC CITIZEN,

Washington, DC, February 24, 2016.

DR. JOHN B. KING, JR.,
Acting Secretary of Education,
Washington, DC.

CITIZEN PETITION

The federal government spends more than \$128 billion annually on student aid distributed under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA), 20 U.S.C. §1070 et seq. This aid, which includes Stafford, PLUS, and Perkins loans, as well as Pell grants, is the largest stream of federal postsecondary education funding.

While profiting from U.S. taxpayers, some predatory schools—particularly in the for-profit education sector—target underserved populations of students, including people of color, low-income individuals, and veterans, with fraudulent recruitment practices. These schools provide students with an education far inferior to what has been promised. They offer low quality programs and faculty, provide few if any student-support services, and have abysmal graduation and job-placement rates. Many students drop out once they realize the extent of a school's misrepresentations. Those who do not may find themselves with a worthless degree. In either case, the school's wrongdoing leaves many students with a debt to the federal government that they cannot repay.

Unfortunately, the courthouse doors are closed to many of these students because they signed mandatory, pre-dispute arbitration agreements at the time of their enrollment. Under these agreements, students are required to use binding arbitration to resolve any dispute they may later have with the school; they are barred from the courts. As demonstrated in this petition, these arbitration clauses are detrimental to students, hamper efforts to uncover wrongdoing by institutions receiving Title IV assistance, and place the federal investment in Title IV programs at risk.

Public Citizen, Inc., a consumer organization with members and supporters nationwide, submits this citizen petition under 5 U.S.C. §553(e) to request that the Department of Education issue a rule requiring institutions to agree, as a condition on receipt of Title IV assistance under the HEA, not to include pre-dispute arbitration clauses in enrollment or other agreements with students. This rule would be consistent with the Department's legal authority under the HEA

and with the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA), 9 U.S.C. §1 et seq. It would also be in line with a call by members of Congress for the Department to condition Title IV funding on a school's commitment not to use forced arbitration clauses or other contractual barriers to court access in student enrollment agreements.

I. STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Since its founding in 1973, Public Citizen has advocated on behalf of its members and supporters for public access to the civil justice system. As part of that work, it seeks to end the use of forced arbitration clauses in consumer contracts because these clauses are fundamentally unfair to consumers, encourage unlawful corporate behavior, and weaken the utility of enforcement efforts to protect the public. Public Citizen is engaged in efforts to encourage the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to ban pre-dispute arbitration agreements in consumer and investor agreements. Public Citizen's counsel have represented parties in several major cases involving the scope of the FAA and the enforceability of pre-dispute arbitration agreements. Public Citizen also frequently appears as amicus in cases involving these issues.

In addition to its arbitration work, Public Citizen supports robust regulation of predatory educational institutions and student lending practices that leave students saddled with debt for overpriced educations. It participated in the Department's Gainful Employment rulemaking, and its attorneys represent twenty-eight organizations as amici in support of that rule in *Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities v. King*, No. 15-5190 (D.C. Cir.). Counsel for Public Citizen have also represented parties and amici in numerous cases involving misconduct by for-profit educational institutions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, countless veterans groups, consumer advocates, legal aid lawyers, and student organizations support a full ban on mandatory arbitration clauses in higher education. I hope the Department of Education responds to this. I hope they have the resolve and the political will to get this done.

It is sad when students end up with a good diploma and a ton of debt. It is unforgivable for us to be complicit when the students end up with a ton of debt and a worthless diploma from a for-profit college or university.

Mr. President, the Federal Aviation Administration is now operating under its second extension. Like too many important issues, we just keep patching up the system. Last year, the Senate worked together to pass a 5-year transportation bill. Finally, after 30 patches of a national transportation program, both parties came together to pass the first long-term bill in over 10 years. This was an important step for the Nation and for my State of Illinois.

Fixing and maintaining our infrastructure involves planning, and planning includes certainty. If we don't know we are going to be funded 6 months from now, it is very tough to plan a highway, a bridge, or how we are going to administer an airport.

We have an opportunity to do the same for the Federal Aviation Administration. Senators THUNE and NEL-

SON—Republican and Democrat—put together the bipartisan bill that we are currently debating. I hope we can give this bill careful consideration. One of the items we should carefully consider is security at airports.

Since 9/11 we have focused more and more on the security of airports, and when we hear of these terrible terrorist incidents overseas, we understand that we can't drop our guard. There were 32 people who died in Belgium, and many were injured. The terrorists targeted people who were just going about their daily routine, catching an airplane. The terrorists took advantage of a vulnerable system. At the airport, two bombs were set off before any security screening took place. That should be a wake-up call for all of us.

Last week Senator HEINRICH offered an amendment that I was proud to co-sponsor for commonsense measures to strengthen security at U.S. airports in places such as transit stops. I am pleased it passed with strong bipartisan support. It adds extra security in these areas where people take planes and trains where we were vulnerable before the checkpoints. It adds law enforcement officials, inspectors, specialists in explosives, dogs, and experts who can help with the screening process. It gives more flexibility to our States in cities like Chicago, which I am honored to represent, to grant security funding for better protecting these vulnerable areas, and it gives more flexibility in spending the money.

O'Hare is one of the busiest airports in the world, with 77 billion passengers last year. Chicago is also host to many major national and global events with millions of travelers. We have one of the busiest networks of commuters and travelers by transit, with 1.6 million people riding Chicago's CTA every day, getting to work by bus or train. Nearly 300,000 passengers take Chicago's Metra commuter rail every day. We must ensure we are doing everything we can to keep them safe.

Communities such as Aurora, IL, that have experienced their own threat not long ago will remember September of 2014. I am filing an amendment which I hope will be considered on this bill to improve security in our air traffic control facilities after the experience we had back in 2014. There was a fire at the air traffic facility in Aurora. That center directs about 9,000 flights a day over 6 States, including, of course, the Chicago region. The fire grounded thousands of flights. Its impact was felt for 2 weeks. It caused \$5.3 million in damages to the traffic control facility, and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact.

The air traffic controllers, local police, and fire department did all they could do, but there turned out to be bigger issues at play. This was a case of arson by an employee at the air traffic control facility.

I went in and actually saw the damage that he did. Following the incident, I worked with the FAA and called on

the Department of Transportation to investigate what happened and to come up with recommendations on how to improve security. After the Department of Transportation investigation, FAA and DOT found there was not enough focus on insider threats, and, clearly, better equipment is needed to help communication from going down. Once again, we are dealing with an area that is not as secure as it should be.

The amendment I have offered to this bill builds on some of the recommendations. It requires the FAA to make plans for law enforcement and other authorities in the event of an incident. It requires the FAA to develop guidelines for training and response to security threats and active shooter incidents and to ensure that, as the FAA makes investments in infrastructure and basic equipment such as electrical systems and telecommunications, they think about resiliency and survivability.

We learned those lessons the hard way in Chicago. I hope the Senate will take up my amendment so other airports as well as Chicago will be ready in the future.

These events are reminders of the damage that can be done. With a similar spirit of bipartisanship, we need to have a commitment to our security at our airports and around the United States.

TRIBUTE TO RAY LAHOOD

Mr. President, while I am on the subject of airports, I want to recognize my friend and former colleague in the House, Congressman Ray LaHood. He was named Secretary of Transportation by President Obama. On Tuesday, the Peoria International Airport honored him by naming their new international terminal after him. Ray served the Peoria region proudly for 14 years as Congressman and for 4 years as President Obama's Secretary of Transportation. Secretary Foxx went out to Peoria to show support for his predecessor.

Ray LaHood has been and continues to be a strong advocate for Illinois and for our Nation's infrastructure. This honor is certainly a fitting tribute, and I congratulate my former colleague, Congressman Ray LaHood.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, first I have an item I want to speak about on the pending bill. There is another item I want to discuss, first of all, but even before that, I want to add that I caught the tail end of the statement of the Senator from Illinois about student loans. When I first arrived here in the Senate and I was sworn in right where our pages are sitting now, I had over \$100,000 in student loans that I had taken on during my undergraduate but primarily my postgraduate education. I can state that had it not been for the blessings of the proceeds of a book that

I wrote called "American Son," I am not sure I would have ever paid those loans off. I was fortunate. I went to law school and got a law degree and was employed. I know firsthand the struggle that millions of Americans are facing and the young people who have taken on substantial student loan debt, some of whom have never graduated from institutions and others who have graduated, frankly, with pieces of paper of degrees that, unfortunately, are not worth the paper they are printed on. As a result, they are stuck with a debt that can never be discharged.

There are only two ways to get rid of a student loan—die or pay it off. For many people, paying it off is not going to happen. It is an issue that this Senator hopes Congress will confront. It is a looming crisis in America. There is over a trillion dollars of student loan debt. Quite frankly, it holds people back. When that student loan is sitting on your credit report, you won't get a loan to buy a home. If your wages are being garnished and other issues come up as a result of paying it off, it is a debilitating problem that people face. We have discussed throughout the years the hopes of steps we can take to address it, and I hope we will have a chance to do that before this Congress finishes its work.

HONORING THE 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
"BORINQUEENERS"

Mr. President, before I speak on the bill, I want to rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished group of American heroes. It is a group that for too long was denied the honors and benefits they were owed for their service to our Nation.

The 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, is a predominantly Puerto Rican regiment that is the only Hispanic segregated unit to fight in every global war of the 20th century. Historically, the Borinqueneers were denied equal benefits and equal honors for their service, despite the fact that their regiment experienced equal risk and equal duty in combat during World War I, World War II, and the Korean war.

They have since been decorated for their extraordinary service on the battlefield. In the Korean war alone, the regiment earned more than 2,700 Purple Hearts, 600 Bronze Stars, 250 Silver Stars, 9 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 1 Medal of Honor.

There is another medal, however, that has yet to be presented, but that will change later this afternoon when the Borinqueneers and their families will celebrate the unveiling of the long overdue Congressional Gold Medal. This is the highest civilian honor in the United States.

The medal will be unveiled today at a ceremony in the Capitol. It will then be given to the Smithsonian Institute and placed on public display. It is my hope that the more than 1,000 Borinqueneer veterans living throughout the United States, as well as the family members of those fallen, departed, and missing

in action, will know at last that their service has received the ultimate tribute from a grateful Nation. Over the years, even in the shadow of unequal treatment, the Borinqueneers never faltered and never failed to prove just how valuable they are to the cause of freedom.

My favorite example is the story of Operation Portrex—a military exercise that occurred on the eve of the Korean war. It was intended to test how the Army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force would do as liberators of an enemy-controlled island. The Borinqueneers were tasked with playing the role of "the enemy aggressors" and attempting to prevent the more than 3,200 American troops from liberating the island in this exercise. It was a task that, quite frankly, they were not expected to accomplish. Yet, much to the surprise of the Army commanders, the 65th Infantry, badly outnumbered, was able to halt the offensive forces on the beaches.

So it is no surprise that after seeing the tremendous skill of the Borinqueneers, our Army commanders quickly deployed them into the heart of the Korean war, trusting them with numerous important offensive operations. One of those operations occurred on January 31, 1951. It is credited as having been the last battalion-size bayonet charge by a U.S. Army unit. Of that charge, the commanding general, Douglas MacArthur, later wrote:

The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry regiment, on the battlefields of Korea, by valor and determination and a resolute will to victory, give daily testament to their invincible loyalty to the United States and the fervor of their devotion to those immutable standards of human relations to which the Americans and the Puerto Ricans are in common dedicated. They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle. I am proud indeed to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them.

Throughout the storied history of the 65th, there are countless examples of valor that have distinguished this regiment. Today, Puerto Ricans serve in our military at some of the highest rates of any demographic group in the Nation, which is no doubt a lasting legacy of the Borinqueneers.

It has been one of my great honors as a Senator to be involved in the effort to secure the Congressional Gold Medal by cosponsoring the legislation that passed the Senate in 2014. I was also honored to stand in the White House as President Obama signed the bill into law.

Today, I want to thank two congressionally designated liaisons who worked tirelessly to make this day a reality: San Rodriguez and Javier Morales. Both of them are Army veterans. They made it their mission to ensure that through the design of the medal and its unveiling ceremony, these men who have honored our Nation receive the honor they deserve in return. I thank both of them for their work.

I would also like to say a special thank-you to the students at St. Luke's Lutheran School in Oviedo, FL, and to their teacher, Ms. Carla Cotto Ford, who is the granddaughter of two Borinqueneers. Ms. Ford and her students raised thousands of dollars in their community toward an ongoing national effort to ensure that every single living Borinqueneer would receive a replica of the Congressional Gold Medal.

The passionate efforts of Mr. Rodriguez and Mr. Morales and Ms. Ford and her students and so many others who have labored to make this day a reality are part of what makes this Congressional Gold Medal so special. It reminds us that the legacy of past Borinqueneers who have fought and died for America is indeed a living legacy.

Today that legacy, alive and well, reminds us that America truly is an exceptional country. Ours is a nation made up of people from all different backgrounds and all different cultures who came together as one Nation because we share a common idea: that everyone deserves the freedom to exercise their God-given rights. Each member of the 65th Infantry Regiment fought for that freedom not just for themselves but for every man and woman and child in these United States.

In closing, to the Borinqueneers, I would like to say congratulations on the unveiling of your well-deserved Congressional Gold Medal. More importantly, on behalf of my staff and my family and the people of Florida, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for fighting to make this Nation the best it can be.

Mr. President, on another topic, I want to briefly discuss an amendment I now have pending on the bill before us, the bill on the FAA. It is an amendment that is drafted to the finance portion of this bill and that deals with welfare reform.

For two decades now, it has been the policy of the United States that new immigrants to the United States do not qualify for welfare and other public assistance programs for their first 5 years in the country. Just to lay out what that means, if you are a legal immigrant to the United States, for the first 5 years that you are in this country, you do not qualify for any Federal welfare or other public assistance programs. Of course, illegal immigrants do not qualify at all for Federal assistance programs. But there is an exception to this Federal law. The exception for this policy is for refugees and asylees who come to our shores seeking shelter from persecution. So while immigrants to the United States do not get Federal benefits, if you can prove you are a refugee fleeing persecution, then you do qualify for Federal assistance.

For those people who can prove they are fleeing persecution, our compassionate country makes this financial

commitment so they can get a new start on life and a leg up. But there is a provision of existing law that many people are not aware of. A provision of this existing law basically says that anyone who comes from Cuba—regardless of why they come to the United States, they are automatically and immediately presumed to be a refugee, and therefore they are automatically and immediately eligible for welfare and other public assistance. In essence, our existing law treats all Cubans categorically as if they are refugees, whether or not they can prove it.

As many of you know, I am the son of Cuban immigrants. I live in a community where Cuban exiles have had an indelible imprint on our country, on the State of Florida and in South Florida in particular. Yet I stand here today to say that this provision of law, this distinction, is no longer justified. This financial incentive, this notion, this reality that if you get here from Cuba, you are going to immediately qualify for Federal benefits has encouraged the current migratory crisis in which today thousands of Cubans are making dangerous trips to come to the United States of America. It is creating pressure for foreign governments—for example, in Central America—that simply cannot host them, and it is now adding pressure to our southwest border.

Just to outline what is happening, traditionally, Cubans come to the United States on a raft, on an airplane, or on a visa, but now many are making to trip to Costa Rica or Honduras and they are working their way up to Central America, through Mexico, and crossing our southern border.

It is my belief—and I think well-founded based on much of the evidence we have now received in testimony and in newspaper articles; the South Florida Sun Sentinel, one of our newspapers based in Broward County, has extensively documented this and other abuses that are going on—that a significant number of people are drawn to this country from Cuba because they know that when they arrive, if they can step foot on dry land, they will immediately receive status and they immediately qualify for a package of Federal benefits that no other immigrant group would qualify for unless they can prove they are refugees.

This current policy is not just being abused, it is hurting the American taxpayers. There are reports that indicate that financial support for Cuban immigrants exceeded \$680 million in the year 2014 alone. Those numbers, by the way, have quite frankly grown since then.

On top of the fundamental unfairness of the policy, recent reports in the media indicate that there is gross abuse of this policy. In Florida, we are now hearing many stories of individuals coming to this country and claiming their benefits regularly and repeatedly returning to Cuba—in essence, the country you are supposed to be fleeing

because you fear for your life and your freedom. If you are a refugee, it means you are seeking refuge. It is difficult to justify someone's refugee status when after arriving in the United States they are traveling back to the place they are "fleeing" from, 10, 15, 20, 30 times a year.

By the way, this places the Cuban act in particular danger. That is a separate topic not dealt with in my amendment and one that I have said publicly should perhaps be reexamined and adjusted to the new reality we now face. But I am not dealing with that right now. We are dealing with the benefits portion of this.

It is difficult to justify refugee benefits for people who are arriving in the United States and are immediately traveling repeatedly back to the nation they claim to be fleeing. Others who are immediately traveling back to the island are actually staying there.

Let me paint the picture for you. You come from Cuba on the Cuban Adjustment Act. You arrive in the United States because you crossed the southwest border with Mexico or you landed on a raft on a beach somewhere in Florida. You claim your status as a Cuban refugee, and then less than a year later or a year later, you travel back to Cuba and you stay there for weeks or months at a time. But because you qualify for Federal refugee benefits, you are receiving benefits from the Federal Government, but you are living in Cuba. And how this practice works is that while you are living in Cuba, relatives or friends in America are getting hold of your benefits, which are mailed to you or direct-deposited, and then they are making sure you get that money to subsidize your lifestyle.

I can tell you today unequivocally that there are people living basically permanently on the island of Cuba, with an occasional visit back to the United States, who are living a lifestyle that is being subsidized by the U.S. taxpayer because of this abuse.

This practice, quite frankly, is illegal under current law, but the responsible agencies seem to have failed to enforce this law. So I have offered an amendment to this bill that puts an end to this abuse and puts an end to the unfairness of the existing law. All my amendment would do is it would simply require those who come from Cuba—they would still be able, under the Cuban Adjustment Act, to receive permanent status in the United States, but they are going to be treated like every other immigrant. They are going to be ineligible for most Federal benefit programs for 5 years unless they can demonstrate and prove they qualify for refugee status.

Let me paint a picture of what that would look like. If you come from Cuba and you can prove that you are fleeing oppression, that you are involved politically, that you are a dissident, that you are someone who the government is persecuting, then you are a refugee and you will be treated like a refugee

and you will qualify for refugee benefits. But if you simply arrive from Cuba because you are seeing a better life for yourself from an economic standpoint, you will still be able to benefit from the Cuban Adjustment Act in that status, but you will not qualify for Federal benefits and you will be treated like any other immigrant who comes to the United States.

We should be clear that the Castro regime does indeed repress hundreds of people every week. There is no question that there are many who still come here from Cuba who are refugees and are fleeing persecution. There is no doubt that there are people who will arrive this month and this year from Cuba who have left Cuba because they are being politically persecuted. There is no doubt about that. So we are not talking about excluding them. They will be able to prove they are refugees and they will be able to qualify for refugee benefits. While it is clear that there are still many people facing persecution in Cuba and fleeing, it is also clear that it is not everyone who is coming from Cuba.

So all this amendment would do is bring parity between Cuban refugees and every other refugee. I say this to you as someone whose parents came from Cuba. I propose this amendment as someone who lives in a community where Cuban Americans comprise a significant plurality of the population. I see firsthand these abuses that are occurring. It is not fair to the American taxpayer. It is costing us money. Quite frankly, it is encouraging people to come here to take advantage of this program.

By passing this amendment—if we pass it—Congress will not only save taxpayers millions of dollars, but I believe it will also help minimize the increase we have seen in migration of Cubans over the last couple of years by weeding out bad actors who only come to the United States in search of government benefits they can take advantage of for the first 5 years they are here.

I believe this is responsible. I believe this is the right approach for our Nation fiscally but also from an immigration standpoint. I hope I can earn bipartisan support for passing this very sensible proposal.

I encourage my colleagues to go on the Web site of the South Florida Sun Sentinel, a newspaper in South Florida. You can see they have extensively documented not just these abuses but a series of other abuses that are occurring as well as part of this overall program.

So it is my hope that I can earn the support of my colleagues to convert this idea into law.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

JESSIE'S STORY

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I am rising to share Jessie's story. Jessie's story is the story of Jessie Grubb from Charleston, WV, who passed away. She was only 30 years old.

After years of struggling with heroin addiction, she had been doing well. Her parents and family members and all her close friends were very proud of the progress she was making. She had been sober since August, but last month she had surgery for an infection. The infection was related to a running injury, and she died a day after leaving the hospital.

Jessie's story with addiction is known to many. Her father David Grubb was a colleague of mine—a State senator, and a very good State senator, I might add. We worked together in the legislature. He shared their family's struggle with addiction with President Obama. I was very pleased President Obama came to a State where he probably has the least popularity but which has the greatest challenge with opioid addiction—West Virginia. He came there and he heard the struggles. He saw it firsthand, and I think it moved him and made him more committed to fighting this drug abuse that is going on in America.

As I said, David Grubb shared his family's story with President Obama when he came to West Virginia last October and, like I said, it has made a difference. In West Virginia, not unlike Iowa, we have been hit very hard. As a matter of fact, West Virginia has been hit the hardest by opioid addiction. It is an epidemic.

When we think about an epidemic, pandemics—we talk about Ebola and the Zika virus and all the things we hear about, but we haven't heard a whole lot about opioid addiction. It has been a silent killer. It is one where we are all ashamed if it happens to us or our family. We don't talk much about it. We think we can handle it within our own structure. Yet it is an epidemic. I say there is not a person in our country who doesn't know someone in their immediate or extended family who hasn't been affected. That is an epidemic, and it is something we have to cure.

Drug overdose in my little State of West Virginia has increased by more than 700 percent between 1999 and 2013. Last year alone, over 600 lives were lost to prescription drug abuse—overdose. Now that is legal. These are products produced by legal manufacturing companies, pharmaceuticals. These are products approved by the Food and Drug Administration, a watchdog responsible for making sure our food and all of our drugs are safe. So this is something that is legal and that our doctors prescribe. Our most trusted people in America—our doctors—are prescribing something they think will help us. Yet it is something that is killing Americans everywhere.

So this is Jessie's story and her family's pain, which is all too familiar and all too common in West Virginia and throughout the Nation. As I said, we lost 627 West Virginians last year, and 61,000 West Virginians used prescription pain medications for nonmedical purposes in 2014—nonmedical purposes. This includes 6,000 teenagers.

Our State is not unique. Every day in the country, 51 Americans are dying—51 Americans die every day from opioid abuse. Since 1999, we have lost almost 200,000 Americans to prescription opioid abuse. Think about that: 200,000 in a little over a decade. That is unheard of. In any other category we would be doing something monumental.

Jessie's story deeply impacted the President, and I spoke with him about her death and the pain her family is going through. When the President came to Charleston, Jessie was in a rehab facility in Michigan for the fourth time—for the fourth time. Before her life was taken over by addiction in 2009, Jessie's future was very bright. She was truly an unbelievable young lady. She was the beloved daughter of David and Kate Grubb, the beloved sister to her four sisters, and a beloved friend to family and to many others.

Jessie was an excellent student and scored in the 99th percentile on every one of her tests. She was a cheerleader at Roosevelt Junior High School and was an avid runner. At the time of her death, she was looking forward to running in her first marathon. The only trouble she had ever gotten into in school was when she protested the Iraq war. Needless to say, she was a natural born leader. She truly was. She was one of those girls who was captivating.

After graduating from Capital High School, she was thrilled and looking forward to her bright future at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. She was sexually assaulted during her first semester, which caused her to withdraw from school and return home to Charleston.

That traumatic event caused Jessie to turn to heroin to escape her pain. Over the next 7 years, Jessie would battle her addiction. She would overdose four times and go into rehab four times, but up until her death, she had been sober for 6 months and was focused on making a life for herself in Michigan, and one her parents were very proud of.

All of Jessie's hard work was ruined because of a careless mistake—one mistake. Jessie's death is particularly heartbreaking because it was 100 percent preventable—100 percent. Her parents traveled to Michigan for Jessie's surgery and told her doctors and hospital personnel that she was a recovering addict. Jessie was having hip surgery that was caused by all her running, and they were treating her for an infection. However, after her surgery, the discharging doctor who said he didn't know she was a recovering ad-

dict sent her home with a prescription for 50—50—OxyContin pills. She should never have been given one—not one—for opioid medication.

We must ensure this never happens again. Jessie passed away that night and think about how preventable this was. Because of a lot of the privacy laws, we can't tell. That doctor didn't know. Did someone mess up? We don't know. If you are allergic to penicillin or something, it is on your chart. They know all the way through if you are allergic to anything, but if you are an addict and you are allergic to opioids, because they will kill you, they can't reveal that.

So, Madam President, I will be asking for your help, as always, and I know you will be compassionate about this. Next week I will be introducing Jessie's Law to make sure this type of careless mistake never happens to another daughter, a son, a nephew, a niece, anyone in America.

The bottom line is, we need to go at this problem from every angle and with the help of everyone—family assistance, counseling programs, drug courts, consumer and medical education, law enforcement support, State and Federal legislation. We need to throw everything we have at this. With continued support and tireless work from everyone, we can beat this epidemic once and for all.

Jessie's death is heartbreaking to anybody who knew her or the family or their contribution to society every day. This is a tremendous family who gives so much back. We all know someone who has been impacted. We do, every one of us. Every one of our young interns here know. Our pages know. They see it in their schools. Everybody sees what is going on, but we have to speak up. This is a fight we have to win.

This opioid epidemic is claiming a generation and taking them away from us. I am committed to this more than I have been committed to anything. If I have one purpose of being in the Senate, it is to bring to light these young people whose lives have been changed, whose families' lives have been changed all over West Virginia, all over America. There has been silence for far too long, and we are not going to keep silent any longer.

People are sending me letters from Iowa, letters from my State of West Virginia, and they are saying: Please use my name. Put a face and a name to a tragedy. They want us to know in Congress that something has to be done. We don't need all these drugs on the market. We don't need the pharmaceutical companies putting out more and more powerful opioids. We don't need a business plan that is destroying people's lives.

I think this is something we agree on. This is something that will unite us like nothing else in Congress. It is not a Democratic or a Republican epidemic. It is not a disease that is killing Democrats and Republicans. It is killing Americans, and we are Americans.

So I am hopeful, and I have been very pleased with all of the support we are getting from both sides, Democrats and Republicans, coming together on this issue. We have important legislation coming forward. I believe this is going to allow us for the first time to make a monumental change. I thank VA Secretary Bob McDonald. He is trying very hard to change the culture of the VA, of treating pain with alternatives. There is so much more we need to do. I will be getting into that later.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the great job she does for the great State of Iowa.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that amendments submitted to the previous substitute, Senate amendment No. 3464, be considered to be submitted to the new substitute, Senate amendment No. 3679, as long as the instructions to the clerk are drafted properly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am trying to get a vote on an amendment that Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have submitted. To explain it, I want to show you this graphic.

These are two airplanes that are exactly the same size, they are flying across the same sky, and they are flying over the same homes. But there is a difference—a difference that I am trying to fix. This one is a passenger plane. Due to an FAA regulation that Senator Snowe and I were able to get in place through a vote in this Chamber several years ago, the pilots in the passenger plane can fly only up to 9 hours a day. After that, they have to rest because pilot fatigue is a very dangerous situation facing not only our pilots but their crews and everyone that is in their vicinity.

What happened when Senator Snowe and I wrote our legislation? We assumed that the regulation that would be forthcoming from the FAA would cover both passenger and cargo planes because, again, these planes share the same skies, go over the same airspace,

and go over the same homes. It is a straightforward point, and fatigue is fatigue. They are not less fatigued because they are carrying cargo rather than passengers. These pilots can fly up to 16 hours a day. We know from the pilots themselves—many pilots organizations have endorsed this—that this is a very dangerous disparity, and it needs to be fixed.

I am asking the majority for an up-or-down vote on this amendment. It is real simple. It simply says the FAA should get rid of this disparity and make the cargo pilots have the same rules as the passenger pilots—real simple.

According to the National Transportation Safety Board, the No. 1 safety issue is fatigue. This is what they cite as the No. 1 problem across the board. So we need to fix this. I have spoken to both of my friends, Senator NELSON, who supports this, and Senator THUNE, who has been a little more subtle about how he feels about this. I asked them if I could have the up-or-down vote. I hope I can have the up-or-down vote. I am not asking for anything special. A 60-vote threshold is fine.

If people want to vote against the amendment, fine; let them be held accountable. But it is a moral issue right now. The bottom line is, people are in jeopardy right now.

I don't know exactly what is going to happen. The reason we are at a standstill is partly because I said I want a vote, and that promptly stopped things. I do it rarely, but I know if we pass this, we are going to save lives. It is written somewhere in the Old Testament that if you save one life, you save humanity. Saving lives is one thing we should do, and since we know about this disparity and we have proof that we need to fix it, we need to fix it.

All I am asking for is an up-or-down vote. If people want to vote no, that is fine with me. Hopefully, most will vote yes, and hopefully we will get this done. We got it done before, and we should be able to get it done again.

What could be happening is that we could get that vote. Of course, what I would love to death is if Senator THUNE and NELSON just took our amendment and put it in the package. That would be wonderful. But if they don't want to do that, I want a vote.

What I hope doesn't happen is that they will say: OK. We will give you a vote, but we are going to take two really poison pill amendments and force everybody to vote on those.

This is not a game. I am not here to have a game. I am here to have a vote, up or down. This should not be tied to anything else.

I want to read to you the incredible words that were spoken. These are excerpts from UPS Flight 1354. This is a cockpit conversation that took place minutes before a crash. These words are coming from the grave. Listen to these words and make up your own mind as to whether I am being unreasonable here in wanting to have a vote.

Pilot 1: I mean I don't get it. It should be one level of safety for everybody.

Pilot 2: It makes no sense at all.

Pilot 1: No, it doesn't at all.

Pilot 2: And to be honest, it should be across the board. To be honest, in my opinion, whether you are flying passengers or cargo, if you are flying this time of day, you know fatigue is definitely—

Pilot 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Pilot 2: When my alarm went off, I mean, I am thinking, I am so tired.

Pilot 1: I know.

“When my alarm went off, I mean, I am thinking, I am so tired.”

This photograph shows what happened to that cargo jet. It happened over Alabama in 2013. This is what happened. The NTSB said it was definitely fatigue that played a role in this crash. So am I being unreasonable to say this is the FAA bill—this is the bill we do every couple years about air safety? Am I being unreasonable to ask my colleagues to vote up or down on whether there ought to be parity between passenger pilots and cargo pilots? I don't think so.

Remember Captain Sullenberger, who was the hero? Captain Sullenberger was the hero who landed his plane in the water—the “Hero of the Hudson.” He is a superstar. He did this. He knows about safety. He knows it.

A passenger on that flight said: I could feel the water running over the top of my feet, and that is what really scared me. “I thought, I survived the impact and now I am going to drown.” That was a passenger who said that—how the pilot saved them all. We all know who saved 155 people as he landed the jet in the frigid New York Hudson River.

Let's see what Sully Sullenberger says about the situation of fatigue. If we cannot listen to this, who are we listening to? By the way, these comments are not aimed just at my colleagues; they are aimed at the administration that has not done this, which is wrong. They are wrong.

Listen to what Captain “Sully” Sullenberger, the hero of Flight 1549, said: “You wouldn't want your surgeon operating on you after only 5 hours of sleep, or your passenger pilot flying the airplane after only 5 hours sleep, and you certainly wouldn't want a cargo pilot flying a large plane over your house at 3 a.m. on 5 hours of sleep trying to find the airport and land.”

So the question is: Who do we listen to? Do we listen to the companies that are afraid it is going to cost them a few dollars? Do we listen to the pilots? Do we listen to Sully Sullenberger, who is telling us fatigue kills? It is a killer. That is what he said at the press conference yesterday.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two articles that appeared recently in the news.

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

[From the New York Daily News, April 12, 2016]

MIRACLE ON THE HUDSON PILOT PUSHES SAFE SKIES ACT TO GRANT CARGO PILOTS REST PROTECTIONS

(By Nancy Dillon)

Tom Hanks will play him in a Clint Eastwood-directed biopic due out this summer, but Chesley Sullenberger isn't leaning his seat back.

The Miracle on the Hudson pilot was in Washington, D.C. Tuesday, pushing lawmakers to pass the Safe Skies Act and grant cargo pilots the same rest protections as passenger pilots.

"This is not a partisan issue, it's a science-based, commonsense issue, Sullenberger told the Daily News.

He said cargo pilots generally fly at night and deserve the same sleep standards already guaranteed to passenger pilots—flights limited to eight or nine hours and minimum 10-hour rest periods.

"It's really just flat wrong (to exclude cargo pilots). They're the ones who need it most. They have their natural circadian rhythms disrupted the most," Sullenberger told The News.

"If you're home in the evening when hundreds of cargo airplanes are flying overhead, it doesn't matter if those planes are carrying people or packages. It matters that their pilots are alert enough to do their job safely," the retired U.S. Airways captain turned author and aviation safety consultant said.

Sullenberger joined Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in Washington to close the "dangerous loophole" in prior legislation that carved out the exception for cargo pilots at the request of cargo carriers, he said.

The Safe Skies Act would be an amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill, according to a press release from Boxer's office.

Currently, cargo pilots can be on duty for up to 16 hours at a time, the release said.

At least one freight giant is against the proposal.

"Cargo and passenger pilots have very different schedules, and one size does not fit all when it comes to air travel safety. Forcing cargo pilots to fly according to a set of rules developed for distinct conditions in a different industry will make them less safe," FedEx said in a statement to the Daily News.

"Safety is our top priority. That's why we oppose legislation mandating passenger-pilot scheduling limits for cargo pilots," the statement said.

Sullenberger said its doubtful he and his crew could have landed U.S. Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River on January 15, 2009—saving all 155 souls—if they were deprived sleep.

"I've proven in the most dramatic way what I'm talking about," Sullenberger said. "Had (copilot) Jeff (Skiles) and I been fatigued, we could not have performed at that level."

The legendary landing on the frigid Hudson—caused by a bird strike that crippled the plane's engines after takeoff from LaGuardia Airport—is something he still thinks about constantly, he said.

"I get daily reminders of that remarkable day. So many people rose to the occasion—the crew, all the rescue workers," he said. "It was the result of the efforts of many people, but I've become the public face."

Asked about Warner Bros planned release of "Sully" this September—a movie based on his autobiography "Highest Duty"—Sullenberger, 65, said he's grateful for all the continued attention.

"I'm doing very well. I've been saying that for a long time. If I was not doing well, it

would be my own fault. I get to travel the world, meet world leaders and leaders in the fields of health, technology," and of course Hollywood, he said.

"It's really been a fascinating education."

[From The Hill, April 12, 2016]

DEMS WANT PILOT-REST PROVISION IN FAA BILL

(By Melanie Zanona)

Senate Democrats want to grant cargo pilots the same rest standards as passenger pilots as a provision of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill.

Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) are leading the fight to attach an amendment to the FAA bill that would limit cargo plane pilots to flying no more than nine hours a day—the same standard for passenger pilots. Cargo pilots can currently fly up to 16 hours a day.

Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, the retired airline captain who safely executed an emergency landing in the Hudson River in 2009, is also backing the provision. He was spotted talking to members about the amendment in the Senate basement after a Tuesday press conference.

"Fatigue is a killer," Sullenberger said at the press conference. "It's time to right this wrong. It's time to fix this rule."

Boxer said she would filibuster the FAA bill if the pilot provision does not get a vote.

"I think this is an absurdity to block a vote on something as important as this," she said.

The comments come amid growing concern that pet interests could bog down the entire FAA bill, including a push to include renewable energy tax breaks. The agency's current legal authority expires July 15.

"There are other problems with the bill that people are weighing as well, so I think this bill has a very shaky future," Boxer added.

Boxer and Klobuchar first crafted legislation to make sure passenger and cargo crews had the same flight- and duty-time requirements after the Department of Transportation (DOT) wrote new rules to address pilot fatigue following a deadly passenger airline crash in 2009.

The DOT standards require passenger pilots to be limited to flying either eight or nine hours, with a minimum of 10 rest hours and the opportunity for at least eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. But cargo pilots were not included in the rules.

"This doesn't make sense," Boxer said Tuesday. "It's dangerous."

A group of shipping companies wrote a letter to Senate leadership explaining why they thought the amendment "could actually make our operations less safe and put our pilots at risk."

"Measures used to prevent fatigue must be different for passenger carriers than they are for cargo carriers because our work schedules are different," wrote FedEx, UPS, ABX Air and Atlas Air.

"We fly fewer legs, have longer layovers, and have better rest opportunities on our trips, including while technically 'on duty' waiting for our nightly sorts to occur."

Boxer beat back against the letter, accusing special interests of intervening.

"The proof is in the pudding," Boxer said. "Special interests are doing what they always do: trying to get a deal."

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you, Mr. President.

Here it is. This one in The Hill is quoting Captain Sullenberger:

"Fatigue is a killer." . . . "It's time to right this wrong. It's time to fix this rule."

Here is another quote in the New York Daily News, with a picture of Captain Sullenberger saying:

"This is not a partisan issue, it is a science-based commonsense issue."

He said cargo pilots generally fly at night and deserve the same sleep standards already guaranteed to passenger pilots—flights limited to eight or nine hours and minimum of 10-hour rest periods.

"It is really just flat wrong (to exclude cargo pilots). They're the ones who need it most. They have their natural circadian rhythms disrupted the most."

Just standing next to the guy was a thrill for me. Captain Sullenberger told the News:

"If you're home in the evening when hundreds of cargo airplanes are flying overhead, it doesn't matter if those planes are carrying people or packages. It matters that their pilots are alert enough to do their job safely," the retired U.S. Airways captain said.

Do you know what Sullenberger said?

He said that "it's doubtful he and his crew could have landed U.S. Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River on January 15, 2009—saving all 155 souls—if they were deprived of sleep."

Look, we can all put ourselves in a situation, whether we are young—and the young can take lack of sleep a lot better. As we age, it is tougher. I used to take the redeye all the time, and I can state that I felt it for days. Do we want to have a pilot in a circumstance where he or she is sleep deprived and they find themselves in an emergency? I don't think so. None other than Sullenberger said that he is doubtful he and his crew could have landed that flight if they were sleep deprived.

He said again—this is in another article from the Daily News. He said:

"I get daily reminders of that remarkable day. So many people rose to the occasion—the crew, all the rescue workers," he said. "It was the result of the efforts of many people, but I've become the public face . . . and had I been fatigued, we could not have performed at that level."

This is the classic case of a no-brainer. The people who fly the airplanes are telling us that fatigue is a killer. They are telling us in a circumstance of emergencies that they will not be able to function.

We have an opportunity to fix it, but we don't have a vote right now. We don't have a vote. As I understand it, we might have a vote, but they may then say to vote on two other issues that are poison pill issues. That is the way it goes around here.

Someday I am going to write a book called "How a Bill Really Becomes a Law." The truth is that is how it goes around here. If one wants to vote on something, then they say: Swallow a porcupine, and maybe we will give you a vote.

Now here is another one. "Miracle on the Hudson Pilot Pushes More Rest for Cargo Crews." He and I are standing there, and all I am saying is:

We just need a vote on this, and you know if people want to come down in the well and vote the wrong way on safety, then they have shown themselves . . . [but], frankly, they are putting the lives of people at risk.

And I am asking for a vote. Again, Sully Sullenberger is quoted:

"Let me be very direct: Fatigue is a killer. . . . It's a ruthless indiscriminate killer that

our industry and our regulators have allowed to continue killing for way too long.”

This is not partisan. I have a Democratic administration who did the wrong thing on this. I have a Republican Senate that is not giving me a vote on this. Come on. When people die in an airplane crash, we don't know if they are Democrats or Republicans; we just know we cry our hearts out for the families.

I am going to show you the crashed plane again. This is what happens when there is fatigue. This is what can happen. There have been many of these crashes because the pilots are flying on 5 hours of sleep.

All I am asking for is a vote. Give us a vote. If you want to vote it down, vote it down. You will be judged. That is OK. That is your problem, not mine.

I want to praise Senator KLOBUCHAR, who is the coauthor of this amendment. She was very effective in her comments both in the committee and at the presser yesterday.

Sullenberger, the “Hero of the Hudson,” said this in this other article:

“This rule was written the way it was, not for scientific reasons, but for economic ones, by those who are more concerned about an additional burden that they consider an additional cost. It's time to right this wrong. It's time to fix this rule.”

You know, those of us who have been around a long time remember the Ford Pinto. That car exploded when there was a crash. I think a lot of us remember it. When discovery was done by the attorneys for the victims, they found out the cold and calculating ways the corporation viewed these accidents and losses of life. Oh, they said, we can stand X number of accidents a year, no problem, because we have insurance. It will not affect us. But, gee, it will cost us X number of dollars to fix the problem.

What could be more callous? What could be more cold? It is the same thing here. It is the companies.

Do you know what is fascinating? The airlines that now operate under the 9-hour rule—I will put up the chart that shows the two planes with the different times. The airlines that now fly their pilots up to 9 hours a day, compared to the cargo plane owners who permit their pilots to work up to 16 hours a day, they—the airline industry is doing great. They never said word one of a problem. They had rested pilots, they had happier crews, and they are doing fine. So why is it that we get letters from the corporations that fly these planes—God forbid we should tell them to give their pilots rest.

I want to tell you who is on our side. The Southwest Airlines Pilot Association—this thrills me—just sent us a letter:

On behalf of the more than 8,000 pilots—

This is actually to Senator THUNE—

I urge you to include Senator Barbara Boxer's Safe Skies Act in the FAA reauthorization.

They say:

It fixes a huge safety gap that exists in our air transportation today.

They talk about the Colgan Air crash in 2009. We took action to fix the problem on passenger planes, but it was inexplicable that it was left out of the cargo planes.

As pilots, they say safety is their No. 1 priority.

They say:

“We cannot do our job if we are not all held to the same safety standard. A tired and fatigued pilot is a danger to everyone in their path.”

That is the point. These passenger pilots are rested; the cargo pilots are fatigued. They fly in the same sky, in the same airspace. They try to land at the same airports. Having this disparity is a nightmare.

They say:

“Please, do not let another tragedy be the reason for action. This is your chance to fix the cargo carve-out and ensure safe skies in this nation.”

I thank these pilots for weighing in on this issue. It means a lot to me that they did it.

The Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations talks about the Klobuchar amendment, which is this amendment, and they ask us to please allow this vote.

They say:

“We cannot continue operating with two levels of safety and we sincerely hope you are able to fix the cargo carve-out once and for all.” We urge your support for this amendment.

I thank so much Captain Michael Karn, president of the Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations.

You know, I want to say to my colleagues who might be listening from their offices: We get on planes all the time. We have 100-percent faith in the pilot. We all do. They have the responsibility of getting us to our families safely. Every single pilots association is saying to us: Fix this carve-out. It is dangerous.

Any of us could be on a passenger plane just doing great with the rested pilot, and somehow a cargo plane crashes into us because that pilot had 5 hours of sleep.

So we have all of these letters from the Independent Pilots Association, the Allied Pilots Association, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Teamsters Local 1224, Teamsters Local 357. They are all saying the same thing: We cannot do our job if we are not all held to the same safety standard. A tired and fatigued pilot is a danger to everyone. Don't let another tragedy be the reason for action.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two letters I have referred to.

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

COALITION OF AIRLINE

PILOTS ASSOCIATIONS,

Washington, DC, March 31, 2016.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. BILL NELSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE AND RANKING MEMBER NELSON: I am writing you today on behalf of 28,000 professional airline pilots in support of the Klobuchar Amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill. As you know, during the committee mark-up Senator Klobuchar respectfully withdrew consideration of her amendment with the hope and committee leadership would work with her to solve what is known as the cargo carve-out.

As you are aware, Congress passed legislation in 2010 following the deadly 2009 Colgan Air Flight 3407 crash that claimed the lives of 45 passengers, 4 crew members and 1 individual on the ground. As the details of the pilots' lack of training and fatigue came to light, the American public demanded that more be done to ensure safety in our skies.

Congress heard these concerns and included a requirement in the 2010 FAA reauthorization that the Department of Transportation promulgate rules on pilot duty and rest hours to prevent fatigue and ensure flights are safely operated by pilots with adequate rest.

As well-intended as those rules were, somehow through a cost benefit analysis and other inexplicable changes to the original rules as proposed, cargo pilots were carved out of these new regulations, apparently because it was too costly to ensure cargo pilots had adequate rest.

Time and time again we see tragic, and avoidable, plane crashes where fatigue is one of the factors contributing to, or out right to blame, for these accidents. In fact, the National Transportation Safety Board listed preventing fatigue related accidents as their number one most wanted improvement in transportation safety for 2016, citing a 2013 UPS plane crash in Birmingham, Alabama as an example.

When the FAA reauthorization legislation reaches the Senate floor for debate, we urge you to use this opportunity to protect your constituents and all Americans across this country. Please do not wait until faced with another tragic accident to address this issue.

We cannot continue operating with two levels of safety and we sincerely hope you are able to fix the cargo carve-out once and for all. We urge your support for the Safe Skies Act and Senator Klobuchar's amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important aviation safety issue.

Sincerely,

Captain D. MICHAEL KARN,
President.

APRIL 8, 2016.

Hon. JOHN THUNE,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. BILL NELSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THUNE AND RANKING MEMBER NELSON: We the undersigned unions representing more than 30,000 pilots across the United States urge you to include Senator Barbara Boxer's Safe Skies Act in the 2016 FAA Reauthorization currently before the full Senate.

Senator Boxer's bill, S.A. 3489, fixes a huge safety gap in our air transportation system

today. After the Colgan Air crash in 2009, Congress took action to prevent future tragedies mandating that the Department of Transportation issue science-based regulations addressing pilot fatigue in our nation's airlines. After substantial research and review of undisputed scientific evidence on sleep cycles and fatigue, the draft rules created a new set of requirements related to duty and rest time for all pilots.

Ignoring these irrefutable facts and the recommendations from safety experts, the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs removed all references to cargo airlines from the final rules suggesting that a cost of imposing this safety regulation did not outweigh the benefits to the public. Or more simply stated, preventing the death of two pilots and the loss of some cargo does not exceed the cost to a corporation to change their pilots' schedules.

As pilots, safety is our number one focus. Rather than argue and dispute the details of the process that created the cargo carve-out, we are more interested in fixing the problem. When we are behind the controls of an airplane trying to get from point A to point B, we do not think about the costs or the benefits of what we do in the cockpit. Our work before, during and after our flights is 100% focused ensuring safety. Our lives depend on it, the lives of those on our planes depend on it and certainly the lives of those who see us flying overhead depend on our commitment to safety.

We cannot do our job if we are not all held to the same safety standards. A tired and fatigued pilot is a danger to everyone in their path. Please do not let another tragedy be the reason for action. This is your chance to fix the cargo carve-out and ensure safe skies in this nation.

Sincerely,

Captain KEITH WILSON,
President, Allied Pilots Association.

Captain ROBERT TRAVIS,
President, Independent Pilots Association.

Captain DAVID BOURNE,
Director, Airline Division, International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Captain DANIEL WELLS,
President, Teamsters Local 1224.

Captain JAMES CLARK,
President, Teamsters Local 357.

Mrs. BOXER. I know people are saying: BARBARA, why are you being so tough and not letting us vote on other things?

I have to say this: If we don't use this occasion to fix a problem that is listed as the No. 1 safety issue by the NTSB, and we can do it in 2 minutes—I have spoken my piece. You know, one of my staffers said she explained to her 6-year-old child what the issue is because he is always interested in what she is working on. She said: Jacob, the fact is, the planes are the same size, and the man who is flying this one and the lady flying this one get different hours of rest.

I see that my friend from Florida, the great ranking member of the Commerce Committee, might want to ask a question.

Mr. NELSON. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, I will.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for yielding. I just want to

bring to the Senator's attention that I am very hopeful that we are getting an agreement that there will be a vote on the Senator's amendment and some other amendments. I thought the Senator would be happy to hear the news that it looks as if we are coming to an agreement where there will be a vote on the Senator's amendment.

Mrs. BOXER. Well, if I could respond through the Chair, the words of my colleague are very hopeful. I just hope it is not tied to some poison pills that other people have a problem with. You never know around here what is going to happen. In my view—and I know the Senator shares it because I know his passion is with me on this—the fact is, this should be an up-or-down vote. It should not be related to other things. It is the No. 1 safety issue of the NTSB.

My friend from Florida is like a brother to me, and we counsel each other on issues on which we have some expertise. I know he is in there fighting to get a vote. I am so grateful to him. I have added a whole bunch of support for this.

I will close at this point because I think my friend has given me some hope. I am going to close reading the recording. I don't know—I ask Senator NELSON, did you ever hear this? I want to make sure you did. This will take just a moment. This is from the excerpt from the flight deck before a plane went down:

Pilot 1: I mean, I don't get that. You know, it should be one level for everybody.

These are words from the grave.

Pilot 2: It makes no sense at all.

Pilot 1: No, it doesn't.

Pilot 2: To be honest, it should be across the board. To be honest, in my opinion, whether you are flying passengers or cargo, if you are flying this time of day, you know fatigue is definitely—

Pilot 1: Yeah, yeah.

Pilot 2: When my alarm went off, I mean, I'm thinking I'm so tired.

Pilot 1: I know.

Now, when this happened, I thought for sure that our administration would take care of this and change that rule. They didn't. That is why we are here.

I wanted everyone to know this: Sometimes it is hard to look at something like this, but it is harder to look at the final result of what happened from fatigue. This is what happened within minutes of that conversation. People could not function. Captain Sullenberger said it well: Fatigue is a killer.

We could fix it here today. We fixed it—Olympia Snowe and I—years ago for passenger aircraft. We need to fix it for cargo pilots. They deserve our support and the support of people who rely on them—all of us—because they share the sky with the passenger aircraft. We need to fix this.

I thank the Senator from Florida.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The Senator from Georgia.

IRAN

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about an issue that we too often forget about here after the fact. We move on to the next topic of the day. But it was just 1 year ago, on April 2, that actually marked the framework for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the President's nuclear deal with Iran. That was the day it was announced. We were promised by this administration at all levels that this nuclear agreement would make the world a safer place. I have traveled the world quite a bit in the last year. I just got back from another trip to the Middle East. I believe the world possibly is more dangerous right now than at any time in my lifetime.

Unfortunately, the message that the world is safer did not resonate with Iran. The world was given a false promise that this nuclear deal would serve as a catalyst for change and a moderation within Iran. We have seen change, but it has only been for the worse. Iran is both enriched and emboldened by this dangerous deal. The President's deal provided Iran with over an estimated \$100 billion, approximately, windfall.

The Secretary said just this January that Iran "had massive needs within their country and we, the U.S., will be able to track where this money is going, what is happening with it." But instead of focusing these funds inward, as we were assured, on improving the lives of their people, Iran has chosen to use the money to bolster its conventional forces and cyber capabilities, to strengthen its proxies, to crack down on its own people, and to further destabilize the region.

Iran has test-launched four ballistic missiles since the nuclear deal was announced. Most recently, these missiles were launched with the words "Death to Israel" emblazoned on their side. The most recently launched missiles were more advanced, by the way, precision-guided and more sophisticated.

Iran has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. They continue in developing space-launch vehicles as well that are a transparent guise for seeking longer range missile capability.

Iran humiliated and detained at gunpoint U.S. Navy sailors, in violation of international law.

According to American officials, Iran is using cyber espionage and cyber attacks as a tool of influence with Iranian hackers, breaking into email and social media accounts of employees of our very own State Department who worked on Iran-related issues.

Iran used American hostages for strategic and economic leverage from this administration, only turning over innocent Americans when the administration freed 7 Iranian sanctions violators and dismissed charges on 14 other Iranians, including 2 men who helped transfer soldiers and weapons to the Assad regime and to the terror group Hezbollah.

Iran continues to spend millions to support the Houthi insurgency that is contributing to the security vacuum in Yemen. Just last week, the U.S. Navy confiscated another weapons cache from the Arabian Sea believed to be en route from Iran to Yemen in support of the Houthis. This shipment included about 1,500 Kalashnikov rifles, 200 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and 21 .50-caliber machine guns. That would be bad enough if it were the only one, but this is the fourth such seizure in the region just since September of last year. I think it is very clear what Iranian intentions are with regard to the rebels in Yemen and also to the terrorists of Hezbollah, Hamas, and others in the region.

According to the State Department, Iran continues to be the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. That is our own State Department. In its quest to dominate the Middle East and expel American influence, Iran has exploited terrorism as a tool of statecraft to oppose U.S. interests and objectives in Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Palestinian territories. Iran continues to spend an estimated \$6 billion a year in support of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and millions of dollars and materiel to Hezbollah and Hamas.

On a recent trip to the Middle East just a few weeks ago, I heard these concerns from our friends and allies in the region firsthand. Iran's domestic repression has also gotten worse. The crackdown on dissent is at its worst since the 2009 Green Movement, according to the NGOs. Iran continues to imprison those who disagree with the mullahs and imprisons those who are at odds with the regime. Executions are at their highest level since 1989. Further, the regime disqualified thousands of reformist candidates in its recently held parliamentary elections.

When you look at the facts, it is clear the Middle East, and I would argue the world, is potentially worse off since the signing of the President's nuclear deal. What are we doing about it? I think that is the question the American people should keep their eyes on. According to Secretary Kerry, "Iran deserves the benefits of this agreement that they struck."

Despite the four ballistic missile launches, the administration will not call them a violation of U.N. Security Council resolution 2231. This is the resolution that includes the nuclear deal, arms embargo, and ballistic missile prohibitions. Just last week, Ambassador Shannon, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, told the Foreign Relations Committee that he believes these ballistic missile tests "violated the intent" of the U.N. Security Council resolution but would not call it a violation. I am troubled by that. Iran's ever-increasing support for terrorism and instability is going essentially unchecked. This is no way to handle a rogue regime. Instead, we need to take a tougher stance on Iran now that we see their intentions postdeal.

On ballistic missile violations, we must go beyond the President's designation of 11 individuals and companies for the ballistic missile launches. The Iranians pay for that technology somehow. Yet no financial institution was sanctioned for this transaction. The technology arrived in Iran by boat or by plane. Yet no shipping line or airline or any logistics firm was included in the sanctions.

We need to codify sectoral sanctions on Iran for ballistic missiles and impose tougher standards for mandatory sanctions, including acquisition or development of ballistic missiles as activity requiring sanctions. We need to show Iran we are serious about stopping their continued support of terrorism and human rights violations. We should impose stricter sanctions on the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps for their support of terrorism. We need to freeze assets owned by the IRGC, its members, and its affiliates. We should codify Executive Order 13599 which prohibits Iran's direct and indirect access to the U.S. financial system. We need to improve new sanctions against Iran as a money-laundering entity for terrorist groups and for its human rights abuses.

We need to reauthorize the Iran sanctions act. This vital legislation, which is one of the most important linchpins in U.S. sanctions architecture on Iran, is due to expire at the end of this very year. Without the authorization of ISA, the Iran sanctions act, the threat of snapback for Iranian violations of the nuclear deal doesn't carry much weight. We need to have these sanctions reauthorized so we can use them swiftly in the event of any future Iranian violation. President Obama has already admitted that Iran has violated the spirit of the nuclear agreement.

Finally, we must ensure that Israel is able to maintain its qualitative military edge—this is a standard that we have upheld for many years—and equip our gulf allies against increased Iranian aggression from proxies.

Iran's behavior over the past year has proven they are not worthy of the trust bestowed upon them by this administration. While the administration refuses to admit reality, Congress must hold Iran's feet to the fire to get a stronger U.S. policy toward Iran. We cannot afford to give this rogue regime the benefit of the doubt any longer.

Iran refuses to be an honest actor. It is clear from Iranian actions, just since the nuclear deal was announced, that they have not changed their behavior on missile testing, human rights violations, or support for terrorism. Our policies must change to reflect the dangerous reality.

The Obama administration should work with Congress to strengthen our sanctions, reauthorize the Iran sanctions act, and stand up to Iran's total disregard for international restrictions and the original intent of this nuclear deal.

The world is a very dangerous place. Iran needs to see a strong America stand up and lead again in the region. On this recent trip, the question we asked most of these leaders was: What do we need to do as America? The No. 1 answer by these heads of State was universal: America needs to lead again.

We have created these power vacuums. It is time now to close this one with Iran.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WELCOMING TEAM 26 FROM NEWTOWN,
CONNECTICUT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the Senate has remarkable, even magic moments. Yesterday was one such time for my colleague from Connecticut and me. Senator MURPHY and I had the great honor and privilege to again welcome Team 26 from Newtown, CT, at the end of a truly extraordinary journey—their fourth bike ride from Newtown—to commemorate and remember the 26 beautiful children and educators who were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

This incredibly searing and horrific moment in the life of our State in December of 2012 was marked by their first journey 3 years ago. This one was their fourth ride through rough roads and tough traffic, and snow and rain across the Northeast as they pedaled—literally pedaled—to Washington, DC, from Newtown.

We said goodbye to them on Saturday morning in some pretty cold weather. I was there. They braved some fierce storms to be here, but the memory they carried with them and the resolve and resilience they showed truly epitomizes the spirit of Sandy Hook and its wonderful people who not only survived that unspeakable tragedy of December 2012 but also showed America a lesson with acts of kindness, unceasing advocacy, resilience, resolve, and—most importantly—a message of peace, love, and hope.

I wear still on my wrist a bracelet I received then. Its lettering is worn out, so it is no longer readable, but it is that same message of hope, peace, and love they brought with them as they traveled here.

Today a number of them came to the Capitol. I was proud to greet them with their leader, Monte Frank, who organized that first ride. He is responsible for the extraordinary leadership in keeping that together and keeping them going over those rough roads.

With us at the Capitol today were Peter Olsen, Andrea Myers, Drew Cunningham, and Ken Eisner. They are among the 26 riders who came to Washington yesterday, met with us outside

the House of Representatives, then went to the White House and met with officials there—including Valerie Jarrett—and eventually with the Vice President of the United States, Mr. BIDEN.

The members of Team 26 chose to ride to Washington, DC, not only for their personal reasons but to deliver a petition with a very clear message that guns have no place on campuses. They have no place on school grounds. They have no safety reason to be there. In fact, they aggravate the danger of firearms and other kinds of peril on school property. They also ride on behalf of commonsense, sensible measures that can be achieved—and we have an obligation to achieve. That is what they said to us as we met with them in front of the Capitol yesterday.

Their message was that we can save lives, that we can work together. We can get things done across the aisle, on a bipartisan basis, to do what 90 percent of the American people want, which are universal background checks to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people and criminals, making sure gun trafficking is a Federal crime and that straw purchases are against Federal law, ensuring that fewer guns get into the hands of dangerous people, particularly domestic abusers. When domestic abuse is combined with a gun in the home, death is five times as likely.

This message ought to also include limiting the use of high-capacity magazines that can prevent all kinds of terrible rampages with assault weapons that have become all too prevalent in this country. Providing protection when temporary restraining orders are issued in domestic violence cases can help some of the most vulnerable members of our society, victims of domestic abuse, at a time when they need it most, and making sure the gun-manufacturing industry is not given an exemption from liability that every other industry has to defend against when it breaks the law. PLCCA ought to be repealed, and I have introduced legislation that would do it.

This problem of gun violence affects all of us—not just through the mass shootings and massacres that occurred, such as Sandy Hook, but 30,000 deaths every year. Many of them are suicides, preventable, senseless, and avoidable if we take action to tackle the problem of gun violence in this country. That is the message of the riders who braved those storms, who traveled those rough roads, and reminds us that Congress has been complicit in these deaths by its failure to act. Congress is complicit in gun violence and its deadly toll in this country.

Monte Frank is a Sandy Hook resident who was one of the founders and leaders of Team 26. He rode here again this year and has ridden every year. I am proud he is a friend. He recently wrote:

Team 26 will ride again because we promised the families in Sandy Hook that we

would continue to honor their lost loved ones. We made the same promise to the many victims' families we have met since then in Baltimore; Bridgeport, Conn.; Harlem, N.Y.; and the District of Columbia. While we established Team 26 for Sandy Hook, Team 26 could just as easily be named for the victims of gun violence in Chicago on a given weekend. In fact, gun violence is so prevalent that we could be called Team 26,000 and that number would fall short of the number of gun deaths each year in America.

I have with me the petition they brought here, but more important, I am here to tell my colleagues we must act. We must cease our complicity in this body. If tens of thousands of people in this country were infected with Ebola or the Zika virus or the flu, there would be drastic and urgent action to meet that public health crisis. The epidemic of gun violence in this country is no less a public health crisis. It is equally an epidemic, and it can be stopped. It must be stopped.

I want to close with the words of Dennis Niez of Bethlehem, CT. Dennis rode here with Team 26 and wrote the following, entitled "Why I Ride."

I ride for the kids who will never know the joy of riding a bike, the feeling of freedom, the visits of their best friends to their house. All of it taken away in a split second with a firearm left loaded in the same house where they're supposed to feel safe.

I ride because the same people who have serious mental health issues are able to purchase deadly firearms without a background check because of a loophole.

I ride because the same people who have a temporary restraining order because of domestic violence are sometimes able to keep a deadly firearm.

I ride so our elected officials, regardless of affiliation, will feel shame when they look at themselves for not doing enough to keep guns away from people who should not have them.

I ride because kids in the U.S. are nine times more likely to die from a gunshot than in any other western country.

I ride because Dawn Hochsprung was my kid's principal in Bethlehem, CT, someone they will always remember. She was a friend to all the kids.

I ride because doing nothing won't make the problems go away.

On that beautiful, sunny day yesterday, as remarkable and magic a time as it was, I thought of all those Sun-filled days that those 20 beautiful children and 6 great educators will never have and that others also will be deprived of having because Congress is failing to act. We must act, and I hope we will act and carry with us in our hearts always the message of Team 26.

I am proud to yield to my colleague and partner in this effort, Senator CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank very much my colleague Senator BLUMENTHAL. I want to associate myself with all the remarks of my colleague from Connecticut.

Let me congratulate the riders from Team 26 for making it through such inclement weather, making it through such a challenging ride to bring these messages to the Halls of Congress and to the White House.

It strikes me that there are similarities between this ride and the challenges ahead of us. Every tough ride is a long stretch of both peaks and valleys. The challenge is knowing there is another hill coming before you and not giving up, knowing that at the end of that long ride, there is reward.

When we talk about the scope of our fight to change the laws of this country to try to put a dent in this epidemic of gun violence, we have to view our journey the same way. There are going to be peaks and there are going to be valleys. There will be moments of triumph where we change the laws for the better, where we see progress, as we have in Connecticut, where a new State law has resulted in a 40-percent diminution in the number of gun homicides. Then there are the valleys—moments like we had here in early 2013, where despite 90 percent of Americans supporting the idea that you should prove you are not a criminal before you buy a gun, we weren't able to pass that law because of a filibuster here. Every great change is defined not only by failures but by peaks and valleys, as was their ride. I join Senator BLUMENTHAL in thanking them for focusing on this particular issue of guns on campuses.

It is up to every individual as to whether they choose to buy a firearm, but they should make that decision imbued by the facts. And the facts are pretty clear that if you have a firearm in your home, it is much more likely to be used to kill you or to kill a family member than it is to kill an intruder, to kill someone trying to do harm to you.

Nancy Lanza had guns in the home for a variety of reasons, but one of the reasons, apparently, was that as a single parent, she wanted firearms for protection. Of course, her guns were used to kill her and then 20 small first graders and their teachers. Similarly, on campuses, the data tells us that in areas that have more guns, you are more likely to have higher rates of gun homicides. This fiction that if you just arm all the good guys, they will kill all the bad guys is not actually how it plays out in real life.

So I thank them for bringing these petitions here to shed focus on this movement to make sure we don't have students walking around campuses with concealed weapons. That doesn't make for a safer campus environment.

Lastly because I know others want to speak, I want to talk about two things that struck me from our meeting at the White House at the end of the day yesterday. The first was when all the riders on Team 26 got to tell their stories about why they decided to join this ride. Many of them, frankly, were doing it for deep love and affection for Monte Frank, but they all shared a common cause with him. Around that table were individuals who had suffered gun violence in their immediate family. One woman's son committed suicide shortly after the murders in Sandy

Hook. Another husband and wife lost close friends in a mass shooting. But many of the individuals who were there were simply there because they had children who were in school, and they knew that there but by the grace of God, it could be their child.

I have a first grader I drop off every morning at school, and I know there is nothing different about my child's school than Sandy Hook Elementary School. And I think about Nicole Hockley almost every morning when I drop off my 7-year-old. She said she never imagined that it would be her, and she doesn't know why more parents don't step up and try to do something about this before it is their child.

The second thing I was struck by was their experience along the road. They noted that in over 4 years, they haven't run into anybody who has disagreed with their mission or who has given them a hard time about their advocacy. And that is really not surprising given the fact there is broad consensus among the American public as to what we should do.

There really is no disagreement in any of our States—regardless of geography, race, or political ideology—on whether we should make sure that criminals don't buy guns, make sure that people who have a serious mental illness can't get their hands on firearms. This appears to be controversial and politically toxic, the way we talk about it, but the way it is talked about on the Main Streets that Team 26 rode down, it is not controversial at all. It is a settled issue: Criminals shouldn't buy guns. And there is no justification, in most Americans' minds, for a Federal law that today, on average, allows for four of six guns to be sold without a criminal background check. They want the law changed. We shouldn't pretend this issue is politically controversial. It might be amidst lobbying circles in Washington, but it is not in the communities Team 26 rode through, and they can tell you that because they were cheered everywhere they went.

It is no small feat to organize this ride. It makes a difference in the communities in which they do events, the communities through which they ride, and it will ultimately make a difference here. Every great movement for change is a long journey made worthwhile at the end when, after you have ridden up lots of hills and down into valleys, you end up at the finish line.

I thank Team 26 for their work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, while my friend from Connecticut is on the floor, let me say that I have been here long enough now to realize it is hard to change things with just a speech. Indeed, it is hard to change things by just voting up or down on bills. The way we actually solve problems is by trying to find consensus.

I know the Senator from Connecticut and I have different views on the Second Amendment, and that may be because there are different views around the country based on our experiences and the culture in which we were raised. I realize that in urban areas, particularly in the Northeast, the idea of people being raised around guns as a sort of way of life for recreation and self-defense and the like is just not their experience, but in other parts of the country—where the Presiding Officer lives and where I live—it is, and people feel very strongly about their rights under the Second Amendment.

There is a common ground here, and the Senator from Connecticut and I have talked about this, and that has to do with the mental health issue, where I hope we can find that consensus because as long as we are talking past each other, we are never going to resolve any of these issues, and I do think there is some common ground. In the end, a gun is an inanimate object. The fact is, if we continue to ignore the fact that mental illness is very often a factor in acts of gun violence, I think we are going to continue to talk past each other.

As the Senator and I have discussed, I actually have a bill that I have introduced—the safer cities and mental health reform bill—which includes a provision allowing people like Adam Lanza's mother to go to court and get a civil court order that would mandate that Adam Lanza take his prescribed anti-psychotic drugs.

I don't know in this instance if it would have changed the course of events, but I do know it would have given Adam Lanza's mother—whom he murdered, and he stole her guns and then killed these poor, innocent children at Sandy Hook—an additional tool and may have just possibly averted the tragedy.

I know there are many families in America today who would welcome additional tools by which they could then help loved ones become compliant with their doctors' orders to take their medication and become productive people.

There is a gentleman named Pete Earley whom I know the Senator knows and who has testified here often. He is a journalist, but he wrote a book called "Crazy." It is a book about his son's experience, who had mental illness. It is not about his son. The title is not for his son. It is about the so-called system that fails people like Pete Earley's son because it doesn't provide the options they need in order to deal with their mental illness.

So I do think there are ways we can work together, but as long as we just keep making speeches to our respective constituents back home, we are never going to do that.

I know we are working on the mental health issue now, and I would just say to my colleague: I am more than happy to try to find some common ground on this issue because I do think we need to

improve the background check system for people who are adjudicated mentally ill, such as the shooter at Virginia Tech. This was a failure of the current system, where the Virginia law did not require that this mental health adjudication be uploaded into the background check system and then this terrible tragedy occurred.

There are things we can do to improve the current background check system. There are things we can do to arm parents and families with new tools to help their mentally ill loved ones and maybe, just maybe, change the course of some of these incidents of mass violence, which are a terrible tragedy. So I make that offer.

I know the Senator is not ready to cosponsor my legislation as currently written, but I would invite him to take a copy of it, mark through in a pencil the things he doesn't like and can't live with and give me what he can live with, and then we can perhaps begin that conversation.

I thank the Senator for listening.

BANKRUPTCY, NOT BAILOUTS BILL

Mr. President, I came to speak on the FAA bill, the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill, but I first want to commend our colleagues in the House for passing some important legislation yesterday called the "Bankruptcy, Not Bailouts" bill—a bill that will put to rest once and for all the concept that it is somehow the taxpayers' responsibility to bail out financial institutions when they fail, putting our financial system in jeopardy. Of course, the idea of too big to fail was an unfair and, I think, an erroneous concept made part of the law in the Dodd-Frank legislation that prioritizes large financial institutions over the needs of American families.

We need to do everything we can to protect taxpayers from having been called upon to bail out banks. We need to let banks go bankrupt and use existing laws to restructure their debt and then to get back on track. So this is actually a very important step in the right direction.

I commend Chairman HENSARLING in the House of Representatives for passing this important piece of legislation. It is similar to legislation that I have introduced here in the Senate with Senator TOOMEY, the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, and I hope we can move forward soon.

I have one other interjection on the whole idea of bankruptcy versus bailouts. I read in the press and I hear from some of our colleagues in the House that they think the bankruptcy laws are somehow a bailout. It is the antithesis of a bailout. It is the opposite of a bailout because what it does is it authorizes a court of law under established rules and laws to restructure the debt of the bankrupt person or business. In doing so, it allows them to get it behind them and then to get on and continue to live a productive life as an individual or to deal with a productive business if you are a business.

But the idea that somehow taking advantage of the bankruptcy laws is a taxpayer bailout is flat wrong. I hope our colleagues in the House have the courage, particularly as we look at the Puerto Rico situation, to realize that at some point, unless we act in the House and the Senate to deal with the impending crisis in Puerto Rico, unless we act in advance of that crisis, we are going to be presented with an emergency situation, and we are going to be asked to bail out Puerto Rico using taxpayer dollars, and I want none of that.

I think all of us who were here during the financial crisis in 2008 would say the same thing: We want none of that. So let's do our work, whether it is ending too big to fail for large financial institutions or dealing with the impending bankruptcy and financial crisis in Puerto Rico.

Mr. President, to the topic of the day, for the past few days we have been working on this legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. Chairman THUNE of the Commerce Committee and his staff have been doing some good work and making a lot of progress toward completing the bill. I hope that cooperation continues and that we are able to conclude this legislation tomorrow.

This legislation would do some very important things. It would streamline critical new investments in airport infrastructure and aviation safety to protect passengers and to help them get where they need to go more efficiently. It would also include the most comprehensive airline security reforms since President Obama took office. For example, it strengthens the vetting process for airport employees and addresses a growing number of cyber security threats facing aviation and air navigation system.

Most important of all, it puts American consumers and safety first. It does so without raising taxes or adding fees to customers that feel like a tax. You may call it a fee. But if it costs money, it really doesn't feel any different than a tax.

I would also like to point out the benefits to States like mine, Texas. It protects air traffic partnerships that supports dozens of Texas airports and directly responds to requests that I have gotten from Texas communities looking for new opportunities to improve regional air traffic management or expand service in order to meet demand—all crucial measures that help Texas communities move people and goods safely through airports.

I have introduced an amendment to this legislation with the two Arizona Senators and the junior Senator from Nevada, Mr. HELLER, that would do even more to help our ports of entry by strengthening public-private partnerships at air, land, and sea ports. The fact of the matter is that financial resources—money—is always in short supply, and rather than always coming back to the taxpayer and saying you

need to pay more, what we need to do is become more creative. That is why public-private partnerships are important.

Local communities are willing to join in a partnership with the Federal Government to deal with these critical infrastructure needs at land, air, and sea ports, and that is what this amendment would do.

We have already seen in my State time and again how important these partnerships can be to help reduce wait times at ports of entry—at the land-based ports of entry such as Laredo, which is the largest land-based port of entry in the United States. If you have ever been there, you have seen the trucks stacked up coming from Mexico. There is important trade that goes on between our two countries that supports 6 million jobs in the United States alone. But these public-private partnerships have been very successful in helping to deal with our infrastructure needs. It is not just about convenience. It has an economic impact as well.

I mentioned that the 6 million people who benefit because of their jobs depend on binational trade between the United States and Mexico. For example, according to one study, each minute a truck sits idle at the border waiting to come to the United States, even though they are legally authorized to come here to bring goods manufactured or produced in Mexico, more than \$100 million in economic output is lost or forfeited.

Let me say that again. For every minute a truck sits at the border because we don't have the infrastructure to process the truck into the United States, more than \$100 million in economic output is lost or forfeited.

So this amendment would authorize more of these partnerships, which would also facilitate staffing and better protect legitimate trade and travel and keep our economy running smoothly and keep jobs being created. I hope my colleagues will consider this amendment and vote to build on the success of similar programs in the past, both in Texas and across the country.

I want to mention one last amendment, one introduced yesterday, as well, that would target the world's foremost sponsor of terrorism. That is the country of Iran. Mahan Air is Iran's largest commercial airline, and it has repeatedly played a role in exporting Iran's terrorism.

We all know Iran as being the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, and Mahan Air is one of the ways they export that terrorism. We might call Mahan Air "Terrorist Airways." That would perhaps be more precise. It not only supports the efforts of the Quds Force, a special unit of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, but of another Iranian-backed terrorist group, Hezbollah.

To put it simply, Mahan Air enables the reach of Iranian personnel and weapons throughout the Middle East,

as well as Iran's proxies, as the regime continues unabated to undercut the interests of the United States and our allies in the Middle East, such as Israel. Unfortunately, today Mahan Air is working to expand its international operations now that the Obama administration has lifted sanctions as part of the misguided Iran nuclear deal.

Mahan Air is expanding its operations and adding more international airports to its flight patterns, including several in Europe in an effort to increase its bottom line. Mahan Air's unfettered support of terrorism in the worst aspects of the Iranian regime should give us all pause. I am concerned about the security risks of Americans who fly in and out of the same airports serviced by a Mahan Air aircraft.

My amendment would require the Department of Homeland Security to compile and make public a list of airports where Mahan Air has recently landed. I think the public has a right to know that the airports they are flying into are being used to service an airline of the Iranian Government used to export terrorism. It would also require the Department of Homeland Security to assess what added security measures are needed. We must protect our country and our citizens from an airline that is complicit in terrorist activity.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this commonsense amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill to help shine a light on this bad actor.

I will close with this. Under new leadership, the 114th Congress has actually gotten the Senate back to work again. It is not just for the benefit of the majority party. It is not just for the benefit of the minority party. It is actually for the benefit of the constituents we serve, because they are the ones who benefit when we can try to work and find common ground and move legislation forward where we can find agreement, knowing that there are many areas where we will never find agreement because of fundamental principle differences of opinion. But this is another example of an important piece of legislation that will benefit the entire country. It definitely isn't a partisan piece of legislation. So it is something I am glad we have been able to move forward on, and I look forward to concluding this legislation tomorrow.

It is time we upgrade our air transportation system for the entire country, and it is time to put the safety of airline customers first. This bill does that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

AMERICA'S COAL INDUSTRY

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about something very dear to me and to so many of my fellow Wyomingites, particularly those in Gillette, WY, where I used to be the mayor. It is the third largest town in

Wyoming. It has 30,000 people. That would be a very small town to the rest of the Nation, but here is an effect it is having. This administration has made no secret about its continuous efforts to whittle away at America's coal industry. Well, very sadly, 2 weeks ago those efforts resulted in unprecedented layoffs, as two of Wyoming's biggest coal mines let go of 15 percent of their workforce. My wife and I were heartbroken to see these 456 miners suddenly out of work.

Besides the mines, there are railroad layoffs because that is how Wyoming coal is delivered to the other 40 States in the Nation. Outside of Gillette, there are 130 coal engines parked, not to mention trains. That means 1,200 railroad workers are out of jobs. Today, Peabody coal announced that they are filing chapter 11 bankruptcy. We will see more of that.

I know the suffering of the 456 people and the 1,200 railroad people suddenly out of work may not sound so bad in places such as California or New York, but in Wyoming, whole communities feel that kind of impact. Folks I talked to in Wyoming are depressed and angry, and it is because the energy industries they support and rely upon have for too long been the target of bad Federal policies.

People have been mining coal in Wyoming since the mid-1800s, but it wasn't until the 1970s that the industry really took off. The Clean Air Act of 1970 implemented the original restrictions on sulfur dioxide emissions, and, suddenly, the low sulfur content, the clean coal from Wyoming's Powder River Basin was in high demand. Wyoming went from producing just under 2 percent of our Nation's coal in the late 1960s to producing 9 percent by the end of the 1970s. That number rose to 31 percent by the end of the 1990s.

By the end of 2014, 39 percent of the Nation's electricity was generated by coal, according to the Energy Information Administration, and 40 percent of that coal was generated in Wyoming. That year, Wyoming's 20 mines directly employed over 6,500 workers who earn an average salary of nearly \$84,000—almost twice the statewide average. The industry indirectly employs tens of thousands more contractors in jobs that support the coal industry. The coal industry paid over \$1.14 billion to Wyoming in taxes, royalties, and other revenue in 2014. That is money that was used for schools, roads, and community colleges across the State. Those are all in jeopardy.

With all of this affordable energy, with all of these well-paying jobs, how did Wyoming find itself losing jobs last week? How did Wyoming wind up with the fastest growing unemployment rate in the Nation? Well, I recently ran across this 2011 editorial cartoon that I think helps explain how this administration is bringing down the coal industry.

This cartoon was drawn and dedicated to the Wyoming Legislature

when they were talking about some similar things. It is still pertinent, but we have to change the tattoo on the arm to say administration, and the dates need to be changed to 2012, when the Environmental Protection Agency issued its final Mercury Air Toxics Standard rule. This needs to be changed to 2015, when the Department of Interior piled on with its proposed stream protection rule and the EPA leased its final Clean Power Plan. We need to change this to 2016, when Interior froze the Federal Coal Leasing Program. If we imagine those changes, this cartoon can explain how we got where we are today. We are killing the golden goose, the producer of low-cost energy for the United States.

Let me expand on those issues a bit further. It is a little hard to understand with only the titles. In 2012 the EPA finalized a standard that required a strict reduction in air emissions from electric-generating units. It was known as the Mercury Air Toxics Standards—or MATS—rule, and like many of the rules from the EPA, the cost of this regulation was immense and the benefits were limited, even if the benefits are calculated over a much longer period of time than the costs. The EPA estimated that the rule would create \$500,000 to \$6 million in benefits related to this mercury reduction. It would cost—remember that this is \$500,000 to \$6 million in benefits—nearly \$10 billion annually to implement the rule.

Luckily the Supreme Court rejected the MATS rule last year, stating that the EPA should have considered costs before setting out to regulate mercury from fossil-fuel fired power plants. But the administration wasn't deterred. Last year Congress disapproved of both the Stream Protection Rule and the Clean Power Plan—disastrous rules aimed at eliminating the extraction and use of low-cost energy—by using the Congressional Review Act. We did so with bipartisan support. Yet the President did not listen and instead chose to veto those bills.

I believe U.S. Presidents should first and foremost seek to help the citizens of the United States, and that means the President must have a deep understanding of the people and the challenges they face. President Obama and others in his administration—and some seeking to replace him—have demonstrated how woefully little they understand about coal, the jobs that are related to coal, the people who produce it, and even the people who use it.

Many folks in Wyoming who produce and use coal have reached out to me, and I want this administration to hear from them. The administration needs to hear from people like Nancy from my hometown in Gillette. She wrote last week to tell me about losing her job at a mine where she worked for 9 years. She is 64 years old, single, and takes care of her elderly father. She has a house payment—a house she worked very hard to keep after going through a divorce. Now she is worried

about her house and just wants a job so she can keep her house and retire with a little money in her pocket.

To understand the impact these policies have on not just energy workers but the communities in which they live, the administration needs to hear about Sarah from Newcastle, which is about 70 miles from Gillette and about 50 miles from any coal mines. Sarah and her husband started a carpet and flooring store and had been successfully managing it for over three decades. She is sad to see so many in her community out of work and fearful that the economic downturn will mean the end of a business she has devoted her life to creating.

The administration needs to hear from Robert, again from Gillette, his and my hometown. He recently lost his job at a smaller coal mine and had to uproot his family to move to another State in order to find work. He knows that out West the media markets are small and the national news will never cover the heartbreaking stories of his colleagues and neighbors in this coal market. Robert needs to know that maybe the media won't cover his family's story, but I won't forget about him, and I won't stop fighting the bad policies this administration has created.

America has the resources, America has the manpower, and America has the reserves to provide the energy we need for a strong economy and a healthy environment. Nobody knows that better than the folks in Wyoming, where people for generations have made a good living extracting energy from the same lands on which they love to hunt, fish, hike, and camp. People are dedicated stewards of the land and want their children and grandchildren to enjoy it in the same way. That is why Wyoming coal mines are recognized year after year for their outstanding reclamation efforts. You can see that in this photo of the beautiful land in Wyoming where a short time before a coal mine existed.

On occasion, I take people out to view the coal mines, and usually, as we get close to the coal mine, they say: Oh, don't let them tear up that land over there. It is beautiful.

We have to explain to them: That is where the mine used to be; this is where it is headed.

They say: Oh. If you can change that into this, do it.

There are some difficulties with replacing it like this. This hill had to be exactly the same as it was before the coal was removed. If there are stones in there, they have to be put back where they were before.

The ranchers who border on these coal mines think, why would anybody move that much dirt and put it back the way it was?

Well, it is the law, and they have been following the law and getting phenomenal results.

What Wyoming and other States that produce and rely on fossil fuels need is

innovative policies that will encourage new ways to continue to develop and use America's huge reserves of coal, oil, and gas. We are the Saudi Arabia of coal, and that can displace some of what Saudi Arabia has been thrusting on us for decades. One of those options is carbon sequestration, which Senators from both sides of the aisle in this Chamber have historically supported. Using that technology, carbon dioxide emitted from combusting fossil fuels can be captured and routed to secure geological storage, preventing it from being released into the atmosphere, although plants need that. The carbon dioxide can also be used for enhanced recovery of oil and natural gas to help ensure that America efficiently utilizes these resources.

When a well is drilled and pumped, you get about 25 percent of the oil out of the ground. There is some enhanced recovery that has been invented and since that time, and they can get about another 20 percent out of the ground. That means that 55 percent of our value is still underground. People are working to invent ways to take care of that and take care of the energy we are going to need to be energy independent.

Even the White House supports investment in research and development projects to make carbon capture more accessible, deployable, and affordable.

I hope my colleagues from any State that uses or produces fossil fuels will join me in supporting policies to encourage carbon sequestration and the use of carbon. There are a number of uses, and one of those is to get that enhanced oil recovery.

Last week was a tough one for Wyoming, but I am proud to be from a State that has always found a way to bounce back from any bust. Actually, what we have is a leveling out, but it is a difficult leveling out because for the first time coal prices, oil prices, and natural gas prices are all down at the same time. When you have an economy that is building for growth and it levels out, it seems like a dramatic bust.

This is not the end of coal's chapter in Wyoming history. I will keep working to make sure of that.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that just came out today entitled "The Powder River Basin: Creating a new future in Wyoming's biggest coal town," which talks about some of the innovative things people are doing and how it will help Gillette, be printed in the RECORD.

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

POWDER RIVER BASIN: CREATING A NEW FUTURE IN WYOMING'S BIGGEST COAL TOWN
(By E&E reporter, Brittany Patterson, April 13, 2016)

GILLETTE, WY.—Laura Chapman's best-selling cupcake is the "Coal Seam Overload," a decadent chocolate cake topped with rich chocolate frosting and dark chocolate toppings.

It's a tribute to her home state's top export, a product that eventually is used by 1

out of every 5 homes or businesses in the United States.

"It does permeate the whole lifestyle here," she said, from inside Alla Lala Cupcakes and Sweet Things, Gillette's first and only cupcake shop, which Chapman opened in the town's downtown district in 2013.

On its face, a specialty store like Chapman's might seem out of place in a town that since its founding has been strongly rooted in producing coal, oil, natural gas and methane.

Located in the heart of the Powder River Basin, Gillette is surrounded by 12 coal mines, some of the largest in the country, employing some 5,600 people, according to 2014 data. In a county just shy of 50,000, the mines provide jobs for 1 out of every 10 residents.

On a recent March morning, charter buses, similar to the ones that ferry tech workers to the Google and Facebook campuses, head out of Gillette. Yet these buses aren't filled with coders and app designers, but with miners. Pickup trucks sporting long poles topped with bright orange flags follow suit. The flags are to make sure those operating the living room-sized coal trucks don't accidentally engage in an unintentional monster truck brawl.

On the south side of town at mining parts supplier L&H Industrial, a 13,000-square-foot mural is devoted largely to an image of inky black coal being scooped into a coal truck, a train filled with coal passing by.

Since 1990, the town's population has doubled to a little more than 30,000, a respectable size in a state where pronghorn antelopes outnumber people. But the promise of plentiful, good-paying jobs has not only brought people to the self-styled, "Energy Capital of the Nation," but also brought tax revenues and prosperity.

Wyoming produces 39 percent of the nation's coal, or about 382 million tons in 2014, according to the Bureau of Land Management. Because Gillette is so interconnected with coal and other fossil energy resources, it faces a barrage of assaults, both economic and regulatory. Production of Wyoming coal has declined 14 percent since 2011. Late last month, mass layoffs were announced.

At the largest mine in the region, Peabody Energy Corp.'s North Antelope Rochelle mine, 235 workers were told not to come to work. Arch Coal Inc. cut 230 jobs. The reductions represent about 15 percent of each company's workforce in the state.

A boomtown since its founding, Gillette is acutely aware of the central role that natural resources, especially coal, have played in its existence. And yet Gillette seems determined to survive in a world that is pushing coal out. It has invested in itself and planned for a future where coal is not king.

The question now facing Gillette is whether it has done enough: Can this boomtown weather this bust?

Shedding a boomtown stigma.

Founded in 1892, the city was named after railroad surveyor Edward Gillette. Today, between 80 and 100 trains speed out of the region daily, carrying Wyoming coal to more than 30 states.

In the 1960s, oil development about doubled the city's population from about 3,500 to more than 7,000. The rapid population growth spurred violence and crime, so much that psychologist Eldean Kohrs in 1974 coined the term "Gillette Syndrome" to describe the social problems that accompany a boomtown.

With the passage of the Clean Air Act in 1963 and subsequent amendments in the years after, power plants began turning to Powder River Basin coal. Gillette officially became a coal town.

It wasn't until the mid-1970s that then-mayor and now U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi (R)

crafted a city expansion plan aimed at changing the public perception about Gillette. A major component included investing in infrastructure to support the growing population.

Built on a 19-mile grid, present-day Gillette is an amalgamation of strip malls newly filled with chain stores like Petco and Buffalo Wild Wings. Rows of hotels and motels advertise weekly rates, and newly constructed subdivisions rise out of the hilly landscape. Shiny trucks, boats and campers litter driveways. There are two frozen yogurt shops and two golf courses.

Recent growth has been steady since the mid-2000s, which Chapman said has led to more boutique shops like hers opening downtown.

About a decade ago, the city and county began investing a sizable portion of revenues from the energy sector back into services for the community. For \$53 a month, residents can use the state-of-the-art recreation center featuring a six-lane indoor track and a 42-foot climbing wall designed to resemble aspects of the nearby Devils Tower National Monument.

The Gillette that Chapman grew up in hardly resembles the one that exists today, she said.

"Hell, when Applebee's opened 10 years ago, it was like the town wanted to throw a party, because before then, the only chains we had were fast-food restaurants," she said, laughing. "And I know that sounds weird, but that's an exciting thing to realize. 'Hey, we've gotten to this point they're going to build an Applebee's.'"

REIMAGINING A CITY WITH FEWER PEOPLE

But as the coal industry feels the pinch, the city's investments are being tested. Gillette is losing people as mines make layoffs, supporting service companies shutter their doors, and oil and gas production falls, said Wyoming state Sen. Michael Von Flatern (R). About 1,500 people have packed up and left in the last year, and he expects another couple of thousand to move on before the summer is out.

"I expect we'll lose 10 percent of our population over the next year," he said. Charlene Murdock, executive director of the Campbell County Chamber of Commerce, embodies the interconnectedness of the energy industry and business community in Gillette. She spent nearly eight years with the chamber in the 1990s and then did communications work for energy companies, most recently working for four years with Peabody Energy.

She is generous with her laughter but also gives off a no-nonsense vibe, and she is quick to shoot down the word "bust" as a descriptor for the current situation in Gillette, preferring to call it a "softer economic period."

"Bust, to me, says something like 'We have no jobs, we have no people, we have no income,'" Murdock said, noting that Gillette's latest "boom" was more like steady growth for the last 12 years.

Murdock sees this period as one of "leveling off" in Gillette, even a chance for the community to catch its breath.

At the height of the energy boom in the 2007-08, unemployment was less than 2 percent. Houses were on the market mere hours before being snapped up.

And yes, she said, this downturn might mean the end of some businesses and services. For example, Gillette might lose one of its frozen yogurt shops. Perhaps, this year, housing development will not occur, she allowed. But whether it's growth or decline, she said, those who have made roots in Gillette are aware that energy commodities drive the economy and uncertainty isn't new.

"I really don't see us not having an energy industry in two years' time," Murdock said. "While I think certainly people are apprehensive about what the future looks like, I think they also are resilient, and we'll see that resiliency really pay off for us."

Not everyone is convinced.

Greg Cottrell, owner of the Big O Tires in Gillette, falls into the worried camp. He worked for 14 years in the Cordero Rojo mine when it was owned by Kennecott Energy, and he said this downturn feels different.

"We've never had a war on coal before coming from the administration," he said. "We've had coal companies since the '70s. So for 40 years, they've been a very big part of this community and the growth and the reason we have very good schools and hospitals and recreation centers for kids."

LOOKING FOR A PLAN B

That phrase "the war on coal" isn't uncommon in Wyoming.

Many in Gillette feel President Obama's environmental policies targeting carbon emissions have doomed the industry.

Concerns abound about a decision earlier this year by the Department of the Interior to pause federal coal leasing for three years while the agency conducts a review of the program. All of the mines near here are part of the federal coal program.

Another fear is U.S. EPA's Clean Power Plan, which which is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 nationwide.

Gillette is surrounded by, and in some cases part owner of, three coal-fired power plants. Some could be on the chopping block in order for the state to meet its emissions cuts under the rule.

Some of the worry is tied to Gillette's deep financial dependence on coal. Revenues from the resource are the second-largest cash stream for state and local governments in Wyoming. In 2014, the total amounted to \$1.14 billion.

In addition, since 1992, Wyoming has received more than \$2 billion in coal bonus bids, which are paid to BLM and the state over a five-year period once a lease is issued. The money has been used to fund schools, highways and community colleges across the state.

Right now, Cottrell said, companies that supported the energy industry, especially the oil industry, have closed shop or aren't spending money, at least not on new tires.

He concedes that the city is different, bigger.

"We don't have so much of an up-and-down economy now because Gillette is a little more diversified," he said, but added, "I wouldn't call it self-sustaining yet, though."

Last month, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services reported that Campbell County had experienced one of the largest jumps in unemployment across the state. From January 2015 to January 2016, unemployment rose from 3.6 percent to 6 percent. That was before the huge mine layoffs were announced.

A population exodus means a loss of sales tax revenue for the city, but a downturn in the energy sector also affects the tax base significantly. Each living room-sized coal truck, road grader or shovel is purchased by the mines from businesses on the south side of town.

The city, for its part, has recently re-evaluated how it will invest in major capital projects over the next five years, according to Gillette City Administrator Carter Napier, but with no way to know if revenues from the energy sector might rebound, the city is facing tough decisions.

"The further questions we need to have are with regard to what services we may need to

cut and what programs we may need to curtail until we can feel comfortable that revenue is back to at least an understandable level," he said.

But if it doesn't come back, there might be a plan B.

MEET THE MAN TRYING TO DIVERSIFY GILLETTE

Soft-spoken, with wire-rimmed glasses, Phil Christopherson's current job is engineering, but of a different kind than the former Boeing employee was trained to do.

As CEO of Energy Capital Economic Development, his job is to help diversify the city's energy-intensive economy. The two-person entity is both publicly and privately funded and tasked with promoting, retaining and expanding business in Gillette.

The state-of-the-art sports complex, events center and other niceties in Gillette were part of that calculation, the idea being that they would foster community and help provide reasons to stay even when times get tough.

Expanding the community college is another form of economic diversification, one that required the city, the county and private industry to step up financially. Inside the Technical Education Center, part of Gillette College, students can earn associate's degrees in welding, industrial electricity, mining machine tools and diesel technology. There's a popular nursing program, as well. Inside the Peabody Energy Hall, students rehearse for an upcoming musical performance. The college is expanding and adding an arena, and more dorms are under construction.

In 2010, the group partnered with the city to revitalize the downtown shopping district now home to the cupcake shop, a brewery, boutique clothing stores and a meadery, among others. Public art adorns the corners of South Gillette Avenue. Art is also sprinkled throughout town—a lustrous palm tree, a polar bear sculpture and a larger-than-life spider.

"There's never not something to do," added Mary Melaragno, director of business retention and expansion with Energy Capital Economic Development.

The group's newest endeavor, with help from a grant from the Wyoming Business Council, is to purchase office space it could then rent to new businesses looking to relocate, like an incubator.

In the wake of the historic layoffs, Christopherson sees the role of diversifying Gillette as even more important.

"It's interesting," he said. "You have some people that are quite worried and quite fearful, but there's a segment of the population that has stepped up."

Some residents have even started a "Stay Strong Gillette" movement, he said.

And why not Gillette, supporters say. The city has the rail and road infrastructure, access to cheap and plentiful electricity and a workforce that is used to working hard.

Already, one company, Atlas Carbon LLC, has moved to town with a business plan that includes using coal—in this case manufacturing activated carbon (the stuff found in water filters)—but not burning it for energy.

Christopherson said he hopes it's enough. He concedes that if the community had prioritized this effort five or 10 years ago, "we could have helped insulate against some of this."

Still, he doesn't see Gillette existing without coal mining.

And he's not alone. Most people in Gillette don't believe coal will disappear from their lives anytime soon, if ever. Instead, the consensus seems to be that the peak of coal production in Campbell County has come and gone.

"There is a way to continue Gillette's economic success and move us into a future that

is not dependent upon coal and oil and methane," said Chapman, back at the cupcake shop. "I just feel like there's a way to do it right, a way that lessens the impact on the people who live and work here and a way that lessens the impact on our future."

For now, Chapman said business is good and she is content to continue whipping up cupcakes and baking birthday cakes. Her husband is in the process of opening a whiskey barber shop across the street.

"Of course I'm optimistic," she said laughing. "I opened a cupcake shop, didn't I?"

Mr. ENZI. If we eliminate coal, it will force people across the Nation to pay more for their energy.

Coal has a good base load. It runs all the time. It is not like wind. If the wind doesn't blow, you don't have it. It is not like solar. If the sun doesn't shine, you don't have it. Coal can work 24 hours a day, and it is low cost. There has also been more done to clean up coal-burning power plants than anywhere else.

We invite people to come to Gillette, WY, and look at the power plants and clean air that we have. The only time we get regional haze is when the forests burn in Oregon or Washington and blow into Wyoming and make our mountains disappear. You won't find coal dust around there, either, because people don't let anything blow away that they can sell.

We hope everyone will come and take a look at the environment and the power plants so you, too, can say: You know, coal is not bad, and America needs it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, this is now my 39th edition of "Waste of the Week." For 39 weeks I have been back on the floor when the Senate has been in session to talk about unnecessary, fraudulent, wasted, abusive spending of taxpayer dollars.

We have run up quite a toll—more than I thought we would—but the more I dig into this and the more information we get from the agencies that are looking at how we spend taxpayers' dollars, the more alarmed I have been and the public should be and our colleagues should be over how these hard-earned tax dollars are spent in a wasted and abusive way or a fraudulent way. So I am going to keep doing this to alert my colleagues and alert the American people—in particular, people in my State—that there are ways we can better and more efficiently use their tax dollars or not require them in the first place.

This week I am focusing on documented abuse of the Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Most Hoosiers and

other Americans know this as the Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program has had some ups and downs in terms of our support, and there has been a lot of bad publicity about the abuse of this program. I get many letters and contacts in my office describing standing in the grocery line and seeing someone use food stamps not for milk for their children or cereal or nutritious food but for junk food or tobacco or alcohol. The program is not supposed to be used for that kind of thing, but somehow we keep reading about potential misuse of what this program is intended to do.

Now, the SNAP program, as it is now called—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, S-N-A-P, the SNAP program—exists to provide low-income individuals with their nutrition needs and food items. It is funded by the Federal Government, and it is administered by the States.

Let me begin by saying I am not here to do a critique of the program. That is a topic for a different discussion. I am here to talk about whether this program is being effectively run by the States and effectively funded by the Federal Government. What we have learned is that—no surprise—as with so many other Federal programs, there has been gaming and fraudulent use of the program. There clearly are people who don't qualify and are not eligible for receiving these food stamp vouchers but are nevertheless receiving them through this program.

The government has become modern with the digital age, and instead of food stamps they issue an electronic benefits transfer card. It is like a debit card that people carry in their wallet. Money is added to that card electronically and it can be used at grocery stores. People swipe it. Hopefully, it works better than Secretary Clinton's card worked at the subways of New York. Anyway, you can swipe this card, and it will deduct the amount you have, in terms of the cost of the food provided, and it is refreshed on a monthly basis.

In looking at the program, the General Accountability Office got some tips about the fact that a lot of replacement cards were being sent out. We all leave our license on the counter in the kitchen or our credit card and we wonder, "Where is that credit card," and then we need a replacement. This happens. We understand that. So there is a replacement card program available through SNAP. You say you lost your card and they send you a new one. The problem is that GAO—the Government Accountability Office—learned from the program that a tremendous amount of replacement cards were going out to people—sometimes over four. Then, they say: Wait a minute. Maybe we ought to look at this because this person has been asking for replacement cards on a regular basis. Are they really losing those cards or are they using them for other purposes?

So they set up a trial program. They looked at three States—Massachusetts, Michigan, and Nebraska—and found that more than 7,500 households receiving these SNAP benefits had suspicious transactions and were using four or more EBT cards in a year during key times, such as when cards were credited with benefits, and all of a sudden the request came in, saying: I lost my card—and by the way this is the fifth time or sixth time or whatever.

In totaling all of this, the General Accountability Office said this accounted for more than \$26 million of suspicious transactions. Now, that was just from the three States. These are sizable States—Massachusetts, Michigan, and Nebraska—but they pale in comparison to say Florida, Texas, California, and New York. So if it was \$26 million of suspicious transactions for just these three States that were looked into, imagine what it would be if they checked all 50 States.

So we did some calculations using the same proportion of SNAP households as those identified by GAO as affecting the whole country, and we came up with roughly \$3.2 billion of waste over a 10-year period of time. That is not small change. A lot of people work awfully hard to accumulate the kind of money needed to total \$3.2 billion and then only to see it wasted.

People said: Maybe these suspicious transactions were legitimate. So we did a quick search on Craig's List. Craig's List is this list you go into—I know all of the young pages understand this. We old people aren't necessarily up to speed on all of these new electronic transactions and processes and so forth. I got into it with the help of my young staff. We got into Craig's List and we found that what was being advertised—see, on Craig's List you put up something that others will want to buy, and it can be anything from a washing machine to a lawn mower, to a picture frame or whatever. We found some people advertising these SNAP cards, these EBT cards. For instance, a mechanic named Marco could—this was not MARCO RUBIO, by the way—a mechanic named Marco will accept EBT cards as payment for auto care, he said. In other words, if you have a problem with your car, come over to my shop. I will fix it for you, and instead of cash, you can give me EBT cards. So probably that is pretty tempting. How much to fix my automobile? Thirty-five bucks. I have an EBT card. It has \$33.47 left on it. How about I pay you with that? He says: OK. I can take that in payment. Then they apply for a replacement card. That is probably one of the ways it adds up.

Another person advertised two Beyonce tickets. I haven't been to a Beyonce concert, but I actually know who she is. I actually realize, even at my age, that she is a star and everybody wants these tickets. So they advertised two tickets for \$1,200 and said: We can accept EBT cards for payment.

Somebody has to accumulate a lot of these cards to come up with a payment for two tickets to a Beyonce concert.

Another post on Craig's List reads: "I have around \$1,300 in food stamps and have no need for it at all." I will sell this card with \$1,300 in credits if you will send me \$300. I guess that raises questions about how these cards are being used, and these are just a few examples.

This kind of fraud obviously needs to be addressed. As all of the other 38 weeks of "Waste of the Week" I have put up here continues to accumulate, these cards obviously are not being used—all of them—for those who need it and for its intended purpose. It is clear that we ought to be adopting GAO's methodology of tracking both the number of recipients that receive more and more EBT cards at specific times of the year and those with suspicious transactions, and I think a lot of this abuse could be eliminated.

So what we are doing today is we are adding another \$3.2 billion of waste, and we continue to raise the amounts. It is now \$162 billion of waste, fraud, and abuse. This is going to continue as we alert the American people, inform my colleagues in the Senate and the Congress, and inform the administration that there are ways to better use, and hopefully not even have to request in the first place, the kind of tax dollars we are paying for a clearly dysfunctional Federal Government program.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the FAA reauthorization legislation before us, as well as the managers' amendment filed yesterday on this key piece of legislation.

This is an important bill that will ensure the airport and airway trust fund will remain solvent and that our Nation's airway system—and the countless jobs that are impacted by the system—do not have to deal with a funding shortfall or a lapse in authorization.

The airport and airway trust fund finances many of our national aviation programs. Currently, expenditures from the trust fund are authorized through July 15 of this year. The provisions that ensure adequate funding for the trust fund expire at the same time. That means that, absent congressional action, national airway programs and projects will come to a screeching halt about 3 months from now.

Make no mistake, this bill is about protecting jobs and consumer interests across the country. No one would benefit from a lapse in funding or authorization as either one would threaten

the livelihoods of people throughout the country. While from time to time the passage of what should be considered routine legislation can get weighed down by unrelated issues, no one seriously disputes the need to get the bill over the finish line.

As the Presiding Officer knows, the Senate Finance Committee, which I chair, is responsible for the tax title of the FAA bill. The trust fund is paid for through a number of tax provisions that are set to expire in July along with the authorization of expenditures from the trust fund. These provisions include longstanding taxes on domestic and international airfares, taxes on jet fuel, and others.

In years past, the Finance Committee has introduced and debated legislation to renew and, if necessary, update those provisions. We typically have a markup and report the legislation out of committee. I had intended to follow a similar course with this year's FAA bill. Unfortunately, that isn't how things worked out.

As we were working through the process in committee to set up an FAA markup, it became clear that my friends on the other side of this aisle saw the bill as an opportunity to add a number of extraneous items—provisions that had nothing whatsoever to do with the FAA—to the bill and set the stage for a politically charged debate in the Finance Committee.

Now, I am not one to shy away from controversy, but with an item of this importance—one that is a priority for Members on both sides—I didn't see the benefit for either side in turning the FAA tax title into another wide-ranging tax extenders bill and reducing the robust debate process in the Finance Committee to a series of controversial votes. Moreover, given the small lead time before the authorizing bill was to be up for floor debate, a markup that addressed anything more than the Finance Committee's basic responsibility to fund the FAA would have prejudiced Members on both sides in terms of preparation. For all of these reasons, we decided not to mark up the bill in committee, and, instead, to resolve the matter here on the floor.

It appears that it has been resolved. There will be voting before the end of the week on a simple extension of the taxes dedicated to the airport and airway trust fund through the end of Fiscal Year 2017. Ultimately, a clean extension of the FAA taxes like the one before us is probably the best approach. My main priority in developing this legislation was to ensure adequate funding for the FAA and airway projects and programs throughout the country and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner.

Over the past few weeks, we heard a lot of talk about adding additional provisions to the tax title and there were some efforts to once again stack this legislation with extraneous items. Indeed, leading up to yesterday, lobbyists and special interest groups all over

town were waiting with baited breath to see what was in the tax title.

Don't get me wrong. I am not a purist or foolhardy idealist. While I have made it clear that I would prefer that the Senate pass a clean FAA bill, I know that none of us can reasonably expect to get everything we want out of every piece of legislation, particularly when the goal is bipartisan compromise. I am very much in favor of practicing the art of the doable, which sometimes means accepting things I don't want to see happen. I have been willing to work with my colleagues to include other provisions in the tax title in order to get a deal on the overall FAA bill.

I will leave it to others to characterize what happened in those negotiations, as none of the items under discussion were high priorities for me. I will just note that after weeks of discussion, finger-pointing, and a little bit of grandstanding, the decision was made to move forward on a clean 18-month extension of the FAA funding provisions, which once again, was my preference from the outset.

Needless to say, I am pleased with the outcome. I wish we could have taken a less contentious path to arrive at this conclusion.

Still, this is a good outcome for the American people and for all the industries that rely on a fully functional airway system. The legislation before us will extend the programs for a year and a half and provide greater certainty for people and businesses around the country. On top of that, it will improve security on planes and in our Nation's airports while also providing much needed improvements to help consumers and airline passengers.

I know that the people of Utah in my home State are particularly interested in seeing Congress finish its work on the FAA reauthorization. Over the last few months, I have heard from many groups and businesses from Utah and elsewhere on a number of issues addressed by this bill, including airport funding, drone safety, rural airport needs, and general aviation.

Many people, when they think about Utah's airways, probably think that we just have the one airport in Salt Lake City. Make no mistake, that is an important airport, not only to Utah but to air travel and shipping all across the country and other parts of the world. But my State's interest in the FAA bill extends well beyond the Salt Lake City International Airport. All told, we have 47 total airports in the State of Utah, varying greatly in purpose, size, and overall capacity, all of which would benefit from this legislation. Many of these airports have new development or expansion projects either underway or in the planning stages. The legislation before us will give assurances to these airports and allow them to plan for future needs.

The bill also includes important provisions from the Treating Small Airports with Fairness Act, which con-

stitutes section 5028 of the FAA bill. This legislation will help a number of smaller rural airports, such as some of those in Utah, to bring back TSA staff and security screening equipment if certain conditions are met.

Under subtitle F of the bill, we have language taken from Pilot's Bill of Rights 2, a bill that the Senate passed with unanimous consent last year but was not yet passed in the House. The general aviation community in Utah will benefit tremendously from these provisions, which could potentially help thousands of general aviation pilots in Utah, saving them time and money in managing their health and fitness to fly. There are other provisions in the bill that will benefit Utah and most States throughout the country.

In short, this is a good bill. From the FAA reauthorization provisions to the tax and funding title, it is the right approach to addressing these particular needs, and we need to get it done. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support Senator THUNE's managers' amendment as well as the overall FAA bill.

ENSURING PATIENT ACCESS AND EFFECTIVE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ACT

Mr. President, I would like to talk for a few minutes on S. 483, the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act. The Senate unanimously passed this crucial legislation last month, and just yesterday the House passed the bill as well. The bill now goes to President Obama for signature.

I would like to begin by thanking Senator WHITEHOUSE for his important work on this legislation. He and his staff have been crucial partners in helping to move it forward. I am also grateful for the support of our other cosponsors—Senators RUBIO, VITTER, and CASSIDY.

S. 483 is not a long bill, but it is an important one. It clarifies several key provisions of the Controlled Substances Act in ways that will strengthen efforts to fight prescription drug abuse while ensuring patients retain access to needed medications.

As we all know, prescription drugs play a crucial role in treating and curing illness, alleviating pain and improving quality of life for millions of Americans. Unfortunately, these drugs can also be abused. A balance is necessary to ensure that individuals who need prescription drugs for treatment receive them but that such drugs are not diverted for improper purposes. To this end, S. 483 makes three important changes to the Controlled Substances Act.

First, it clarifies the factors that the Attorney General is required to consider when deciding whether to register an applicant to manufacture or distribute controlled substances. The current text of the Controlled Substances Act instructs the Attorney General to consider factors that "may be relevant to and consistent with the public

health and safety," but it does not provide any guidance as to what those factors might be. This vague language creates uncertainty among advocates regarding the standards they must meet to obtain a registration.

S. 483 reduces this uncertainty by tying those standards to Congress's findings in section 101 of the Controlled Substances Act regarding the benefits, harms, and commercial impact of controlled substances. This change will bring clarity to the registration process and provide better guidance to regulators as they consider applications to manufacture or distribute controlled substances.

The second change S. 483 makes is to delineate the standards under which the Attorney General may suspend a Controlled Substances Act registration without a court proceeding. Under the terms of the Controlled Substances Act, the Attorney General may suspend a registration to manufacture or distribute controlled substances without court process if she determines there is an imminent danger to the public health and safety. But the Act does not define what constitutes an imminent danger, leaving the Attorney General's authority under this provision essentially open-ended. This in turn leads companies to operate in the shadow of uncertainty regarding when and whether a registration might be summarily suspended.

S. 483 clarifies the Attorney General's authority to immediately suspend a registration by specifying that such a suspension may be appropriate where there is a "substantial likelihood of an immediate threat that death, serious bodily harm, or abuse of a controlled substance will occur in the absence of an immediate suspension of the registration." This will permit the Attorney General to issue immediate suspension orders when necessary to protect against an imminent threat of harm, while at the same time ensuring that this power does not become a sword constantly hanging over the head of law-abiding companies.

In addition to these important clarifications, S. 483 will also facilitate greater collaboration between distributors, manufacturers, and relevant Federal actors in combatting prescription drug abuse. In particular, the bill provides a mechanism for companies that violate the Controlled Substances Act to correct their practices before the Attorney General suspends or revokes their registration. Even inadvertent violations may lead to suspension or revocation, disrupting the supply chain for the company's prescription drugs. This in turn can cause hardship for patients who rely on the company's drugs for treatment and cure.

S. 483 alleviates this problem by allowing companies to submit a collective action plan to remediate the violation before suspension or revocation, thus ensuring that supply chains remain intact. This provision will also encourage greater self-reporting of vio-

lations and promote joint efforts between government and private actors to stem the tide of prescription drug abuse.

S. 483 takes a balanced approach to the problem of prescription drugs. It clarifies and further defines the Attorney General's enforcement powers while seeking to avoid situations that may lead to an interruption in the supply of medicine to suffering patients. It reflects a measured, carefully negotiated compromise between stakeholders and law enforcement that will enable both to work together more effectively. Most importantly, it will make a meaningful difference in our homes and communities.

I want to thank my colleagues for their support of this legislation, and I urge the President to sign it into law.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

REMEMBERING RAY THORNTON

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, Arkansas lost a political legend today when former Congressman Ray Thornton passed away at the age of 87.

Ray Thornton grew up in Sheridan, the child of two teachers. Ray's intellect and quick wit was evident from an early age. He graduated from high school at just 16 years old. He then headed off to the University of Arkansas, eventually winning the Navy Holloway Program scholarship to attend Yale University. After college, Ray heeded what would be the first of several calls to serve his country and joined the U.S. Navy, where he served 3 years with the Pacific Fleet during the Korean war.

After leaving the Navy, Ray returned home to Arkansas, earned a law degree from the University of Arkansas, and married Betty Jo, with whom he raised three daughters.

Ray began a successful legal career before being elected attorney general in 1970. After one term, Ray was elected to the House of Representatives from Arkansas's Fourth District. Ray served with distinction, including on the Judiciary Committee, where he helped draft the articles of impeachment against President Nixon.

In 1978, he narrowly lost an epic Senate primary fight, featuring him, fellow Congressman and later Governor Jim Guy Tucker, and Governor, later Senator, David Pryor. He then returned to the family business of education, becoming the only man to serve as president of both Arkansas State University and the University of Arkansas.

Ray returned to politics in 1990, winning election to the House of Representatives again, this time from Arkansas's Second District, serving another three terms. Representing the Little Rock area, Ray was President Clinton's Congressman, yet he voted against the President's signature budget in 1993. Also, around this time, Arkansans passed an amendment to our State's Constitution limiting the terms of Federal officeholders.

In the ensuing landmark case, *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, the Supreme Court held that States cannot add additional qualifications to Federal offices, including a limitation on terms. Ray was the named defendant and believed in this constitutional principle. But shortly after the decision, he announced his retirement from Congress, proving that the case was never really about him but rather his devotion to the Constitution.

On a personal note, I got to know Ray as he prepared to retire from Congress. Thanks to the recommendation of a family friend who worked for Ray, I interned at Ray's Little Rock office for a few weeks in the summer of 1996. Rather than the usual intern routine of "clips"—for you pages down front, that is when interns literally clip stories out of the newspaper—I spent days and days at a storage unit in southwest Pulaski County, sorting through more than a quarter century of Ray's public papers and preparing them for the archives under the supervision of his longtime, matchless advisor, Julie Baldrige.

It was a fascinating history lesson in Arkansas politics, and it highlighted a common theme of Ray's career: his commitment to do the right thing, as he saw the right, even when it was the tough thing. Whether it was impeachment, that 1993 budget vote, or the term limit case, Ray stood his ground. But Ray did not leave public life after Congress, for he answered another call to service, this time on the Arkansas Supreme Court, where he served until 2005.

Now Ray has gone home to his Maker. While we join his family and friends in mourning the loss, we also celebrate his long, well-lived life in service to our country and Arkansas. Rest in peace, Ray Thornton.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from South Dakota.

(The remarks of Mr. ROUNDS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2796 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as we are trying to determine whether we

have a path forward for an energy bill we have been working on for months, as well as the FAA reauthorization, I thought I would take the time to come to the floor to speak about the importance of this much needed Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, recognizing the importance of what the FAA does. It is just a reminder to us that when we delay needed reforms and those initiatives that provide some certainty of funding for airport improvements, it doesn't help us out here, and that making sure we are attending to these matters in a timely manner is important.

I think it is fair to say that all of us in this body travel a fair bit. Most everyone, seemingly, will fly home to their respective States, visit with their constituents, and be with their families on weekends. Some of us who are from farther away make efforts to be back home as often as we can, but the distances might complicate it a little bit more. But I think it is fair to say that we see firsthand the inside of many of our Nation's airports and see firsthand those areas where improvements can certainly be made.

In my State of Alaska, for some of us the airport is almost as common and matter-of-fact as going to the grocery store. It seems as though we are in and out of our small airports so much because it is how we get around. In a State where 80 percent of our communities are not connected by a road, how do you get around? How do you get to Dillingham? How do you get to Fort Yukon? Well, you can take a boat. You could take a snow machine in the winter. But the fact is, we fly. We are a flying State. And it is not a matter of flying because it is a vacation or a business trip. It is to go see the doctor. It is to go to high school. It is to go to the grocery store—literally to the grocery store. So many of the people in the outlying rural parts of the State will fly to Anchorage so they can shop at Costco, and instead of taking luggage back home with them, they take toilet paper, diapers, canned goods, and their grocery items. In one community, we have kids who literally instead of a schoolbus to get to school, they take a small plane to fly across the river that separates their community from the school.

We are working to get them a bridge. Some might suggest these are bridges to nowhere. We think this is about connecting people. Right now it is pretty limited in our ability to move in and out. When we talk about flying, for us in Alaska, it is a very matter-of-fact way to travel. It is no frills.

You come from a cold State, Mr. President. You know that if you and your family are going on a long trip out on the road and you are going to be in the high mountains and the roads might be treacherous and it is cold, you will be smart and you will pack some snow gear in the trunk. You might have some emergency supplies there. We do that when we are flying

on the airplanes too. Make sure you have snow pants and boots on because sometimes these airplanes are cold, and unfortunately sometimes things happen. This is a fact of life, and I think the Alaska delegation probably logs as many miles as any Members out there—perhaps our friends from Hawaii just a little bit more. It is a part of who we are. We have come to rely on that access with a pragmatism that perhaps some others don't necessarily appreciate.

I can be at Reagan National, and if a plane is canceled or there is a mechanical problem, the tension is almost so thick you can cut it with a knife. People are so frustrated. If your flight gets grounded in Alaska, it is like, well, the weather has set in. My sister lived on the Aleutian Islands for many years in a community called Unalaska. When she needed to take her family into Anchorage some 800 miles or so away for medical care or any other issues that presented themselves that she would have to go to town, she basically planned for 3 days on either end of her trip because weather shuts you in.

I was in Fairbanks, AK, on a field hearing for the Energy and Natural Resources Committee 2 weeks ago, and it was a quick day trip up and back, but there was no plane that came my way. In fact, all the planes were grounded in Fairbanks because a volcano blew about 800 miles to the south and the winds were strong. It picked up the volcanic ash and deposited it all the way from Pavlof Volcano, down in the Aleutians, up to Barrow and down into the interior of Fairbanks. So what do we do? We don't panic. I was able to spend the night with my sister, catch up on family stuff, rent a car, and drove the 7 hours to Anchorage the next day. It messed up my schedule, but it is a matter-of-fact part of flying in Alaska. At the end of that week, I took a quick supposedly day trip to Kodiak to attend our commercial fishing symposium. Halfway through the day, weather kicked up again. It wasn't a volcano, but it was pretty tough winds, rain, and fog. While the airport wasn't shut down, the airplanes weren't flying. You find a friend's house to go camp out for the evening, and you hope the skies are favorable the next day. You don't want to press the weather because when you are in the air and you are flying, you want to be safe.

I don't tell you these stories to be dramatic about what happens with volcanos and weather in Alaska but to speak to how integral air transportation is to people in my State. A good airport, a reliable flight schedule, this is the equivalent of having a good road and a good car on the road.

I look very critically and very carefully at things such as the FAA Reauthorization Act because some of what we deal with in this measure is effectively a matter of life safety for many of my constituents. Some of those for whom flight is the only option in my State live in the small community of

Little Diomedé. Little Diomedé is about 16 miles off the coast of Alaska. It is in the middle of the Bering Strait. You may have heard of Little Diomedé because it is 2½ miles from Big Diomedé. Little Diomedé is owned by the United States. Big Diomedé is owned by Russia. So when you hear that statement about you can see Russia from Alaska, when you are on Big Diomedé, that is a true statement.

When you are sitting in this small island community of some 110 people, your hub community for food, for health care, for pretty much anything is Nome, AK. That is where you go. During the summertime, during the time when the ice is not frozen over in the Bering Strait, literally the only way to get in and out is by helicopter because the island is so small and it is such a peaked island—basically a big rock coming out of the water—there is no flat space for a runway. So you have a helicopter that provides for medical in and out and travel in and out. In the winter, the residents will actually carve a runway into the ice so planes can land on the ice to deliver essential products, whether it is food or medicine or the such. Sometimes you can't put the runway on the ice because the ice has been so compressed and jumbled and you have ice ridges that don't allow for a place to land. Again, you are back to helicopter.

The good news for the residents of Little Diomedé—and this is thanks to the good work of my colleague Senator SULLIVAN—Little Diomedé will be joining the other 43 communities in the State that are part of the Essential Air Service, and this will help provide funding to keep the airport open so people can continue to live in a place they have lived for generations.

Nowhere in this country is Essential Air Service so vital. The reason they call it Essential Air Service is because it is essential. In a place like Little Diomedé, it is essential. Forty-three communities in the State of Alaska, compared to 113 across the rest of the country, are in Alaska. Many of these locations are only accessible by air. As with Little Diomedé, you don't have a road in, you don't have a road out. It truly does make the phrase "Essential Air Service" have meaning.

Another community you have heard me speak about at great length—and in fact we are going to be having a hearing focused on King Cove, AK. King Cove is a community that is at the beginning of the Aleutian chain. This is a community that has no road access in or out. It is accessible only by plane. It is an area that suffers from some very difficult weather conditions because of where it sits on the peninsula—the mountains, the ocean. The dynamics are such that it doesn't allow their small airport to be open for about one-third of the year. Think about that—getting goods in and out, getting people in and out, getting to safety if there is a medical emergency. There is a small airstrip there in King Cove. It

is about 3,500 feet long. It is made of gravel. We have been working to try to get access for the people of King Cove for about 25 years, access to the State's second longest runway, which is in Cold Bay.

We have an opportunity tomorrow morning in the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to shine a spotlight on this issue, to remind people that since 1980 we have had 19 people die due to plane crashes or injured residents who have waited for a safe way out. I have brought up this issue with Secretary Jewell so many times I can't count it, but she continues to be a blockade and refuses to allow a road to be built so these people can gain safe passage.

Since 2013, there have been 42 medevacs out of King Cove; 16 of them carried out by the Coast Guard. This is one of those examples where if you have people who live in a place where the elements and their geography dictate a level of concern for safety, where we can provide for safe transportation systems, where we can provide them the access to the best air transportation possible, which is over in Cold Bay, then we should be trying to do that.

The last issue I want to raise with the FAA bill that is very important is all that is going on with unmanned aerial systems. Alaska is home to one of the six official FAA sites for unmanned aerial systems. It is managed by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex is huge. It covers an area from the Arctic all the way down to the tropics. In Alaska, we have six test ranges. I think it is fair to say that provides some pretty unique range for an opportunity to conduct experiments.

In addition to incredible range, the Arctic itself offers a unique opportunity for testing our UAS. It is vast. It is remote. You are away from the congestion of the lower 48. You are in different climate conditions. So this is something where Alaska truly has been leading and pioneering, and we are very proud of that.

I am encouraged that this bill requires the Department of Transportation to develop a plan allowing UAS to operate in designated areas of the Arctic 24 hours a day and beyond line of sight. I think this is important not only from the research perspective but hopefully for the commercial purposes as well.

I think it is fair to say there is good work, strong work that has gone into this FAA reauthorization. I commend the chairman of the Commerce Committee, Senator THUNE, for his leadership, and I look forward to its passage in the very short term. I will certainly stand in support of that measure.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

MS. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthoriza-

tion Act of 2016. I wish to thank Senators THUNE and NELSON for their work on this bipartisan bill. The Presiding Officer also serves on the Commerce Committee. Thank you.

I also thank Senator MURKOWSKI because in 2013 we worked together to pass the Small Airplane Revitalization Act, and the law requires the FAA to move forward with modernizing the Part 23 safety certification process for small airplanes. Updating the Part 23 process—why we brought the bill together and passed it—will improve safety, decrease costs, and encourage innovation for American small airplane manufacturers.

The bill before us actually builds on those efforts by requiring the FAA to finish the Part 23 rulemaking by the end of the year and make further reforms to the certification process. It will also help to ensure greater coordination with FAA regional officers when they interpret and implement FAA rules and regulations so that the aviation industry has certainty. There are also provisions to help the FAA and industry maintain global leadership on safety at a time when the aviation market is becoming increasingly competitive and global.

Senator MURKOWSKI and I have similar but different interests here. In Alaska, of course, people fly on a lot of small planes to get places, and in Minnesota we do the same thing, but we also make planes. We have one of the biggest domestic manufacturers, Cirrus, in Duluth, MN, and so we share an interest in the safety of small planes and also in expediting these safety regulations and getting them approved. It has been taking the FAA a while to do that, so we are really glad this bill before us, the FAA reauthorization, actually includes a deadline so that this can get done.

Last week I spoke about the security elements of this bill. I am a cosponsor of the amendments that we passed to strengthen airport security, improving security in nonsecure areas of the airport, such as the check-in and baggage claim, and also tightening airline employees' access to secure areas of our airport. Those are important security advancements and show how we can make bipartisan progress on an important issue.

My airport has been experiencing significant delays in processing passengers. There has been a bit of an improvement since the Homeland Security TSA Administrator actually came out and saw for himself what was going on, and as a result, they gave us additional dog teams—similar to what we are talking about in this bill—to help us with security. In this case they also walk the longer lines of passengers. Once they are able to use the dogs, which are highly efficient and good, it will help to expedite the lines because the passengers become the equivalent of a precheck passenger, and they can move them along faster.

When I first heard we were getting a few dog teams, I wasn't sure if that

would actually solve our problem when the average line was up to 45 minutes, and as a result many people would miss their planes. We have seen some improvement, including adjusting to the reconfiguration at our airport.

Another issue the bill addresses that I think is really important is human trafficking. During the Commerce Committee markup, we adopted my Stop Trafficking on Planes Act as an amendment. This bill, which Senator WARNER and I introduced, will require training for flight attendants so they can recognize and report suspected human trafficking. Flight attendants are on the frontlines in the battle against trafficking, and this amendment will ensure they have the training they need to help prevent the horror and violence women and children suffer as victims of human trafficking. Obviously, Senator CORNYN and I led a significant bill last year on this issue to give our law enforcement some better tools to be able to go after these perpetrators, and this is really a continuation of that work.

There is another important safety priority which I am concerned this bill does not address. I filed an amendment with Senators MORAN and INHOFE to clarify that the Oklahoma City aircraft registry office provides essential services and should remain open during a government shutdown. One might wonder why the Senator from Minnesota is concerned about the Oklahoma City aircraft registry office. The reason for the concern is that every aircraft sold domestically, exported, or imported to the United States must be registered and obtain FAA approval. These registrations are vital to the safety of our national airspace system, and they are all processed by the Oklahoma City aircraft registry office.

In addition to the safety risk from closing the registry office—and that is what occurred during the shutdown—we saw that it had a devastating economic impact. The company I am talking about, Cirrus, which makes these jets, had jets lined up in a warehouse for weeks and weeks and weeks—multi-million dollar products that were supposed to be sold around the world. They were unable to ship them out because this particular office in Oklahoma had been shut down. The General Aviation Manufacturers Association estimates that \$1.9 billion worth of aircraft deliveries were delayed during the last shutdown, putting a severe strain on many general aviation manufacturers and their employees.

The Oklahoma City aircraft registry office is vital to the safety of our national airspace system and the economic well-being of our aviation sector. An entire sector was shut down because they couldn't get approval to keep selling their planes for a number of weeks. I urge my colleagues to support my amendment to ensure that this important office remains open in case we have another shutdown, which we all hope does not occur.

The last issue I came to the floor to speak about in terms of a grouping of provisions in this bill is the Safe Skies amendment. I am on this amendment with Senator BOXER. She is leading this amendment, which is based on her bill, the Safe Skies Act. This bill will close the so-called cargo carve-out. There is absolutely no reason to exempt cargo pilots from the stronger pilot fatigue rules that we all passed and Congress mandated after the tragic 2009 crash of Colgan Flight 3407 outside of Buffalo.

I met those family members, I have seen the tragedy, and I have talked to others who have been in other crashes that were the results of pilot fatigue. We had our own tragic air crash in Minnesota when Senator Paul Wellstone and his wife Sheila died in a small airplane, not a commercial airplane, due to pilot error. That pilot supposedly had not slept for a long time, and so we have seen this in my own State.

Cargo airline operations share the same airspace as passenger airplanes, the same runways, and the same airports as the rest of the airline industry and the flying public. A tired pilot is a danger not only to himself or herself but to others in the air and to those on the ground.

This issue is a top priority at NTSB. They want to have this loophole closed, and I don't know how it could be more telling than this dialogue. This happened in 2013 when two cargo airline pilots were tragically killed in a crash near the airport in Birmingham, AL. I will read an excerpt, which is right here on the chart, from the cockpit voice recorder on that flight. These were the two pilots speaking to each other just 20 minutes before this flight went down.

Pilot 1: I mean, I don't get that. You know, it should be one level of safety for everybody.

They are actually discussing the fact that these rules don't apply to them. They are not protected. They don't have the 8-hour flying rule, and then they can rest.

Pilot 2: It makes no sense at all.

Pilot 1: No it doesn't at all.

Pilot 2: And to be honest, it should be across the board. To be honest in my opinion whether you are flying passengers or cargo . . . if you're flying this time of day—

They often fly in the evenings—you know fatigue is definitely . . .

Pilot 1: Yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah . . .

Pilot 2: When my alarm went off I mean I'm thinkin' I'm so tired.

Pilot 1: I know.

Twenty minutes later, this plane crashed, and both of the pilots were killed. We shouldn't have to wait for more tragedies before we close this gap in aviation safety.

I urge all my colleagues to support Senator BOXER's amendment and create a uniform rest standard for all pilots. I don't know how much clearer it can be when the actual pilots who crashed were discussing the fact that

they were too tired because of the way the cargo rules work.

This bill—the general bill that is before us—makes great strides in aviation security and safety. I think there are some things we can add to this bill. By the way, Captain Sully Sullenberger did an event yesterday with Senator BOXER and me. He feels strongly about this issue. He was the one who made that miraculous landing in New York. He stood with us and a bunch of pilots and said there is absolutely no difference between flying cargo and flying people; it is just a different kind of cargo.

I look forward to continuing to work on these amendments, and I urge my colleagues to support this long-term FAA reauthorization and avoid the uncertainty of further short-term extensions. I hope we will be able to have a vote on this very important safety amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise once again to talk about the urgency of our passing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act in the House of Representatives. This is legislation that passed the Senate with a 94-to-1 vote about a month ago. In fact, the Senator from Minnesota, who just spoke, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, is one of the four original cosponsors of this legislation. She is one of those who feels so passionately about it, along with Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator AYOTTE.

When this came bill came up for a vote, all but one Senator said that this is important, it is urgent, and we need to address it. Passing it in the Senate with that kind of a vote meant that the House of Representatives would likely take it up quickly, partly because over the last 3 years we worked with the House. We didn't just make this bipartisan, we made it non-partisan. We didn't just make it a Senate project, we made it a House-Senate project. It was bicameral. We introduced the same legislation in the Senate that they introduced in the House. I believe there are 119 cosponsors of that bill in the House.

It has been subject to a lot of hearings over here. It has been subject to five different summits here in Washington, DC. We brought experts from all over the country to tell us what to do. We don't have all the best ideas here in Washington, so we got the ideas from around the country. One reason the legislation got this strong vote of 94 to 1 in the Senate is that it does address the problems people see in their communities.

I want the House to act on this because it is so urgent. This legislation will help right away in terms of helping to prevent drug abuse, helping young people to make the right decisions, and helping people get into treatment and recovery which is evidence-based and works, rather than

people overdosing and dying from this heroin and prescription drug epidemic.

It has been more than a month since we voted on this bill in the Senate. Every day it is estimated that 120 Americans die from drug overdoses. That means we have lost more than 3,800 Americans to drug overdoses since the legislation passed the Senate. We can't wait. We have to move, and we have to move quickly on this because it is an epidemic.

The experts say that from 2000 to 2014, the rate of overdose deaths doubled, leaving nearly half a million Americans dead from drug overdoses. That is why we call it an epidemic.

In Ohio alone, we have lost 160 Ohioans since the Senate passed CARA. Since 2007, drug overdoses have killed more Ohioans than car accidents. Car accidents used to be the No. 1 cause of accidental deaths in Ohio, and now it is drug overdoses. It is probably true in your State too.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, CDC, Ohio now has the fifth highest overdose death rate in the country—top five, not something to be proud of. Statewide, overdose deaths more than tripled from 1999 to 2010. We have been told that over 200,000 Ohioans are addicted to opioids right now. It is not slowing down. Unfortunately, this crisis continues, and therefore our response cannot slow down. In fact, it needs to speed up.

Washington is not going to solve this problem. It will be solved in our communities back home, but we can help. We can be better partners, and that is what the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, CARA, does. It makes Washington a better partner to be able to save lives.

Last week I talked about how it is affecting one of our cities in Ohio—Cleveland, OH. I would like to update everybody here and my colleagues in the House about what is happening in Cleveland, OH. From March 10, which was the day we passed CARA, to March 27, the latest date for which we have statistics, 29 people died from overdoses, and that is in one 17-day period in one city. Over the course of one long weekend during that period, eight men and four women died of overdoses. During one long weekend in one city, 12 Ohioans overdosed, which included a 21-year-old and a 64-year-old. Some of the victims were White, some of the victims were African American, some of the victims were from the suburbs, and some of the victims were from the inner city. This is affecting all ages, all races, all backgrounds, and all ZIP Codes.

Some of you may have heard the story of Jeremy Wilder. He is from Portsmouth, OH, one of the areas that is hardest hit in Ohio.

In Portsmouth, OH, we had a town-hall meeting 6 years ago. I brought in the drug czar and law enforcement officials to deal with the prescription drug epidemic that was exploding at that point. As we made more progress on

prescription drugs, heroin started to come in, which is a cheaper alternative, and unfortunately more and more people got into the grip of that heroin addiction.

Jeremy Wilder of Portsmouth, OH, said he became addicted to heroin and sold drugs to pay for his own use. He told National Public Radio this:

I sold dope to cops, I sold dope to lawyers, I sold dope to doctors. I had a cop that used to drive me to my drug connection—rich kids. I had two good friends that were very wealthy, and because of their addiction, their parents have nothing today because their children just drained them.

That was on National Public Radio.

There is no demographic, no State, no city, no county that is safe from this epidemic.

One of the big issues we have now in Ohio is heroin laced with what is called fentanyl, which is an even more powerful drug. In 2013, five people in Cleveland died of overdoses of fentanyl, which we are told is up to 100 times more potent than heroin, depending on the fentanyl. In 2014, that number increased by more than 700 percent. So from 2013 to 2014, a 700-percent increase to 37 people dying. Last year, by the way, that number more than doubled to 89 people dying of fentanyl overdoses.

Over the weekend—4 weeks after the Senate passed CARA—in the middle of the day, a man overdosed and died at a McDonald's in a suburban community outside of Cleveland in front of a lot of people, and there was a lot of media coverage as a result.

In Franklin County, annual overdose deaths have nearly quadrupled in the last decade.

In Toledo, we lost 214 people to overdoses last year—a 50-percent increase in just 1 year. We think now that some 10,000 people in the area are addicted to heroin or opioids.

People in Akron have been heartbroken over the story of Andrew Frye. Andrew's mom was a heroin addict. Andrew, his mom, and his grandmother all did heroin. Last week, Andrew's mom found him dead at the age of 16 in a Summit County hotel room. That was his last week, 16 years old.

Summit County, by the way, where Akron is located, has seen its overdose death rate double in just 5 years.

I think we get the picture. This is clearly a growing epidemic. It is a problem that must be addressed. As I have said, no ZIP Code, no congressional district is safe from this threat. In Ohio, we understand that. Just in the last few weeks, there have been summits on this issue in Cincinnati, in Middletown, in Cedarville, OH. Again, suburban, rural, and inner city communities are all affected.

On March 23, nearly 2 weeks after CARA passed, the Franklin County coroner, Dr. Anahi Ortiz, convened the Franklin County Opiate Crisis Summit. She says she has seen children as young as 14 die of drug overdoses. She has seen toddlers and seniors alike die

of overdoses as the coroner in that community.

There is a sense of urgency across Ohio about this, a sense that it has gotten out of control. It is in the headlines. People understand it. Washington could use that sense of urgency too. Communities are taking action. Ohio is taking action. Other States are taking action. The Senate has taken action by a 94-to-1 vote. That means it is now time for the House of Representatives to take action. Right now, the House version of CARA has 113 cosponsors.

This bill was written together with us, on a bipartisan, bicameral basis, to ensure that we could get this legislation through to the President for signature and get it out to our communities to begin helping to avoid not just these overdose deaths but all the dislocations occurring because of this epidemic, all the families and all the communities that are being torn apart and devastated. Prosecutors in Ohio told me 80 percent of crime is related to this opiate addiction issue.

I know the House majority leader has said he wants the House to take on this drug epidemic and pass legislation sometime this month. I appreciate that, and I know he is sincere. I watched the Republican weekly address by Congressman BOB DOLD of Illinois. He did a very good job. It is clear to me that he is passionate about this issue, and I appreciate his advocacy on behalf of those who need our help. But I would say that I didn't notice any hearings or markups this week.

We passed this legislation in the Senate. It has been subject to all kinds of scrutiny and hearings, and it passed with a 94-to-1 vote. Are there other ideas? Of course there are, and that is fine. But we know these ideas work: better prevention; better education; more people in treatment and in recovery that is actually evidenced-based, and it works; helping police officers to have the Narcan they need to save lives—this miracle drug that can stop an overdose from turning into a death; helping to ensure that prescription drugs are taken off the bathroom shelves; stopping this overprescribing by having a drug-monitoring program because most people who are hooked on heroin started with prescription drugs. We know these things. This legislation does this.

It provides around \$80 million in additional funding going forward. That funding is needed, again, to be a partner with State and local governments and nonprofits, not to take their place. We know this.

Let's get this legislation passed. Let's move this legislation separately. It can be sent to the President's desk next week. We can begin to make progress now. If there are other ideas, that is great; send them over here and we will work on them. We will work on our own ideas. There is always more to do on this issue. Unfortunately, there is always more to do.

We know the bill we passed here works. We know it is bicameral, and we know it has cosponsorship in the House to be able to get it done. We hope the House will simply put CARA on the floor, pass it by a large bipartisan margin, just as the Senate did, and get it to the President's desk for his signature. This is close to being a historic achievement for this Congress and, much more importantly, for the American people. It is really one vote away—one vote away—on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I will tell my colleagues why it is going to pass. It is going to pass because Senators from every State in the Union representing every single congressional district supported this bill. It has the support, more importantly, from groups all over the country, including 130 different organizations, stakeholders, the people who represent those who are in the trenches dealing with treatment, in the trenches dealing with prevention. Our law enforcement community—the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association—they all endorse this legislation. These groups understand what is needed, and they want this help now.

This is a unique opportunity for us to move forward. In this political year, in this partisan atmosphere, this is one issue that should not have any partisanship to it at all. It should just get done.

Senator WHITEHOUSE and I crafted this legislation together, again working with others in the Chamber, as we talked about earlier. We drafted it with a lot of different stakeholders from around the country, holding five forums on various aspects of this debate. These forums were here in Washington, but we brought in experts from all over the country, knowing that is where the best ideas are going to be.

The best practices around the country are represented in the legislation. We have done this. We have done the factfinding. We have consulted with the experts—with the doctors, law enforcement, the patients in recovery, with the drug experts in the Obama administration, including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice. We brought in people from all over, and they agree that this is where we can make progress and make progress now.

That work is important. It should not be ignored. But much more important is the fact that people out there are waiting for us. They are waiting for us to act. Thousands of veterans, pregnant women, and first responders are waiting because this legislation affects all of them. Every single one of these groups would benefit from CARA, and they want it now.

Think about the peace of mind we could give parents by expanding prevention and educational efforts to prevent prescription and opioid abuse and the use of heroin so that their kids

don't make that tragic mistake of experimenting one time—one time—which is sometimes all it takes. CARA could give them some peace of mind.

CARA would increase drug disposal sites to keep these medications—these prescription drugs and pain killers—from getting into the wrong hands. We are already told by the Centers for Disease Control that the amount of prescription opioids sold in the United States nearly quadrupled since 1999; yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain Americans report. So how do we explain this dramatic increase in prescriptions? Some of these drugs are being abused, or sold on the street to addicts. A survey in 2013 found that 4.5 million Americans use opioids for nonmedical purposes. CARA would help make sure that prescription drugs don't get into the wrong hands. And set up the drug-monitoring program to better know who is getting these drugs and why and be able to stop the inappropriate use.

CARA would create law enforcement task forces to combat heroin and methamphetamine and expand the availability of naloxone and Narcan to our law enforcement and first responders. They know how important that is. They know that if they had more training and more availability, they could save more lives. Again, that is why law enforcement, including the Fraternal Order of Police, supports this legislation. Thank God we have them out there. If you talk to your police officers and firefighters, you will find that they are doing this work every single day. They are intervening and saving lives every single day in your community.

They know that this addiction epidemic is driving lots of other crime too. It causes thefts, violence, and human trafficking. Last month in Columbus, I met with a group of trafficking victims. These were women. They all told me the same thing, which is that their pimps, their traffickers, got them hooked on heroin and then trafficked them, and in each case they were trafficked on this Web site: backpage.com. This drug issue and human trafficking are definitely related.

We are told by law enforcement that so much of the crime—the majority of the crime in our State has been driven by this drug addiction.

There are so many heartbreaking stories, but there are also stories of hope. I have heard them firsthand. I have met people who have been in recovery, who have made it through to the other side. So part of what this legislation is saying is that this addiction issue is an illness. Addiction is an illness and, like other illnesses, needs to be treated that way. It is a disease. But also, part of our legislation is saying that there is hope. We have seen where treatment and recovery that is evidenced-based can work to get people's lives back on track, to bring families back together.

I have heard so many stories. I was in a treatment center in Athens, OH, a couple of weeks ago meeting with women who are now reunited with their children for the first time in years because they have taken the brave and courageous step to get into treatment. This grip of addiction is very difficult. It is very difficult to escape from, but they have done it. They are now in long-term recovery. They are back at work. They have the dignity and self-respect that come with taking care of their family and being at work.

On March 29, 19 days after we passed CARA, the President spoke at the National Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit in Atlanta, GA. At that summit we heard from Crystal Oertle of Shelby, OH. She told her story of trying Vicodin because someone offered it to her. She became addicted because she tried it once. Eventually she needed something stronger and stronger, and pills weren't always available and they were more expensive. Heroin was more readily available and cheaper, so she started using heroin. She would drive an hour to Columbus, OH, with her 2-year-old daughter every day to get her heroin. Her addiction drove her to theft. Her family supported her and begged her to get help. She is now being treated. She is more than 1 year sober. She is part of an outreach program, the Urban Minorities Alcohol and Abuse Outreach Program. She is taking opiate blockers, drugs that actually block the effects of opiates. This is exciting new medication. She is getting counseling. She is part of a support group with other people in treatment. It is working. It is working for her, and it is working for many other Americans. She is dedicating herself to eliminating the stigma around addiction to get more people to step forward and to get into treatment because she knows that if you treat addiction like other diseases, it will have an impact on that stigma, more people will come forward, and more people will be able to get their lives back on track.

There is hope. Addiction is treatable. We are told that 9 out of 10 people who need treatment aren't getting it. Again, this is one reason CARA is so important: It will get more people into treatment.

As I said before, I take the House leadership at their word when they say they would like to move this legislation and move it through regular order. I understand that, but I will say this: They need to move and they need to move quickly because of the urgency of this issue, because of the fact that in their communities and in the communities represented here on the Senate floor, which is every community in America—every single State here has a U.S. Senator who supports this legislation.

People are waiting. They need the help. We can provide the help. We can make the Federal Government a better partner. We can deal with this crisis.

I am going to do everything in my power to protect the people of Ohio, even if that means continuing to come out here on the floor every week and continuing to do everything I can, including making calls, as I did yesterday, over to the House of Representatives; including talking to my colleagues personally; and including telling some of these stories I have told today. People's lives are at stake. We have to move this legislation. We need to get it to the President's desk. He will sign it. And it can then begin to make a real difference for the families we represent who are so affected by this epidemic.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2200

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, yesterday many Members of the Senate came down to the floor to discuss the importance of equal pay for equal work.

Republicans remain committed to enforcing our equal pay laws and preventing discrimination. We all believe wage transparency is an important tool, and we agree that employees have a right to freely discuss their compensation without the fear of retaliation. This transparency will allow employers and employees to identify what trends or factors exist and how they are actually contributing to wage disparities.

No meaningful change to overcoming the opportunity gap can occur without this knowledge. We have bipartisan agreement that preventing retaliation will empower American workers and will enable them to negotiate more effectively for the wages that they have earned. Protecting employees from retaliation is an issue that all of us, Democrats and Republicans, can agree on. Today we have a unique opportunity to pass a bill that will strengthen our Nation's equal pay laws for the first time in over 50 years. Today we have a chance to make a difference for American workers.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 278, S. 2200. I ask consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 862

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the bill my colleague from Nebraska is

asking to bring to the floor falls far short of closing the wage gap. I want to speak for a few minutes about why. At the end of my remarks, I have a unanimous consent request.

If we really want to offer working women solutions for wage discrimination, we should instead pass Senator MIKULSKI's Paycheck Fairness Act because today women across the country make just 79 cents for every \$1 a man makes. This is an issue that Democrats have been focused on for years. I am glad at least some Republicans finally recognize there is a wage gap problem, and I welcome their support for fixing this systemic problem. Unfortunately, the Republican proposal that is offered today will not provide the solutions working women need.

Many companies prohibit workers from discussing their pay. So if a woman talks with her male colleague about their salary and discovers there is a wage gap, her employer could fire her or retaliate in some other way. The Republican bill would make it illegal for an employer to retaliate against workers for discussing salary but only when those conversations are for the express purpose of finding out if the employer is providing equal pay for equal work.

Nonretaliation is only one small part of the wage gap problem. It doesn't provide nearly enough protections to actually make a difference in closing the pay gap. In today's workplace, many workers find out about pay discrimination by accident. Maybe they see a spreadsheet that was left on a copy machine or maybe a male colleague's salary comes up in casual conversation, but in these circumstances, any worker who attempts to address the problem would have no protections from retaliation under this bill. The only way to qualify for these limited protections is if a woman uses the magic words that pass a legal test when discussing equal pay with her colleagues.

It is even worse than that. This bill can give workers a false sense of security that their conversations about equal pay are protected, when instead women can still be reprimanded or, worse, lose their jobs altogether for finding out their male colleagues earn more than them. So this Republican bill wouldn't even solve the one narrow problem it is trying to address.

Thankfully, we do have a bill that would address the wage gap. It is the Paycheck Fairness Act that Senator MIKULSKI has championed. The Paycheck Fairness Act would make it unlawful for employers to retaliate against workers for discussing pay, period. It wouldn't involve a complicated legal test like the Republican proposal, and the Paycheck Fairness Act would help close the wage gap in so many important ways.

If a woman finds out her male colleagues are paid more for the same work, the Paycheck Fairness Act backs her up. It would empower women to ne-

gotiate for equal pay, it would close loopholes in the Equal Pay Act, and it would create strong incentives for employers to provide equal pay.

I want to make one thing very clear. The Republican bill being offered today has zero Democratic cosponsors. It is not bipartisan. By contrast, before Republicans politicized equal pay for equal work, the Paycheck Fairness Act actually passed the House of Representatives in both 2008 and 2009 with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, since then, some Republicans have decided to make the wage gap about politics and blocked it in the Senate. So today I am glad Republicans do agree with us that this is an urgent problem. We need real solutions to address it.

That is why I object to the Fischer bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the Paycheck Fairness Act that would tackle pay discrimination head-on.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 862, the Paycheck Fairness Act; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

I have heard many times from my friends on the other side of the aisle that my proposal doesn't go far enough. Respectfully, I believe some of the provisions of the Paycheck Fairness Act go too far. I take issue with the accusation from those who wrongly assert that my bill will make it harder for women to discuss wage discrimination. I understand that my nonretaliation language is different from the Paycheck Fairness Act, but the intent and the effect are the same. My bill will protect women and men from retaliation when they learn about or seek out information about how their compensation compares with other employees.

It is clear there is common ground to make progress on equal pay when it comes to wage transparency. Every Senate Republican is on board with this proposal. It is a needed update to our equal pay laws. In 2014, every Senate Democrat welcomed a more limited but similar Executive order that was issued by President Obama that pertained only to Federal workers.

My Workplace Advancement Act goes further. It protects all Americans. Moreover, it is bipartisan. Five Senate Democrats are already on the record in support of this plan. So why do my friends from the other side of the aisle not now support my bill?

Colleagues, this is an issue we can agree on. It is clear my legislation enjoys bipartisan support, and it can make meaningful progress for Amer-

ican women. While I am disappointed in today's objection to my bill, I hope we can move beyond sound bites because this issue is too important to politicize year after year.

The Paycheck Fairness Act that my colleague speaks of will inhibit employers' ability to establish merit-based pay systems, and it will inhibit employees' ability to negotiate flexible work arrangements.

The Independent Women's Forum recently conducted a study on what matters to women when they choose a job. They found that flexibility was a common theme. Whether providing flexible scheduling or offering alternatives like telecommuting, women value flexibility, and they value it at about the same level as receiving 10 paid vacation and sick days or receiving \$5,000 to \$10,000 in extra income. This is important to women. We should be doing it.

The survey showed what many of us already know. Every situation is different, and by providing more options, workers can negotiate work arrangements that can suit their own particular needs.

With these concerns in mind, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. FISCHER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the Senators from Minnesota and Connecticut.

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

IRAN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, in the months since world powers reached an agreement to block Iran's pathway to building a nuclear weapon, Iran's behavior has given the international community reasons for both some optimism and continuing, serious concern. The positive news has been that Iran has taken some real steps to restrain its nuclear programs. It has disabled two of its short-term pathways to producing weapons-grade material by shipping nearly its entire stockpile of enriched uranium out of the country and by filling its plutonium reactor with concrete.

Iran has reduced its number of functioning uranium-enrichment centrifuges by two-thirds, and the country has provided international inspectors 24/7 access to continuously monitor all of Iran's declared facilities. These are positive developments. Yet, at the same time, Iran continues to engage in deeply concerning activities, such as support for terrorism and efforts to foment instability in the Middle East, to

conduct illegal ballistic missile tests, and to continue to violate its citizens' most basic human rights.

Today, my colleagues and I come to the floor to draw attention to some of the more grave, more concerning developments of recent weeks. I am honored to have the company of my friend, the senior Senator from Connecticut, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, who joins me in addressing why Russia's refusal to condemn Iran's bad behavior—and, in fact, in some ways encouraging it—poses huge security risks for our allies in the Middle East.

I would now like to yield, if I could, to my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to express my gratitude to my friend from Delaware, who is truly an expert on this issue, as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. He has been a leader in this area, and I am delighted and honored to join him on the floor today to discuss the ever-evolving and concerning cooperation between Russia and Iran, particularly in recent months. He has very eloquently and persuasively described a number of the concerns that we share. I want to associate myself with what he has said here this afternoon.

As we all know, Iran has conducted multiple ballistic tests in the last several months. That is beyond question. I have continuously condemned both Iran's ongoing ballistic program and Iran's failure to uphold its international obligations under the U.N. Security Council resolutions by calling for sanctions enforcement at the Armed Services Committee hearings and in letters to the administration and in public statements.

We have been steadfast in this effort. While the administration has heeded my calls by enforcing sanctions against 11 entities and individuals supporting Iran's missile program, clearly more must be done. The United States and the international community must vigilantly enforce sanctions on Iran's ballistic development, as well as its state sponsorship of terrorism and human rights violations which continue day in and day out.

These steps must be taken to hold this regime accountable and prevent Tehran from believing it can violate international law with impunity. Nothing less is at stake here than that principle. Yet Russia has refused to punish Iran. As a world power and permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Russia can and must be doing more to counter Iran's destructive deeds, including ensuring that Iran abides by U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231.

This resolution calls on Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches, using ballistic missile technology." That is a quote. That mandate applies for up to 8 years from the JCPOA's adoption day, October 18, 2005.

In March, one of Iran's defiant tests notoriously involved a missile that had a disturbing and alarming message scrawled on the side: "Israel must be wiped off the face of the Earth." This explicit message, by the way, written not only in Persian but in Hebrew, was designed to directly threaten Israel. That is hardly speculation.

It should not be tolerated by any Nation. Even worse than Russia's refusal to condemn Iran's ballistic missile tests, is that Russia has essentially rewarded Iran for its bad behavior by continuing—even increasing—its cooperation with Iran through military deals.

In February, Iran's Defense Minister visited Moscow to discuss purchasing an array of weapons. Any sale of major combat systems to Iran in the next 5 years would require approval by the U.N. Security Council under Resolution 2231. But the United States has made it clear that such a sale will not be supported. Therefore, it will not be approved by the U.N. Security Council.

Media reports in recent weeks have highlighted Russia's shipment of parts of an S-300 air defense system to Iran. In addition, Russia and Iran are supposedly in talks over Sukhoi fighter jets. If such sales are finalized and the systems are delivered, Russia would be directly defying U.N. Resolution 2231.

Supplying weapons to Iran is particularly dangerous and potentially damaging because it is not done in a vacuum. Russia's growing partnership has far-reaching ramifications because Hezbollah, Iran's terrorist proxy in Lebanon, also benefits, at least indirectly, from Russian arms and military operational experience in Syria.

The flow of support from Russia to Iran to Hezbollah feeds into yet another threat that deeply concerns me and our greatest ally in the Middle East and one of our greatest in the world, Israel. Coupled with continued chaos in the region, the Russian-Iranian cooperation, which strengthens Hezbollah, only adds to the urgency and importance of ensuring that Israel remains secure, stable, and independent.

Last November, Senator BENNET and I co-led a letter to the President concerning the need to renew the memorandum of understanding on U.S. military assistance—the MOU, as it is known—with Israel to help that nation prepare for, respond to, and defend against threats in an uncertain regional environment and to ensure its qualitative military edge. There is nothing original or novel about that policy or principle.

The current MOU provides \$30 billion in assistance to Israel through fiscal year 2018. As threats in the region continue to evolve, including Iran's malign influence, reinforced and enabled by Russia, the administration must engage at the highest levels to continue to develop a shared understanding of threats confronting Israel by strengthening the MOU that serves as the foun-

dation of our bilateral security efforts. Those efforts support not only Israel, they are in the national interests of the United States of America. Indeed, they are essential to our national interests in the region and in the world.

While negotiations remain ongoing between the United States and Israel regarding the historic renewal of the MOU, I want to express that I continue to support making the MOU a truly transformational investment to deepen the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership. It is based on a shared understanding of the environment that confronts Israel and the United States together. Russia is only exacerbating the threats in the region to our partnership—the United States and Israel—as well as to each of our nations.

The Russian-Iranian cooperation legitimizes and strengthens Tehran's adventurism, as well as the Assad regime in Syria, and threatens international security. Moscow's affair with Tehran and beyond has brought Russian military might to a network of terrorism that we must continue to monitor closely and work to combat for the safety and security of the United States. It is our security and it is Israel's security that is at stake, and the entire international community's security.

I again thank my colleague from Delaware for giving me this time and his patience in hearing me out. I look forward to working with him and other colleagues who are concerned about the Russian-Iranian cooperation. They are certainly deeply concerning. I thank him again for his leadership and vision on this topic.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Connecticut—who has been determined, engaged, and thoughtful—for his wise words today and for his persistence and his efforts in making sure that our colleagues on both sides of the aisle are aware of alarming developments in the region and continuing to do everything we can in a responsible and bipartisan way to support Israel's security through the MOU, which he has referenced and on which he led a letter about the importance of a prompt and supportive renegotiation of that MOU, and calling attention to Russia's destabilizing actions.

As Senator BLUMENTHAL just referenced, recent reports convey that Iran is reporting that Russia has already delivered parts of this S-300 weapons system—a defense system, they claim, but a weapons system that would significantly change the regional balance of power.

I again thank my colleague from Connecticut for being shoulder-to-shoulder with me on the floor today and in the months and years behind us and the months and years ahead of us because it will be a longstanding challenge to keep the Members of this body and folks in Washington focused on the very real threat to America's security and Israel's security that is presented by Iran and its actions.

As Senator BLUMENTHAL mentioned, when it comes to countering Iranian aggression in the Middle East, a number of Russia's recent actions do threaten to do more harm than good.

Last summer, when the United States came together with the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Russia to reach an agreement with Iran to block their pathway to build a nuclear weapon, the international community was clear that the success of this deal relied on every signatory keeping its word and doing its part to prevent Iran from violating the deal.

The responsibility to enforce the terms of the JCPOA goes hand-in-hand with an understanding that world powers must also push back on Iran's bad behavior outside the four corners of this agreement—specifically, its support for terrorism, its continued illegal ballistic missile tests, and its human rights violations.

Despite its participation in the negotiations that led to the agreement, Russia reportedly plans to sell missile systems to the still-dangerous Iranian regime, as well as—as referenced by Senator BLUMENTHAL—advanced fighter jets. Russia also continues to block the U.N. Security Council from taking action—necessary and responsible action—after Iran's recent illegal missile tests, which contravene its commitments under U.N. Security Council resolution 2231.

Despite the divisions that have brought Congress to a standstill in recent years, I am confident that we all agree on one thing: that Iran must not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon. I continue to believe the JCPOA represents the least bad option for blocking Iran's pathway to a nuclear bomb.

In recent months, as I have said, Russia has repeatedly undermined the spirit of that agreement, using the JCPOA as an excuse to proceed with dangerous and provocative sales of allegedly defensive equipment to Iran. According to news reports, as I said, Russia has begun delivering parts of the S-300 surface-to-air missile system to Iran. Although it is unclear how much of that system has already been delivered, the five S-300 systems Russia has promised to Iran would contain 40 launchers, which could shoot down missiles or aircraft as far as 90 miles away. One version of the S-300 currently in use by the Russian military can travel nearly 250 miles at five times the speed of sound. In a worst-case scenario, if Iran backs out of the nuclear deal, this S-300 system would substantially limit the international community's options to act to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

That is not all, though. Recent news reports indicate Russia and Iran are actively negotiating an agreement to allow Iran to purchase an unknown number of Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jets—similar to the one pictured here—some of the most advanced fighter jets available in the world. Although it is un-

clear what specific version of this aircraft Iran is seeking to obtain, these advanced weapons would significantly enhance the capabilities of Iran's Air Force.

Currently, Iran fields an outdated mix of antiquated Russian, Iraqi, American, and Chinese-built aircraft. Many of these planes date from the Cold War. One particularly advanced variety of this Russian jet, for example, is armed with air-to-air, anti-ship, and land attack missiles and bombs—precision munitions that would significantly increase the performance capabilities of the Iranian Air Force. They could target other fighter aircraft, stationary military facilities, and naval vessels. In the hands of Iran, these fighter jets would fundamentally change the balance of power in the Middle East and pose a threat to U.S. facilities and our local allies.

More concerning, according to some reports, Iran is seeking not just to buy these aircraft but also to license their production in Iran, which would greatly strengthen Iran's industrial base and its technical knowledge. It would also leave the international community with even fewer options to prevent Iranian access to this technology in the future.

At a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Tom Shannon, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, said the United States would “block the approval of fighter” aircraft sales from Russia to Iran. I urge the Obama administration to use all diplomatic measures available to it to ensure that we fulfill Under Secretary Shannon's commitment.

As my colleagues know, Iran could use these weapons to threaten U.S. assets in the Persian Gulf region, challenge the safety of our vital ally Israel and other close partners, or to protect illicit nuclear sites within Iran's borders. These threats are not just hypothetical. Iran remains a rogue and unpredictable regime that supports terrorism in the region and is publically committed to the destruction of valley.

The international community cannot stand by while Iran continues to threaten our allies and destabilize the Middle East. Its illegal ballistic missile tests in March served as yet another example that the Iranian regime is not a responsible member of the international community. These tests help Iran to further develop missiles capable of reaching most of the Middle East and even parts of Europe, and they destabilize the region and belie Iran's supposedly peaceful intentions, stated often by both its President and Foreign Minister. They claim Iran's intentions are to serve as a responsible member of the international community, but these provocative missile tests clearly contradict their commitments under U.N. Security Council resolution 2231 and demand a response.

Last week I met with Vitaly Churkin, the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations. While Ambassador

Churkin reiterated Russia's commitment to the JCPOA and our shared goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, I left our conversation convinced that Russia will continue to stand in the way of the international community's efforts to penalize Iran for its ballistic missile tests.

Russia's military sales to Iran and intransigence at the U.N. Security Council are disappointing, to say the least, in light of Russia's agreement to the terms of this nuclear deal and the importance of all of us working together in the international community to constrain Iran's bad behavior.

The challenge for American diplomacy is to convince Russia that its military sales to Iran, its refusal to engage in multilateral action to punish Iranian ballistic missile tests, and its hesitancy to sanction Iran for supporting terrorist groups harm not only American interests but Russian interests as well.

Enabling Iran to strengthen its military capabilities makes it easier for Iran in the future to one day return to an effort to develop a nuclear weapon. Ballistic missile tests foment instability in the whole Persian Gulf and southern Europe, both of which lie close to Russia. As we have tragically seen in recent weeks, the scourge of modern terrorism does not abide by international borders and poses a real threat to Russia as well.

In the coming months and years, the United States must continue to pursue action at the Security Council and work with our European allies to punish Iran for its bad behavior.

With that, I yield to my friend the senior Senator from Minnesota, who has just joined me for the colloquy. Senator KLOBUCHAR has joined me to talk about the importance of continuing to work to hold Iran accountable under the JCPOA, to urge a need to confirm senior national security nominees, and the imperative to support our regional partners, especially of our ally Israel.

Senator KLOBUCHAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I thank Senator COONS for his work. As he stated, Russia's actions are very harmful in the effort to bring peace in the Middle East. Russia reportedly plans to sell advanced aircraft and missile systems to Iran, as Senator COONS noted, and may begin making these shipments in the next few days. These weapons could be used to destabilize the region and threaten the security of our allies, especially Israel.

Russia also continues to block the U.N. Security Council from taking action in response to Iran's recent illegal missile tests. These actions can only embolden Iran and encourage Iran to disregard its commitment.

Russia, as a JCPOA country, a world power, and a member of the U.N. Security Council, needs to be convinced that it is in its best interests and in

the interests of the international community that Iran stick to its commitments under the JCPOA. I thank Senator COONS for making those points.

As he noted, I also stress the need to enforce Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and also to confirm nominees for positions vital to national security and to support our allies in the Mid East. Preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is one of the most important objectives of our national security policy.

I strongly advocated for and supported the economic sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table over the last few years. Those sanctions resulted in a nuclear non-proliferation agreement between Iran and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China that was implemented in January. But our work is clearly not done. As we have seen over the past few months, Iran continues to conduct ballistic missile tests and continues to support terrorism and threatening regional stability. Now we are reading news reports, as I noted, that Russia is selling a long-range surface-to-air missile defense system to Iran.

All of this means we have to remain vigilant in our monitoring and in our verification. That is why I sponsored the Iran Policy Oversight Act and encourage my colleagues to pass it. The bill does three important things to hold Iran accountable. First, it allows Congress to more quickly impose economic sanctions against Iran's terrorist activity. Second, the bill expands military aid to Israel. Third, the bill ensures that agencies charged with monitoring Iran have the resources they need.

We also have to reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act in order to ensure that we can hold Iran accountable if it violates the deal. The Iran Sanctions Act is up for reauthorization this December and has been a pivotal component of U.S. sanctions against Iran's energy sector, and its application has been steadily expanded to other Iranian industries. Given Iran's history, we can anticipate that it will continue to test the boundaries of international agreements, and we have to be ready to respond when it does so.

In summary, we must hold Iran accountable every step of the way. Imposing harsh sanctions, as the administration must do, against those responsible for Iran's ballistic missile program, which threatened regional and global security, is, of course, a good start, but we must continue to sanction Iran's ballistic missile program as well as its sponsorship of terrorism and abuse of human rights.

Any person or business involved in helping Iran obtain illicit weapons should be banned from doing business with the United States, have their assets and financial operations immediately frozen, and have their travel restricted. Minimizing the threat Iran

poses also means working to ensure that the money flowing into Iran now that nuclear sanctions are lifted is not used to further destabilize the region and spread terrorism. We must monitor the flow of terrorist financing and use every tool available to punish bad actors who seek to do harm. But it is also important for Iran to understand that we will not hesitate to snap back sanctions if Iran fails to comply its commitments under the JCPOA. Sanctions were effective at getting Iran to the table and they will continue to be a tool that allows the United States and our allies to minimize the threat posed by Iran.

We must also continue to work with our partners, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the European Union, and Russia to ensure that the agreement is strictly enforced. Iran must know that if it violates the rules, the response will be certain, swift, and severe. As Senator COONS mentioned, when the agreement was reached, its success is ultimately dependent upon every country keeping its word to keep Iran from violating its commitments under the agreement. We need the support of the international community to ensure that Iran sticks to its commitments. As we just heard from Senator COONS, Russia's actions are harmful to this effort.

Russia reportedly plans to sell advanced aircraft and missile systems to Iran and may begin making these shipments in the next few days. These weapons could be used to destabilize the region and threaten the security of our allies, especially Israel. Russia also continues to block the U.N. Security Council from taking action in response to Iran's recent illegal missile tests. These actions can only embolden Iran and encourage Iran to disregard its commitments. Russia, as a JCPOA country, a world power, and a member of the U.N. Security Council, needs to be convinced that it is in the best interest of the international community that Iran sticks to its commitments under the JCPOA.

We also need to make sure that we fill vacant frontline positions that hamper our ability to protect our country and work with our allies. While I was pleased that the Senate Banking Committee voted 14-8 last month to approve the nomination of Adam Szubin as undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the Department of Treasury, the fact remains that it should not have taken 325 days for the committee to vote. This position is essential to national security as it tracks the source of terrorist funding around the world and should be filled as soon as possible.

We cannot delay confirmations if the reasoning has nothing to do with policy and everything to do with politics. Senator SHAHEEN came to the floor several times to call for swift action on his confirmation, and I join her to urge my Senate colleagues to vote on his confirmation as soon as possible. Our

allies and our enemies need to see a united and functional American front-line. And in order to hold Iran accountable, we have to have these positions filled. It is that simple.

The United States needs to limit Iran's destabilizing activity in the region. We need to give our allies in the region the support they need. As the Administration negotiates a new Memorandum of Understanding for security assistance to Israel, I, along with many of my colleagues, support a substantially enhanced agreement to help provide Israel the resources it requires to defend itself and preserve its qualitative military edge. Israel remains America's strongest ally in this troubled region. A strong and secure Israel remains a central pillar of our national strategy to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East.

Those of us who supported the Iran nuclear agreement have a special responsibility to ensure that it works. In fact, this whole Senate has a responsibility, regardless of whether Members supported it or not. It is in the best interest of our country. We cannot shirk from our duties and we must be vigilant. We owe it to the American people, to Israel, and to our allies.

Our mission here is clear: We must protect our own citizens by exercising our authority to enact strong legislation to ensure that Iran does not cheat on its international commitments. Because we know from experience that Iran will test the international community, we must be ready to respond when it does. We must also minimize the threat Iran poses to our citizens and the world by doing everything in our power to stop Iran from funding the world's terrorists.

It is critical that we take additional steps to stop countries like Iran from funding terrorism and destabilizing the world. Stopping Iran's support of terrorism protects us here at home, but it also helps millions of refugees fleeing Syria, the children that are starving in cities like Madaya, and the families fleeing mortar fire in Yemen. Our values of justice, democracy, and freedom for all demand nothing less.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I want to thank Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUMENTHAL for joining me in this colloquy, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2012

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 2012 and that it be in order to call up the following amendments en bloc, and that the amendments be called up and reported by number: amendments Nos. 3276, Cantwell, striking certain provisions; 3302, as modified, Klobuchar, modifying a provision; 3055, Flake; 3050, Flake; 3237, Hatch; 3308, Murkowski; 3286, as

modified, Heller; 3075, Vitter; 3168, Portman-Shaheen; 3292, as modified, Shaheen; 3155, Heinrich; 3270, Manchin; 3313, as modified, Cantwell; 3214, Cantwell; 3266, Vitter; 3310, Sullivan; 3317, Heinrich; 3265, as modified, Vitter; 3012, Kaine; 3290, Alexander-Merkley; 3004, Gillibrand-Cassidy; 3233, as modified, Warner; 3239, Thune; 3221, Udall-Portman; 3203, Coons; 3309, as modified, Portman; 3229, Flake; 3251, Inhofe.

I ask consent that immediately following the reporting of the amendments, it be in order for the Senate to vote on these amendments en bloc, as well as the Murkowski amendment No. 2963, with no intervening action or debate; further, that it be in order to call up the following amendments en bloc and that the amendments be called up and reported by number: amendments Nos. 3234, as modified, Murkowski-Cantwell; 3202, Isakson-Bennet; 3175, Burr; 3210, Lankford; 3311, Boozman; 3312, Udall; 3787, Paul; that there be 2 hours of debate, equally divided in the usual form, on the amendments concurrently; that no further amendments to these amendments be in order; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the amendments in the order listed, with a 60-affirmative-vote threshold for adoption of each of the amendments with no intervening action or debate; further, that following the disposition of the Paul amendment No. 3787, the Senate vote on the Cassidy amendment No. 2954, with a 60-vote-affirmative threshold for adoption; that following the disposition of the Cassidy amendment, the substitute amendment No. 2953, as amended, be agreed to, and that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture, upon reconsideration, on S. 2012, as amended; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of S. 2012, as amended; finally, that budget points of order not be barred by virtue of this agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. To clarify, amendments Nos. 3055 by Flake and 3229 by Flake.

The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to take a moment here to congratulate Chairman MURKOWSKI for what could best be described as a long march. Her persistence and determination to pull this very important bill together with a lot of Senators with different views at points along the way has been a really extraordinary accomplishment and, frankly, has been fun to watch because she certainly knows how to manage a bill, how to get to a conclusion, and she did that in an extraordinary fashion.

I also want to thank Senator CANTWELL, her ranking member. The two of them worked well together, and I think we are on the cusp here of something very important and very much worth doing for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am very happy we are at this point. This legislation has taken 3 years. It has been hard to get to where we are today. We can go back to a lot of hurdles that we have had to jump to get to where we are now, and we can affix blame to a lot of different people, but there is no need to do that today. We are where we are, and we should accept that with glee.

I am gratified we are able to reach this agreement, and that is an understatement. It is an important piece of legislation. Is it perfect? Of course not. But nothing we do legislatively is. We are trying to work things out through compromise. This is a good opportunity for us to show we can do that.

We have tried to move this legislation for 3 years, and I really appreciate the patience of JEANNE SHAHEEN from New Hampshire. She has worked on this and has been so disappointed so many times. I hope she feels as good as the rest of us.

I also want to thank the ranking member of the Energy Committee. She has had other responsibilities before, but those of us who have worked with Senator CANTWELL know how persistent she can be. She is tireless in advocating for what she thinks is appropriate. So I appreciate what she has done in the last few days to get us to this point.

I am grateful that we are done with this and that we are going to finish this bill. We will have to work it out timewise. It will not be the easiest thing, but we should be able to do that. We have other things we need to do. We have an appropriations bill coming up. We are going to finish with the FAA, I hope, pretty soon. I hope nobody is going to be demanding a lot of postcloture time on that.

So I would hope, Mr. President, we can use this as a pattern for what we can do in the future to get things done for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge and thank the majority leader and the minority leader for their cooperation and their help in getting us here and specifically recognize the good work of Senator CANTWELL. You do not get to a point in this body with significant legislation if you don't have a willing partner on the other side.

We have not taken up energy reform or any real energy legislation in over 8 years now, and in those intervening 8 years, much has happened in the energy space. Our policies as they relate to energy, whether it is LNG exports or renewables, haven't advanced. And the commitment that Senator CANTWELL and I made to one another over a year ago to try to move legislation—not just to move messages but to move legislation—was a commitment that held us through a lot of hearings, a lot of discussion, a lot of debate going back and forth, but to the point where we

are today with an agreement to move forward to final passage on a very significant energy bill for the country.

So I thank Senator CANTWELL, and I would also like to recognize her staff, led by Angela Becker-Dippmann, and my energy team, led by Colin Hayes, who have put in yeoman's work to get us to this point.

I would like to think we could kick this whole thing out tonight, but we are not going to be doing that. We do, however, have the glidepath forward, and I thank not only those on our respective teams but also those here on the floor who have helped us with this as well.

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

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HOEVEN. 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 THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the University of North Dakota men's hockey team, which won a national championship last Saturday. Undoubtedly, like everybody else, the Presiding Officer was glued to his TV set watching the exciting game between the University of North Dakota men's hockey team and Quinnipiac. The UND hockey team prevailed 5 to 1 in an exciting game in front of about 20,000 fans. It was just fantastic.

So I am here to read a resolution into the record from the United States Senate congratulating the University of North Dakota men's hockey team for winning the 2016 National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division I Men's Hockey Championship.

Whereas the University of North Dakota (referred to in this preamble as "UND") Men's Hockey Team won the 2016 National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the "NCAA") Division I Men's Hockey Championship Game in Tampa, Florida, on April 9, 2016, in a hard fought victory over the Quinnipiac University Bobcats of Connecticut by a score of 5 to 1;

Whereas the UND men's hockey team and Coach Brad Berry had an incredible 2015-16 season and became the first head coach to win the National Championship in his first season as head coach;

Whereas UND has won its eighth NCAA Frozen Four Championship—

Second only to Michigan. Michigan has won nine. We hope to remedy that next year and get our ninth, and then pass by the University of Michigan—ending the season with a 34-6-4 record;

Whereas Coach Berry and his staff have instilled character and perseverance in the UND players and have done an outstanding job with the UND hockey program;

Whereas the leadership of Interim President Ed Schafer and Athletic Director Brian Faison has helped further both academic and athletic excellence at UND;

Whereas thousands of UND fans attended the championship game, reflecting the tremendous fan base of the University of North Dakota that showcases the spirit and dedication of UND hockey fans, which has helped propel the team's success; and

Whereas the 2016 NCAA Frozen Four Division I Hockey Championship was a victory not only for the UND men's hockey team, but also for the entire State of North Dakota—

We take great pride in our hockey and our tremendous UND hockey team—

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the University of North Dakota men's hockey team, the 2016 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Men's Hockey champions;

(2) commends the University of North Dakota players, coaches, and staff for their hard work and dedication; and

(3) recognizes the students, alumni, and loyal fans for supporting the UND men's hockey team on their successful quest to capture another NCAA National Championship trophy for the University of North Dakota.

We are very proud of our university, of the leadership there at the university, of the coaches, the staff, and these tremendous student athletes. They conducted themselves so well both on and off the ice. They had an absolutely impressive run through the postseason.

I think Quinnipiac only lost about three games all year, so they had an incredible record. They were rated No. 1 in the country. Our hockey team came in and played a fantastic game. It was an exciting game to watch, but on both sides tremendous athletes. Congratulations to Quinnipiac on a great year and on an outstanding program.

We played Denver in the semifinals. They also had a great year. Boston College was in the other bracket. They were outstanding hockey programs. It was a great hockey tournament. There was a fantastic fan base from all the schools. Again, back to the quality of the athletes, the student athletes who were competing—great character. They handled themselves well and had great sportsmanship. It is exactly the kind of thing we like to see not only for our State but the other States that were there and the teams that were representing.

It was a great tournament all around. Also, thanks and congratulations to everyone in Tampa for hosting the tournament and doing an absolutely fantastic job. We had thousands of fans outside the arena after the game savoring the victory and having a great time. The city of Tampa and the arena could not have been more hospitable, so we want to say thank you and express our appreciation. Again, congratulations to a great team on a great year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is the 133rd climate speech that I have delivered, and it has been an amazing week. On Saturday, the New York Times posted its cover story about dying coral reefs in our oceans. On Sunday, the cover story in the Providence Journal was about drowning salt marshes in Rhode Island. Both are the handiwork of climate change.

Even more amazing, listen to what a Koch brothers operative said last week: "Charles has said the climate is changing. So, the climate is changing." That was Sheryl Corrigan speaking, of Koch Industries, the massive fuel conglomerate led by Charles and David Koch, and the Charles was Charles Koch.

She went on: "I think he's also said, and we believe that humans have a part in that."

Climate change is real, it seems, and manmade if even they say so.

What this really means is that the denial shtick has collapsed entirely. We saw this coming with the oil and gas CEOs. In the runup to the Paris climate summit, the chief executive officers of 10 of the world's largest oil and gas companies declared their collective support for a strong international climate change agreement.

"We are committed to playing our part," they professed. "Over the coming years we will collectively strengthen our actions and investments to contribute to reducing the GHG intensity of the global energy mix."

So if the oil and gas CEOs will not do it and now even the Koch brothers will not do it, it looks like denying climate change is no longer acceptable—even to those who most cause it.

As we know, Big Coal took another path, denying to the end, and for many players in the coal industry it really is the end. The industry is being devastated by market forces and is in precipitous decline. As I noted in my last climate speech, the Wall Street Journal reported that the "war on coal" was a war on coal by the natural gas industry, and the natural gas industry has won.

Appalachian Power president and CEO Charles Patton told a meeting of energy executives last fall that coal was losing a long-term contest with natural gas and wind power. Today we learned America's largest coal company, Peabody Energy, filed for bankruptcy, as Arch Coal did in January.

In recent years, one report found 26 U.S. coal companies have gone into bankruptcy. Some of the most notable bankruptcies include James River Coal and Patriot Coal Corporation, which had combined assets that totaled \$4.6 billion.

Denial was not a winning strategy for the coal industry. If outright denial of manmade climate change is no longer a viable strategy, what is left? It is an old classic: Dissembling—saying one thing and doing another. The

polluters say climate change is real and they say that a carbon fee makes sense, but they put their entire massive lobbying and political operations to work to prevent Congress from actually acknowledging that climate change is real or from working on legislation to establish a carbon fee—even a carbon fee that would dramatically reduce the corporate income tax rate.

For example, USA TODAY reported this week that oil titan Chevron has pumped at least \$1 million into the super PAC set up to keep the Senate in the hands of the climate denial party. I don't know of a penny that Chevron has put into supporting climate action in Congress. Say one thing; do another.

A new report from the nonprofit research organization Influence Map shows that two other major oil companies, along with three of their industry trade groups, spend as much as \$115 million a year to lobby against the very climate policies they publicly claim to support. Say one thing, do another.

This chart shows the streams of money from ExxonMobil and Royal Dutch Shell—whose CEO, by the way, signed the oil-and-gas Paris declaration—as well as the American Petroleum Institute, the Western States Petroleum Association, and the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association. That is Shell and that is Exxon.

This money deluge—total spent, \$114 million—includes advertising and public relations, direct lobbying here in Congress and at State houses, and political contributions and electioneering. Don't think any of this goes to support a solution to climate change.

What this chart doesn't show is the dark money these corporate behemoths funnel through phony-baloney front groups, often untraceable, to undermine public understanding of the climate crisis and to undermine action in Congress. Front groups have been testifying this very week in the Environment and Public Works Committee against climate action. Was there any pushback from Charles Koch or from the oil CEOs? No. Nor does this chart show the undisclosed fossil fuel millions dumped into our elections thanks to the regrettable Citizens United Supreme Court decision.

Academic researchers like Robert Brulle at Drexel University, Riley Dunlap at Oklahoma State University, Justin Farrell at Yale University, and Michael Mann at Penn State University, among many others, have studied and are exposing the precise dimensions and functions of the corporate climate denial machine. It is quite a piece of machinery. Investigative writers like Naomi Oreskes, Erik Conway, Naomi Klein, and Steve Coll are also on the hunt.

Jane Mayer of The New Yorker has put out an important piece of legislation—her new, aptly titled book "Dark Money," about the secret but massive

influence-buying of rightwing billionaires led by the infamous Koch brothers. Mayer's book catalogs the rise and the expansion into a vast array of front groups of this operation and the role in it of two of America's more shameless villains Charles and David Koch.

If you want a little more history on this unholy alliance, you can read "Poison Tea," a new book out by Jeff Nesbit. Mr. Nesbit was a Republican who worked in the Bush 41 White House. He was there at the creation. He has reviewed an enormous array of documents and he has written an amazing exposé.

The Koch brothers' say one thing, do another strategy is every bit as bad as the say one thing, do another strategy of their oil and gas allies. Remember, here is what they now say:

Charles has said the climate is changing. So, the climate is changing. . . . I think he's also said, and we believe that humans have a part in that.

Again, that is the Koch Industries' rep.

Here is what they still do: They threaten that Republicans who support a carbon tax or climate regulations would "be at a severe disadvantage in the Republican nomination process. . . . We would absolutely make that a crucial issue."

That is the President of Americans for Prosperity, the juggernaut of the Koch brothers-backed political network, which has promised to spend, believe it or not, \$750 million just in this 2016 election. What on Earth could they possibly want to spend \$750 million on?

Americans for Prosperity's president also takes credit for the "political peril" they are proud to have created for Republicans who cross them on climate change. This threat is not subtle. Step out of line and here come the attack ads and the primary challengers all funded by the deep pockets of the fossil fuel industry, powered up by Citizens United.

The result? The issue of climate change is completely absent from the Republican campaigns. They really don't want to talk about it. Every Republican candidate has gone into silence or outright denial. Their silence or outright denial is exactly paralleled on the floor of this body.

Just this week, a bipartisan effort to extend tax incentives for renewable energy fell apart after it was reported that the Kochs and an array of their front groups told the Senate majority to cease and desist from allowing an extension of renewable tax credits the majority had already agreed to.

So down came the FAA bill compromise. Of course, the Big Oil tax credits have been baked into the Tax Code, and there is no contesting them that is allowed. We now have a field in which renewable tax credits that were agreed to are not in place, but Big Oil protects its own tax breaks as the fossil fuel industry attacks the renewable tax breaks.

Look at what fossil fuel influence has done to the business lobby groups. The

Chamber of Commerce, which is probably more accurately defined now as the chamber of carbon, the American Petroleum Institute, even the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Federation of Independent Business, and the Farm Bureau—Big Oil and the Koch brothers have locked them all down. It is a wall of opposition among those groups to any sensible conversation about carbon pollution.

I have spoken before about the well-defended castle of denial constructed by the big polluters to attack and harass their opponents and to keep out the unwelcome truths of climate science. Built as it is on a foundation of lies, the denial castle is bound to crumble. We have seen cracks begin to appear in the edifice. This revelation on the part of the Koch brothers that they finally see that climate change is real and manmade is another collapse. It is a big collapse. But don't believe they are surrendering their position entirely. What we see here in Congress is that they are still fighting as hard as ever. They are just conceding some of their more extreme positions because they know some of their nonsense is now simply beyond the pale and is not acceptable. This is just a strategic retreat from a preposterous stance.

Every major scientific society in America agrees on the cause and urgency of climate change, and, I think, so do every one of our major State universities—certainly every one I have looked at—all of our National Labs, NASA, NOAA, America's national security and intelligence community, and all the corporations that signed the American Business Act on Climate Pledge, which includes major corporations from a lot of our Republican colleagues' home States. That is a lot of information to deny and ignore, and that is an awful lot of legitimate people to claim our part of the hoax.

Here it comes—the whole structure of deceit and denial erected by the fossil fuel interest is creaking and crumbling. More than a dozen attorneys general are starting to poke and probe. My Republican colleagues may want to consider getting out of the way of this because the day is coming—and soon—when the whole denier castle collapses, and that day cannot come too soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK AND THE JUSTICE FOR ALL RE-AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, every year in April, we pause to observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and this year marks its 35th anniversary. Since 1981, in communities across the Nation, people have observed this week with candlelight vigils and public rallies to renew our commitment to crime victims and their families. Vermonters have always banded together to help crime victims and their families. That is just who we are, and I am proud of that long tradition. It is vitally important that we continue to recognize the needs of these survivors and work together to promote victims' rights and services.

One of our most important tools to do so is the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 and the crime victims fund that it created. I strongly supported passage of this critical legislation, which has been the principal means through which the Federal Government has supported essential services for crime victims and their families for more than three decades. It is time to review and renew that law, and I have been working closely with Senator GRASSLEY in that effort. Next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing to assess the crime victims fund and discuss how to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of victims.

The Justice for All Act is another important law that promotes victims' rights. I am working with Senator CORNYN to reauthorize this vital legislation. Our bill will further strengthen the rights of crime victims; improve the use of forensic evidence, including rape kits, to provide justice as swiftly as possible; and protect the innocent by improving access to post-conviction DNA testing.

The Justice for All Reauthorization Act builds on the work I began in 2000, when I introduced the Innocence Protection Act, which sought to ensure that defendants in the most serious cases receive competent representation and, where appropriate, access to post-conviction DNA testing. I served proudly as a prosecutor in Vermont for 8 years, and I believe that we must find those responsible for crimes and prosecute them. But we must also ensure that our system does not wrongly convict those who are innocent. DNA testing is often necessary to prove the innocence of individuals in cases where the system got it grievously wrong. "Innocent until proven guilty" is a hallmark of our criminal justice system, but when a person who has been found guilty is truly innocent, we cannot stand idly by. We must act to exonerate that person.

The Innocence Protection Act passed as part of the original Justice for All Act in 2004, and since that time, at