

from their doctors or from primary care clinics. Limiting access to contraception while fighting a disease we know can be transmitted sexually is ridiculous, counterintuitive, and downright dangerous. This approach unnecessarily endangers women across the country.

Why on Earth would the Republicans—with a public health crisis looming—insert a provision that is not only bad policy, but that they knew Democrats could not support? One reason: politics.

Turning emergency research funding into a political football is irresponsible, and I cannot support it. Women, men, and children need to be protected against Zika, and this bill undermines those efforts. As mosquito season continues and the danger of Zika increases, we need serious legislation that addresses this public health crisis, not partisan gamesmanship.

But Zika funding is not the only place this bill falls short. This conference report cuts \$500 million from the bipartisan Senate VA Appropriations bill.

The Senate bill cleared the Senate 89-8, a truly bipartisan bill. In the U.S. Senate, I imagine we couldn't even get 89 people to agree on what color the sky is, much less an appropriations bill, but here, we have one.

The Democratic conferees went to conference with open ears and an open mind. Things started off okay, but Republican leadership inserted themselves into the process, and it quickly became clear that they had no interest in crafting a bipartisan deal. Getting a deal requires two parties to at least talk to each other.

But once leadership got involved, Republicans did not even return our phone calls after last weekend. This conference report was negotiated in private with only Republican Members in the room.

They took the chainsaw to the Senate's bipartisan proposal that would have given the VA the resources it needs to give our vets the care they have earned.

The conference report before the Senate would put the VA \$653 million below what the VA says it needs to get the job done.

Veterans across the country and in my home State of Montana are waiting for action, and these harmful cuts will leave the VA with just enough to try and address veterans' needs. And let's be clear, "just enough" isn't good enough for our veterans.

This bill cuts money out of medical service accounts. These are the very accounts that are used to pay doctors, nurses, and for medical equipment.

Making it harder for the VA to administer care is irresponsible, and this bill would leave VA medical centers scrambling to provide services for thousands of veterans.

Compared to what the Senate passed—with 89 votes earlier this year—this bill cuts \$250 million for fa-

cility maintenance of VA hospitals and clinics.

I have toured these clinics. In Missoula, MT, we have a VA clinic that is far over capacity. Patients are forced to double and triple-up in rooms, ruining any semblance of patient privacy. Doctors and nurses are forced to have conversations that should be confidential in front of other patients.

Sixty percent of VHA facilities are more than 50 years old, and they have over \$10 billion in code deficiencies.

Our veterans deserve better than being treated in third-rate facilities.

This type of cut is exactly the partisan game playing that shows this bill was never meant as a compromise, but rather it is just a catalyst for cuts to make the VA less effective.

These cuts aren't designed to improve care; they are designed to balance the budget on the backs of our veterans.

If Republicans had come to the table willing to play ball, we could swallow these cuts if real improvements were made to how the VA is run, but these cuts will only compound the problems at the VA and are unacceptable without genuine reform.

This was not how a conference should operate; not a single vote was ever taken by the conferees on VA related items. They were simply shoved into the bill.

The unfortunate byproduct of this partisanship was that a bipartisan approach to VA funding and policy priorities was abandoned at the end and left VA short of what I believe to be responsible funding levels.

I invite my Republican colleagues in the House—and one in particular in the Senate—to look at the Veterans First Act, that cleared committee unanimously, that takes a real shot at reforming the VA, and is a good example of what bipartisan compromise can look like.

The VA is struggling, and cutting costs and not addressing real issues across the VA is not what our veterans deserve. I cannot support this bill because it does not support our veterans.

We have 3 months before the next fiscal year begins—3 months before the VA runs out of money.

I am ready to work with folks on both sides to see if we can agree on a plan that gives our veterans more than "good enough." We have done it once this year, and we can do it again, but we need to get moving.

#### GREEN CLIMATE FUND

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, on June 29, 2016, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up S. 3117, the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriation Act, 2017. During the mark-up, the Senator from Oregon offered an amendment to strike language that would have prohibited the Department of State from expending funds appropriated by the bill to make a Federal

Government contribution to the Green Climate Fund. The Appropriations Committee adopted Senator MERKLEY's amendment by voice vote.

The committee's voice vote did not afford me the opportunity to record my opposition to Senator MERKLEY's amendment in the committee record. I oppose the Merkley amendment and any transfer of funding to the Green Climate Fund.

As Deputy Secretary of State Heather Higginbottom testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March, Congress did not authorize the Green Climate Fund. Congress also failed to appropriate any funding for the Green Climate Fund in fiscal year 2016. In March 2016, the Department of State transferred \$500 million from the Economic Support Fund to the Green Climate Fund, despite the lack of any authorization or appropriation from Congress.

This \$500 million transfer represents 26 percent of all appropriations to the Economic Support Fund—intended to promote economic and political stability around the globe—at a time when combating the Zika virus, addressing the threat of international terrorism, and dealing with the risks posed by Russian aggression in Eastern Europe all would have been better uses of State Department funds.

For these reasons, I oppose Senator MERKLEY's amendment to S. 3117.

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(A) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 0N-16. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described