

adjourn. I urge support of this important bill.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION AND FEMALE VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION BILLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it was encouraging to see the Senate vote to advance the National Defense Authorization Act this morning. It reflects a recognition by this body of the importance of the bill and the moment. The defense authorization act will promote defense innovation and research, it will modernize retirement benefits for our men and women in uniform, and authorize the pay raises they deserve. It will help prepare our country for the threats of today and the challenges of tomorrow, and it will better enable the next Commander in Chief, regardless of party, to deal with them as well. That is critical given that the next President is about to inherit an array of threats and troubling instability in the Middle East.

Yesterday Senators laid out many ways in which President Obama's foreign policy has fallen short. One was lack of strategic vision. Take for instance his unnecessary threat to veto this very bill. He doesn't like bipartisan prohibitions on transferring hardcore terrorists from Guantanamo's secure facilities to American communities or unstable countries. We include similar bipartisan provisions year after year after year. He makes similar threats year after year after year, but he signs the bill year after year, so it is time to quit that.

This bill just advanced in the Senate by a bipartisan vote of 68 to 23. The funding levels this bill authorizes is exactly the same as what President Obama requested in his budget, and unless the President is actually more concerned about a campaign slogan from back in 2008 than he is about grave threats we face in 2016, he will sign it.

I thank colleagues on both sides for their hard work on this legislation, particularly Chairman MCCAIN. He is always on guard for our men and women in uniform, and he is always standing up for our national security. This bill is a reflection of his commitment. It is an important step for the American people, but it is not the only one we took this past week.

It has been reported that we lose over 20 veterans each day to suicide, and one study has revealed that suicide rates among female veterans grew by 40 percent between 2000 and 2010. This is heartbreaking, and it underlines the

importance of the Female Veterans Suicide Prevention Act that the Senate passed earlier this week. This legislation will require the VA to take a closer look at this issue and assess which mental health care and veteran suicide prevention programs are most successful for our female veterans. It builds upon the progress of the Clay Hunt Act, an important law we passed last year that provides more of the suicide prevention and mental health support our veterans deserve.

As Senator ERNST recently reminded us, our servicemembers have selflessly sacrificed in defense of our freedoms, and we should help ensure that they are prepared to transition back to civilian life, which includes access to quality and timely mental health care they deserve. Senator ERNST knows what it means to serve. I thank her for her continued leadership for Iowa and for her work on this bill with Senators BOXER, BLUMENTHAL, and BROWN.

This veterans mental health legislation is another example of what we can accomplish when we work together to find solutions for the American people, and it is another example of a Senate that is back to work.

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#### SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERSHIP BILL

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of S. 1089, a bill to encourage and support partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve our Nation's social programs, and for other purposes, known as the Social Impact Partnership Act, SIPA. This legislation would facilitate the creation of public-private partnerships that have the goal of improving the outcomes from our Nation's social services spending in order to benefit both the people intended to be helped by those programs and the U.S. taxpayer. It would do so by creating the Federal Interagency Council on Social Impact Partnerships, which would recommend to the Treasury Secretary that the Federal Government enter into agreements with State and local governments and private investors to pay for successful social improvement programs funded by private investors out of savings those programs create for the Federal Government.

The bill appropriates \$300 million for this purpose and aims to ensure that the savings to the Federal Government from the projects selected will exceed that \$300 million. If a social services program is not successful, the Federal Government will not pay for it. In this way, SIPA helps to reorient Federal social spending towards measurable improvements in the lives of those served.

While I am supportive of the bill, I do want to note for the record that this bill could benefit from further assurances at a committee markup that the funded projects will result in governmental savings.

The appropriations for the legislation should be offset with spending reduc-

tions in other areas, as has been done in the companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

There should be a specified role in the legislation for CBO and OMB to certify for taxpayers that the Federal performance payments authorized in the bill for successful projects do not exceed actual programmatic savings and that this bill provides better social outcomes for equal or less total money spent.

Finally, the bill should ensure that there is no way for any program stakeholder, government official, or member of the Federal Interagency Council on Social Impact Partnerships to unduly influence the measured outcome of these funded projects, which is required to receive federal payments. As part of these protections, there should be strict conflict of interest rules in place to prohibit those involved in selecting and measuring the projects from having a financial interest in their outcome.

The purpose of the Social Impact Partnership Act is to establish funding for innovative social service projects that work and ending funding for those that do not. If there is any evidence that such innovation is not occurring and SIPA is becoming yet another wasteful and politically influenced government program, I will work to end it.

I thank Senators HATCH and BENNET for their great work on this bill, and I look forward to its markup in the Finance Committee and passage in the full Senate.

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#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

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##### TRIBUTE TO BILLY COX

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Baxter County Sheriff's Deputy Billy Cox, the American Legion Department of Arkansas Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award recipient.

Deputy Cox has dedicated 13 years to law enforcement and currently serves as the Norfolk school resource officer. He provides a law enforcement presence, but also uses his skills and experiences to help students learn and grow in a safe environment through D.A.R.E. and other youth safety programs. Having worked as a paramedic for two decades, he also teaches CPR to high school students.

Known as Officer Billy to the students and educators around the Norfolk School District, Deputy Cox is a positive role model for the students. Students rely on him to listen to their problems, and he is always patient and willing to listen. Norfolk High School Principal Bobby Hulse says Deputy Cox means a lot to the students and staff.

His dedication to law enforcement has earned Deputy Cox certifications in drug abuse education and gang resistance education. He is a State-certified drug recognition expert.

The American Legion Department of Arkansas Law Enforcement Officer of