The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. Foxx).

**DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC, March 30, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VIRGINIA FOXX to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, thank You for giving us another day. Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people’s House to encourage them in their official tasks. Especially during this season of budget deliberations, give them wisdom and an accurate understanding of the needs of the citizens of this country, most particularly those with narrow margins in their life options.

As the trees of the city are bright with flowers, may Your spirit enlighten the minds of those who serve, and may the beauty of Your creation show forth in the creative work of our Congress.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

**THE JOURNAL**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule 1, the Journal stands approved.

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Kilmer) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILMER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATING PAT BRADFORD

(Mr. ROUZER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to make special mention of Pat Bradford, who recently stepped down as publisher and editor of the local paper she founded, the Lumina News.

The Lumina News has served as the voice of Wrightsville Beach and its surrounding communities since 2002. This local paper covers a wide range of topics but sets itself apart by covering matters especially important to coastal communities.

The Lumina News has consistently been ranked first in its North Carolina Press Association newspaper category. In fact, first in nine new top awards for 2016.

With her recent departure from the paper, Pat is focusing her attention on the very successful monthly sister publication which she co-founded, the Wrightsville Beach Magazine.

I have had the pleasure of getting to know Pat in the past few years and will certainly miss interacting with her as publisher and editor of the Lumina News.

Congratulations to you, Pat, for your continued success in all these endeavors and for your continued contributions to the Wrightsville Beach community and beyond.

BERTIEL SPIER CELEBRATES HER 107TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. KILMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILMER. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, March 31, 1910, Bertiel Spier was born, and tomorrow she will celebrate her 107th birthday.

Just imagine what she has seen: two world wars, technological advancements beyond our wildest dreams. When she sees a video on a telephone, she cannot believe it.

She has an extraordinary legacy: a loving daughter, four adoring and adorable great-grandchildren, and three grandsons to whom she is a hero. I am proud to be one of them.

My grandma is someone who is a testament to the greatness of this Nation and of the importance of what happens in this building.

She immigrated to the U.S. from Holland and was welcomed here and accepted here, built a life here. That is part of the greatness of this Nation.

A person born 10 years before women’s suffrage, she proudly voted herself in this building. That is part of the greatness of this Nation.

A person who outlived any projected retirement, she has been able to retire and live with dignity because of two of our country’s most successful public policies: Medicare and Social Security. That is part of the greatness of this Nation, too.

Madam Speaker, it is such an honor for me to say four of the most extraordinary and almost unbelievable words that I may ever say on this floor:
Happy 107th birthday, Oma. We love you.

MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING JON RICHARDS

(Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to celebrate the life of Jon Richards, a Georgia treasure, a brilliant political journalist, a selfless mentor. He passed away this past Sunday after a battle with cancer. Our prayers go out and we grieve for the family and friends of Jon during this difficult time.

Madam Speaker, Jon grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, and later moved to Lawrenceville, Georgia, where he became active in various Gwinnett County civic, social, and political organizations.

He was well respected on both sides of the political aisle, serving with endless passion as editor-in-chief of georgiaiol.com. Most notably, however, was his devotion to mentoring high school and college students who were interested in politics, and he left a lasting impression.

Madam Speaker, Jon was known by the Gwinnett community as someone who lived life to its fullest and made the most of every day. His leadership was unmatched and cannot be overstated.

I am grateful to know that, through Christ, we will be able to meet again.

Madam Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to stand and join with me for a moment of silence to honor the life and legacy of Jon Richards, who will be sorely missed by many.

INVESTIGATING RUSSIA’S INFLUENCE ON OUR ELECTION

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, Russia’s efforts to influence our election constitutes a direct assault on our democracy. These alarming events must be thoroughly investigated. In particular, we must determine if any Americans collaborated in these attacks and are legally culpable.

Sadly, the House Intelligence Committee chairman is either unwilling or incapable of conducting a fair investigation. How can Mr. Nunes run this investigation if he is briefing the President before talking with members of his committee? How can he be secretly meeting with so-called sources at the White House?

Madam Speaker, the American people need to know that democracy is intact, and that requires a full, fair, and impartial investigation.

Since December, I have repeatedly called for the Department of Justice to appoint a special counsel. I have also cosponsored legislation to create a bipartisan commission to investigate.

The bottom line is this: Chairman Nunes has lost all credibility. He must recuse himself. We need a real investigation. Appoint a special counsel now.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FROZEN FOOD MONTH

(Mr. NEWHOUSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize March as National Frozen Food Month.

In my district, growers count on our food processors to ensure that their agricultural products make it from farms to kitchen tables. Jobs in agriculture depend on the ability to transport our products to buyers across and around the world. In my district, there are over 6,000 jobs in the frozen food industry, ensuring that families across the U.S. can enjoy Washington’s agricultural products.

As a farmer and a former State director of agriculture, I understand how important frozen foods are to enable timely delivery and freshness, despite seasonal changes. Freezing reduces food waste and increases safety and affordability. Freezing also allows Americans to have access to a diverse array of food products they enjoy every day.

Join me in celebrating National Frozen Food Month and all those who work to ensure that the U.S. has the safest, most reliable, and most affordable foods in the world.

ENDING GLOBAL HUNGER WITH RISE AGAINST HUNGER

(Mr. McGovern asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McGovern. Madam Speaker, Rise Against Hunger, under the leadership of Rod Brooks, is a charitable organization committed to ending global hunger by 2030. They partner with other charities, faith-based organizations, and corporations to host meal-packing events across the country where volunteers assemble nutritious meals that are sent to over 40 countries.

On Tuesday, I had the opportunity to participate in a Rise Against Hunger meal-packing event sponsored by The Kraft Heinz Company. I joined 100 volunteers to package 7,500 meals that will reach hungry families across the globe.

Last year alone, Rise Against Hunger engaged over 367,000 volunteers at over 3,000 events nationwide to assemble over 6.4 million meals that reached nearly 1.1 million hungry people.

I applaud Kraft Heinz and its CEO, Bernardo Hees, for their commitment to packing 1 billion meals over the next 5 years. I appreciate all that Rise Against Hunger does to address chronic malnutrition and alleviate poverty worldwide.

Working together, we can end hunger now.

RUSSIA’S INTERFEERENCE IN OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

(Mr. CARBAJAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARBAJAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today because the American people have the right to know the truth regarding Russia’s interference in our democratic process.

I am a member of the House Armed Services Committee, and the message I hear from our military leaders is consistent: Russia is a top threat to the United States and our interests.

Russia has not only used its military to destabilize regions around the world, but it has completely undermined and disrupted the democratic values of this country.

This is unacceptable. And yet my colleagues from the other side of the aisle refuse to do their job as an oversight body and establish a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate Russia’s egregious behavior.

We have a responsibility to be transparent with the American people. I strongly urge my Republican colleagues to not only immediately establish an independent investigation into Russia’s interference in our election, but I also call for the release of President Trump’s tax returns.

America’s security and values are on the line. Any treasonous and unlawful relations with Russia cannot be tolerated.

EPA SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 233, I call up the bill (H.R. 1431) to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications, public participation, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 233, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1431
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD.
(a) Independent Advice—Section 8(a) of the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978
(42 U.S.C. 3436(a)) is amended by inserting "independently" after "Advisory Board which shall".

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—Section 8(b) of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Omnibus Authorization Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 3436(b)) is amended to read as follows:

"(b)(1) The Board shall be composed of at least one member from each State, and shall designate a Chairman, and shall meet at such times and places as may be designated by the Chairman.

(2) A member of the Board shall be qualified by education, training, and experience to evaluate scientific and technical information on matters referred to the Board under this section. The Administrator shall ensure that:

(A) the scientific and technical points of view represented on the Board and the functions to be performed by the Board are fairly balanced among the members of the Board;

(B) at least ten percent of the membership of the Board are from State, local, or tribal governments;

(C) persons with substantial and relevant expertise are not excluded from the Board due to affiliation with or representation of entities that may have a potential interest in the Board's advisory activities, so long as that interest is fully disclosed to the Administrator and the public and appointment to the Board complies with section 208 of title 18, United States Code;

(D) in the case of a Board advisory activity on a particular matter involving, or for which the Board has evidence that it may involve, a specific party, no Board member having an interest in the specific party shall participate in that activity;

(E) Board members may not participate in advisory activities that directly or indirectly involve review or evaluation of their own work, unless fully disclosed to the public and the work has been externally peer-reviewed;

(F) Board members shall be designated as special Government employees;

(G) no registered lobbyist is appointed to the Board; and

(H) a Board member shall have no current grants or contracts from the Environmental Protection Agency

(iii) solicit nominations from relevant Federal agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, the Interior, and Health and Human Services;

(iv) solicit nominations from:

(A) institutions of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)); and

(B) scientific and research institutions based in the United States that are relevant to that of the Board;

(D) make public the list of nominees, including the identity of the entities that nominated each, and shall accept public comments on the nominees;

(E) require that, upon their provisional nomination, nominees shall file a written report disclosing financial relationships and interests, including Environmental Protection Agency grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other financial assistance, that are relevant to the Board's advisory activities for the five-year period prior to the date of their nomination, and relevant professional activities and public statements for the five-year period prior to the date of their nomination;

(F) make such reports public, with the exception of specific dollar amounts, for each member of the Board upon such member's selection.

(4) Disclosure of relevant professional activities under paragraph (3)(E) shall include, in the Administrator, expert testimony, and contract work as well as identifying the party for which the work was done.

(5) Except as prohibited by law, the Agency shall make all conflict of interest waivers granted to members of the Board, member committees, or investigative panels publicly available.

(6) Any recusal agreement made by a member of the Board, a member committee, or an investigative panel shall be made public.

(7) The terms of the members of the Board shall be three years and shall be staggered so that the terms of no more than one-third of the total membership of the Board expire within a single fiscal year. No member shall serve more than two terms over a ten-year period.

(c) RECORD.—Section 8(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3436(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting "or draft risk or hazard assessment," after "at the time any proposed"; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting "or draft risk or hazard assessment," after "the scientific and technical basis of the proposed"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(c) DECISIONS.—The Board shall ensure that advice and recommendations of the Board or its members shall be made in accordance with the policies set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b), in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b), and in the event the Board feels compelled to make decisions on behalf of the Board; and

(iii) may not report directly to the Environmental Protection Agency.

(e) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—Section 8 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3436) is amended by adding subsection (ii) to read as follows:

"(ii) To facilitate public participation in the advisory activities of the Board, the Administrator and the Board shall publish, on their Internet site, all public comments received, and shall provide materials to the public at the same time as received by members of the Board.

(2) Prior to conducting major advisory activities, the Board shall hold a public information-gathering session to discuss the state of the science related to the advisory activity.

(3) Prior to convening a member committee or investigative panel under subsection (e) or requesting scientific advice from the Board, the Administrator shall accept, consider, and address public comments on questions to be asked of the Board. The Board shall make all comments and investigative panels shall accept, consider, and address public comments on such questions and shall not accept a question that unduly narrows the scope of the advisory activity.

(4) The Administrator and the Board shall encourage public comments, including oral comments and discussion during the proceedings, that shall not be limited by an insufficient or arbitrary time restriction. Public comments shall be provided to the Board when received, and shall be published in the Federal Register grouped by common themes. If multiple repetitive comments are received, only one such comment shall be reproduced. The Administrator may remove repetitive comments received. Any report made public by the Board shall include written responses to significant comments, including those that raise additional hypothesis-based scientific points of view, offered by members of the public to the Board.

(5) OPERATIONS.—Section 8 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3436) is further amended by amending subsection (i) to read as follows:

"(i)(1) In carrying out its advisory activities, the Board shall strive to avoid making policy determinations or recommendations, and in the event the Board feels compelled to offer policy advice, shall explicitly distinguish between scientific determinations and policy advice.

(2) The Board shall clearly communicate uncertainties associated with the scientific advice provided to the Administrator or Congress;

(3) The Board shall ensure that advice and comments reflect the views of the members and encourage all members to make their views known to the public, the Administrator, and Congress.

(4) The Board shall conduct periodic reviews to ensure that its advisory activities are addressing the most important scientific issues affecting the Environmental Protection Agency.

(5) The Board shall be fully and timely responsive to Congress.

SEC. 3. RELATION TO THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed as supplanting the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

SEC. 4. RELATION TO THE ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT ACT OF 1978.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed as supplanting the requirements of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. Lucas) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Eddie Bernice Johnson) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. Lucas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 1431.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. Lucas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank Chairman Smith and Environmental Subcommittee Chairman Biggs for their hard work on this important piece of legislation. I also thank my good friend, Representative...
PETERSON for, yet again, working—helping, I should say—to make this bill a bipartisan effort. I appreciate his willingness to sponsor this bill with me.

I had the opportunity to speak in favor of this legislation when it passed this House with bipartisan support in the 114th Congress. Now, I come to the floor yet again to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important reform. The SAB Reform Act was a good bill then, and it is a good bill now. This is a policy that is built on the values we should uphold regardless of which side of the political aisle we are on or who happens to be the President.

H.R. 1431, the Science Advisory Board Reform Act, ensures that the best experts are free to undertake a balanced and open review of regulatory science. The Board was established to provide scientific advice to the EPA and Congress, and to review the quality and relevance of science EPA uses for regulations. But in recent years, shortcomings with the process have arisen. Opportunities for public participation have been limited, potential conflicts of interest have gone unchecked, and the ability of the Board to speak independently has been curtailed.

If the administration undermines the Board’s independence or prevents it from providing advice to Congress, the valuable advice these experts can provide is wasted.

Despite the existing requirement that the EPA’s advisory panels be fairly balanced in terms of point of view representation, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee has identified a number of past problems that have undermined the panel’s credibility and work product. These include a number of advisory members who received money from the EPA. At the very least, this could create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Some of the panelists have taken public and even political positions on issues they are advising about. For example, one of the Board’s draulfic study published an anti-fracking article titled, “Regulate, Baby, Regulate.” Now, this clearly is not an objective viewpoint, and should be publicly disclosed.

Public participation is limited during most board meetings. Interested parties have almost no ability to comment on the scope of the work, and meeting records are often incomplete and hard to obtain.

This bill is both pro-science, and pro-sound science. This bill is founded upon recommendations for reform outlined by the National Academy of Sciences, and the EPA’s Peer Review Handbook. This is the case that the Board’s balanced, transparent, and independent, all of which will help prevent the SAB from being manipulated by any group.

H.R. 1431 makes sound science the driving force of the Board, no matter who is the chief executive officer of our government.

Perhaps most importantly, this bill seeks to increase public participation that benefits all stakeholders. Currently, valuable opportunities for diverse perspectives are limited. The Federal Government does not have a monopoly on the truth. Ask your constituents back home if they know that.

This is a very important expertise that cannot afford to be ignored in a democracy. State, local, tribal, and private sectors have a long history of qualified scientific experts. Their contributions should be taken seriously.

Unfortunately, the history of the SAB shows that private sector representation is often lacking or simply nonexistent. Instead, in the past, EPA has picked the Board, ignoring the knowledge, experience, and contributions of those experts. This bill ensures that qualified experts are not excluded simply due to their affiliation. This will add value and credibility to future Board reviews.

Mr. PETERSON and I recognize the important role science should play in our policy debates. This does not mean the EPA needs to give the public confidence in science. It restores the independent Science Advisory Board as a defender of scientific integrity.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H.R. 1431, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017. Like the bill we considered yesterday, the so-called HONEST Act, H.R. 1431 is designed to harm the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to use science to make informed decisions.

The bill before us today claims to reform the EPA’s Science Advisory Board. And let’s talk about what these reforms would mean.

First, the bill establishes a series of roadblocks to keep independent academic scientists from serving on the Board. It accomplishes this by turning the term “conflict of interest” on its head by excluding scientists who have done the most relevant research on the topic being considered by the Board. The bill also prohibits Science Advisory Board members from obtaining extramural research grants for 3 years after their service on the Board, which would be a major disincentive for scientists to serve.

At the same time that this bill makes it much more difficult for academic researchers to serve on the Science Advisory Board, the bill also makes it much easier for corporate interests to serve. This is accomplished by gutting actual financial conflict-of-interest restrictions against industry representatives. Under this legislation, those industry representatives would simply have to disclose their financial conflicts, and they could serve on panels directly related to their corporate interests.

Finally, H.R. 1431 imposes exhaustive and duplicative notice-and-comment requirements on the Science Advisory Board. I say these requirements are exhaustive because, in addition to being an open-ended process, the Board would also have to respond in writing to any and all significant comments. In fact, I find it hard to believe that any advisory process created by this bill could ever be completed.

Of course, that is the real purpose of this provision. It is designed to throw sand in the gears of the Science Advisory Board process, and prevent board members from ever rendering their expert advice. These additions are totally unnecessary. The Science Advisory Board already has statutorily mandated notice-and-comment obligations, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act already applies to their activities.

So if this bill passes, what would happen? With an example, I will turn to a case study from the early 1990s. At that time, the EPA was forming a Scientific Advisory Panel to review evidence of harm from secondhand tobacco smoke. Thanks to internal tobacco industry documents that have been made public, we now know that Big Tobacco made a concerted effort to stack the Scientific Advisory Panel with tobacco industry hacks.

We take it for granted now that tobacco smoke is dangerous, but at that time, in the early nineties, Big Tobacco had succeeded in muddying the scientific waters around this issue by investing tens of millions of dollars in a coordinated attempt to defraud the American people.

If H.R. 1431 had been in effect back then, Big Tobacco likely would have succeeded in co-opting the Science Advisory Board. And let’s talk about what the effects have been on public health to have had the EPA’s science review body controlled by tobacco interests.

That is why a number of public health and environmental interest groups have come out against H.R. 1431. In a letter penned by the American Lung Association, the American Public Health Association, and several other health groups, the effects of H.R. 1431 are summed up like this:

“The bill we considered yesterday, the so-called HONEST Act, H.R. 1431 is designed to harm the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to use science to make informed decisions. The bill before us today claims to reform the EPA’s Science Advisory Board. And let’s talk about what these reforms would mean.”

I couldn’t agree more. I strongly urge Members to oppose this misguided bill. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, a fellow who has worked very diligently on the committee for many years.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman
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from Oklahoma, Mr. LUCAS, the vice chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee for yielding to me, and I would also like to thank him for his leadership on H.R. 1431, the Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017.

This bill gives much needed transparency, fairness, and balance to the EPA’s Science Advisory Board. These reforms will strengthen the public’s trust in the science the EPA uses to support its regulations. It also allows more public participation in the EPA science review process, and it requires the SAB to be more responsive to the public and to congressional questions, inquiries, and oversight.

Last Congress, similar legislation passed the House with bipartisan support. I appreciate Mr. LUCAS and the ranking member of the Agriculture Committee, Representative PETERSON, for introducing this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I support this bill, and I recommend it to my colleagues.

Mr. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1431, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1431 is a blatant attempt to cripple the important mission of the EPA by stacking the EPA Science Advisory Board with industry insiders.

When Congress established the Science Advisory Board in 1978 to review the scientific data that informs the EPA’s regulatory process, they did that with the requirement that the Board be balanced with representatives from industry and academia. The legislation we are considering today would skew that balance in favor of industry, with the intent of slowing down the EPA’s regulatory process.

With a significant respect for the vice chair from Oklahoma, it makes no sense to suggest that the representatives of regulated corporate interests, however expert, can be credibly described as “defenders of scientific integrity.”

I am particularly concerned about the double standard mandated by this bill. On one hand, the bill makes it easier for representatives to serve on the Board by only requiring that they disclose their conflicts of interest. There is no recusal requirement for industry insiders, no matter how deep their financial ties may go or how much their industry is regulated by the EPA. On the other hand, the same scientists and researchers who received EPA research grants or contracts are automatically disqualified from service. Any scientists or researcher would be precluded from accepting an EPA grant or contract for 3 years after their service.

So the scientists who spent their whole career becoming the world’s top experts on a given topic must choose between advising our public health or continuing their research. They can bring their knowledge to the EPA and give up that work or continue.

Why oh why would we make it more difficult for the scientists and academic experts to participate in the Science Advisory Board while at the same time making it easier for industry experts to participate? Why would we want less science on the Science Advisory Board?

This billprovides nothing to advance science or protect public health. Instead, it creates senseless hurdles, burdensome red tape for the Science Advisory Board, and makes it more difficult to achieve its mission. We need to let scientists and researchers do their jobs by opposing this legislation.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS), a member of the Environment Subcommittee of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1431, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act, of which I am an original cosponsor.

This bill intends not to deny science, but to deny manipulated science. This is a commonsense, good-government piece of legislation that will discourage ideologically based decisions by the Science Advisory Board and set it back on a path of making objective, science-based conclusions as originally intended by Congress.

Further, this bill would promote accountability within SAB, while also strengthening public participation, ensuring that there is a diverse makeup on its various boards and panels, reinforcing a strong system of peer-review requirements that are directed toward reducing conflicts of interest, providing ample opportunity for dissenting views by panelists, and, most importantly, requiring conclusions and reasonings be made available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crucial piece of legislation. The rules and regulations coming out of the Environmental Protection Agency have real-world implications on families in my State of Louisiana and, indeed, across the Nation.

The majority is trying to claim that the legislation before us today will do nothing to assuage the fears of my constituents and millions of others around the country who support independent, unbiased, science-based decisionmaking at the EPA, which is essential to protecting public health, clean water, and combating climate change.

Instead of promoting sound science, this legislation would weaken the scientific expertise of the EPA’s Science Advisory Board, the independent body that reviews scientific and technical information used in EPA decisionmaking and provides scientific advice to the EPA Administrator.

If Congress really wants to promote sound science, I would urge consideration of the Scientific Integrity Act, legislation that I introduced along with Ranking Member EDELE BernICE JOHNSON of Texas and Representatives LOWENTHAL and TONKO. Our bill will protect scientific research at Federal agencies from political interference and special interests. This legislation currently has 32 cosponsors, and it deserves debate in this House.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 1431.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS).

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, since President Trump took office, I have heard from hundreds of my constituents who are concerned about attacks by this new administration on the Environmental Protection Agency and the potential, long-term negative impacts on public health, clean water, clean air, and our Nation’s work to play a leading role in combating climate change.

The gentlewoman from Lowell wrote:

Without EPA and its mission to protect our water and air, I fear that all the work done over the past 40 years will be erased.

Ingrid from Groton wrote:

I need to be able to trust that the EPA will protect our air, water, land, and health. But Scott Pruitt has worked so closely with polluters, even suing the EPA more than a dozen times, how can we trust that he will protect our health and safety?

And demonstrating just how personal an issue this is for many people, Katherine from Acton wrote to me:

This is my first time writing a congressional Representative, and I am proud to be doing so now, though my motivation is less heartening. As a mother of two precocious young kids, I have little time to do much beyond the essentials of daily living, much less writing a letter, so I assure you this one is written out of a feeling of necessity.

She went on to say:

Environmental pollution is real and in our backyards. It contaminates our air, our water, and our land. Cleanup of these pollutants is extremely difficult, if not impossible, and the implications for our health are astounding.

Unfortunately, the legislation before us today will do nothing to assuage the fears of my constituents and millions of others around the country who support independent, unbiased, science-based decisionmaking at the EPA, which is essential to protecting public health, clean water, and combating climate change.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on H.R. 1431.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I include in the Record the following letter from a letter of support from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, a letter of support from the American Chemistry Council, a letter
of support from the National Cotton Council of America, another letter of support from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, a letter of support from the Independent Petroleum Association of America, a letter of support from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Chemistry Council (ACC), and a letter of support from the Cato Institute.


To the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce applauds the “Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment (HONEST) Act of 2017” and the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017.” These bills would improve the transparency and reliability of scientific and technical information that Federal agencies rely heavily upon to support new regulatory actions.

The HONEST Act is designed to ensure that the studies and data Federal agencies cite when they write new regulations, standards, guidance, assessments of risk—or take other regulatory action—are clearly identified and available for public review. Additionally, information must be sufficiently transparent to allow study findings to be reproduced and validated. This is a critical safeguard to assure the public that the data Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound, unbiased, and reliable.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 would help ensure that the Science Advisory Board (SAB), which directly counsels the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on key scientific and technical issues, is unbiased and transparent in performing its duties. The bill would establish requirements that SAB members are qualified experts, that conflicts of interest and sources of bias are disclosed, and that the views of members—including dissenting members—are available to the public, and that the public has the opportunity to participate in the advisory activities of the Board and view EPA’s responses. Because EPA relies on SAB reviews and studies to support new regulations, standards, guidance, assessments of risk, and other actions, the actions of the SAB must be transparent and accountable.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would improve the transparency and trustworthiness of scientific and technical reviews and information that EPA, including the American Chemistry Council (ACC), relies on to justify regulatory actions that can significantly affect society. The American public must have confidence that the scientific and technical data driving regulatory action can be trusted. Accordingly, the Chamber supports these important bills.

Sincerely,

NEIL L. BRADLEY,
Senior Vice President & Chief Policy Officer, Government Affairs.

AMERICAN CHEMISTRY COUNCIL,

Hon. FRANK LUCAS,
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

Dear CHAIRMAN LUCAS: On behalf of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), we would like to thank you for introducing H.R. 1431 “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017,” to help improve the science employed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the Agency’s regulatory decision making processes.

The proposed legislation would increase the transparency and public confidence in the EPA’s peer review panels.

The Science Advisory Board Reform Act would improve the peer review process—a critical component of the scientific process used by EPA in their regulatory decisions regarding potential health or the environment. The Act would make peer reviewers accountable for responding to public comments, address conflicts of interest, ensure engagement of a wide range of perspectives of qualified scientific experts in EPA’s scientific peer review panels to increase transparency in peer review reports.

We commend you for your leadership and commitment to advance this important issue. We look forward to working with you and other cosponsors for quick passage of H.R. 1431.

Sincerely,

CAL DOOLEY,
President and CEO.

NATIONAL COTTON COUNCIL OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC, March 27, 2017.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman Smith:

On behalf of the National Cotton Council, thank you and your committee for the work on the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017. As you know, assessments of risk—or take other regulatory action—are clearly identified and available for public review. Additionally, information must be sufficiently transparent to allow study findings to be reproduced and validated. This is a critical safeguard to assure the public that the data Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound, unbiased, and reliable.

The HONEST Act and the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 would help ensure that the Science Advisory Board (SAB), which directly counsels the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on key scientific and technical issues, is unbiased and transparent in performing its duties. The bill would establish requirements that SAB members are qualified experts, that conflicts of interest and sources of bias are disclosed, and that the views of members—including dissenting members—are available to the public, and that the public has the opportunity to participate in the advisory activities of the Board and view EPA’s responses.

The NCC is the central organization of the United States cotton industry. Its members include growers, ginner, cottonseed processors and merchandizers, merchants, cooperatives, and textile manufacturers. A majority of the industry is concentrated in 17 cotton-producing states stretching from California to Virginia. U.S. cotton producers cultivate between 9 and 12 million acres of cotton with production averaging 12 to 18 million 480-lb bales annually. The downstream manufacturers of cotton apparel and home furnishings are located in virtually every state. Farms and businesses directly involved in the production, distribution, management, and processing of cotton employ more than 250,000 workers and produce direct business revenue of more than $25 billion. Annual cotton seed oil production tops $5.5 billion at the farm gate, the point at which the producer markets the crop. Accounting for the ripple effect of cotton through the broader economy, industry wide economic impact employment surpasses 260,000 workers with economic activity of almost $100 billion. In addition to the cotton fiber, cottonseed products are used for livestock feed, and cottonseed oil is used as an ingredient in food products as well as being a premium cooking oil.

As you know, cotton and cottonseed agriculture struggles with many factors in the production of fiber, food, and fuel, but the regulatory impact and burdens on our industry have greatly increased over the last several years. In addition, we have found ourselves unable to adequately defend and maintain many of our crop production products and technologies because we are often unable to access the data used by federal government agencies to place additional restrictions on these products and technologies. The H.R. 1430 and H.R. 1431 will greatly improve the transparency of regulatory review process. These two bills will substantially enhance the public’s role in regulatory reviews that was intended to be a centerpiece of the regulatory process.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to get these bills enacted into law. If you have any questions or need any additional information from us, please have your staff contact Steve Hensley in our office.

Sincerely,

RECE Langley,
Vice President—Washington Operations.


Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Science, Space and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Dear CHAIRMAN SMITH AND RANKING MEMBER JOHNSON: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the “Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment (HONEST) Act of 2017” and the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017.” These bills would improve the transparency and reliability of scientific and technical information that Federal agencies rely heavily upon to support new regulatory actions.

The HONEST Act is designed to ensure that the studies and data Federal agencies cite when they write new regulations, standards, guidance, assessments of risk—or take other regulatory action—are clearly identified and available for public review. Additionally, information must be sufficiently transparent to allow study findings to be reproduced and validated. This is a critical safeguard to assure the public that the data Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound, unbiased, and reliable.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 would help ensure that the Science Advisory Board (SAB), which directly counsels the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on key scientific and technical issues, is unbiased and transparent in performing its duties. The bill would establish requirements that SAB members are qualified experts, that conflicts of interest and sources of bias are disclosed, and that the views of members—including dissenting members—are available to the public, and that the public has the opportunity to participate in the advisory activities of the Board and view EPA’s responses. Because EPA relies on SAB reviews and studies to support new regulations, standards, guidance, assessments of risk, and other actions, the actions of the SAB must be transparent and accountable. This is a critical safeguard to assure the public that the data Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound and unbiased.

The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 would help ensure that the Science Advisory Board (SAB), which directly counsels the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on key scientific and technical issues, is unbiased and transparent in performing its duties. The bill would establish requirements that SAB members are qualified experts, that conflicts of interest and sources of bias are disclosed, and that the views of members—including dissenting members—are available to the public, and that the public has the opportunity to participate in the advisory activities of the Board and view EPA’s responses. Because EPA relies on SAB reviews and studies to support new regulations, standards, guidance, assessments of risk, and other actions, the actions of the SAB must be transparent and accountable. This is a critical safeguard to assure the public that the data Federal agencies rely on is scientifically sound and unbiased.

The HONEST Act and the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 enhance the role of sound science that was intended to be a centerpiece of the regulatory process. We commend you for your leadership and commitment to advance this important issue. We look forward to working with you and other cosponsors for quick passage of H.R. 1431.

Sincerely,

NEIL L. BRADLEY,
Senior Vice President & Chief Policy Officer, Government Affairs.

MARCH 30, 2017.
and the Independent Petroleum Association of America strongly support the enactment of both the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act and the Honest and Open New EPA Science Advisory Board Act (HONEST Act) and are most grateful to you and your committee for your efforts in respect of the important objectives set forth in each of these pieces of proposed legislation.

AXPC is a national trade association representing 33 of America’s largest and most active independent natural gas and crude oil exploration and production companies, each with considerable experience drilling, operating, and producing oil and natural gas on federal lands. Our members are truly independent: in that their operations are limited to exploration for and production of oil and natural gas. Moreover, its members operate autonomously, unlike their fully integrated counterparts, which operate in additional segments of the energy business, such as downstream refining and marketing. AXPC members are leaders in developing and applying innovative and advanced technologies necessary to explore for and produce oil and natural gas, both offshore and onshore, from non-conventional sources.

IPAA represents the thousands of independent oil and natural gas explorers and producers who supply the service and supply industries that support their efforts, that will most directly be impacted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policy decisions to regulate methane directly from the oil and natural gas sector. Independent producers develop about 95 percent of America oil and natural gas wells, produce 54 percent of American oil, and produce 85 percent of American natural gas. Historically, independent producers have invested a very large portion of their cash flow back into American oil and natural gas development to find and produce more American energy. IPAA is dedicated to ensuring a strong, viable American oil and natural gas industry, recognizing that an adequate and secure supply of energy is essential to the national economy.

The EPA's Science Advisory Board is a critical link in the EPA’s policy making process and must, therefore, be unbiased and motivated only to seek the best possible policy recommendation based on the best possible, publicly available, verifiable data. Moreover, open, public debate must be encouraged, not discouraged. The goal here is to get the best possible result, which is why the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act should be enacted.

The Cato Institute interprets its tax-exempt status as precluding any specific support of adoption (or recommendation of rejection) for pending legislation. However, I can comment on substantive aspects of such legislation. The HONEST Act would require that regulations promulgated by EPA be backed by reproducible and transparent science. In the area of climate change, this will surely provoke a timely inquiry as to whether the climate models that are used to calculate the Social Cost of Carbon, and the justification of subsequent regulations, are indeed “science”. I would argue that they are not.

A climate model is merely a complicated mathematical statement of multiple hypotheses. These include a prediction of a general warming of surface temperatures, and a general warming of the troposphere. All subsequent changes in weather regimes—such as rainfall, winter snows, and Atlantic hurricanes derive from the warming and its distribution.

As such, a reasonable test of hypothesis would be to examine the performance of these models as carbon dioxide has accumulated in the atmosphere. During the period in which we have multiple, independent measures of bulk atmospheric global temperatures, which would be from 1979 to the present. As I noted in my February 29 testimony, there is a clear systematic failure of these models, with the central estimate of warming generally twice as large as what is being observed, which is larger in the troposphere, and as much as seven times larger than what is being observed in the tropical upper troposphere.

This, and other recent refereed publications are finally beginning to detail the subjective fashion by which the equilibrium climate sensitivity is estimated, argue that these models do not constitute science in the classical sense. It would be more appropriate to call the field “climate studies.”

Litigation deriving from the HONEST Act is likely to uncover this problem, with the likelihood that EPA’s 2009 Endangerment Finding, which empowers subsequent regulation of carbon dioxide, should be vacated because of a lack of verifiable science associated with its determination.

I hope you find my comments useful, and stand available to answer any questions or provide any amplifications you may desire.

Cordially,

PATRICK J. MICHAELS, Ph.D.,
Director, Center for the Study of Science.
a conflict through these disclosures, we will know. I would hope that whoever leads the EPA on whatever day would act in a responsible fashion.

I just want, through this bill, to change the system so that the perception of the public is that the SAB and the scientific process and the rulemaking that comes from it at EPA are being gained by one perspective or the other because that is in no one’s best interest.

I know we live in tough times and challenging times to legislate. I think my colleagues know, in the legislation I have worked on before, that I have always worked across the aisle. I have always worked with every perspective within this body. I have always tried to take that long-ball perspective. I know it is a challenging time, but think about that as we continue this well-meaning, good-spirited, very focused debate.

I respect the balance of my time.

Ms. ZELDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD correspondence in opposition to this bill: a letter from the American Lung Association, the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, the American Public Health Association, the National Medical Association, the Health Care Without Harm Association, the Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the American Thoracic Society; along with a letter from the Clean Air Action, Earthjustice, League of Conservation Voters, and Natural Resources Defense Council; as well as a letter from the League of Conservation Voters.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned health and medical organizations are writing to express our opposition to the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 and the Honoring Our EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017. Our organizations are dedicated to saving lives and improving public health.

Science is the bedrock of sound medical and public health decision-making. The best science undergirds everything our organizations do to improve health. Under the Clean Air Act, EPA has long implemented a transparent and open process for seeking advice from the medical and scientific community on standards and measures to meet those standards. Both of these bills would respect the input of scientific experts in the review of complex issues and add undue industry influence into EPA’s decision-making process.

As written, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would make unneeded and unproductive changes that would:

Reserve the authority to speak on issues that include their own expertise;

Block scientists who receive any EPA grants from serving on the EPA Scientific Advisory Board, despite their having the expertise and conducted relevant research that earned them these highly competitive grants;

Prevent the EPA Scientific Advisory Board from making policy recommendations, even though EPA administrators have regularly sought their advice in the past;

Add a notice and comment component to all parts of the EPA Scientific Advisory Board actions, a burdensome and unnecessary requirement since their reviews of major issues already include public notice and comment; and

Reallocate membership requirements to increase the influence of industry representatives on the scientific advisory panels.

In short, EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act would limit the voice of scientists, restrict the ability of the Board to respond to important questions, and increase the influence of industry in shaping EPA policy. This is not in the best interest of the American public.

We also have concerns with the HONEST Act. This legislation would limit the kinds of scientific data EPA can use as it develops policy to protect the American public from exposure to radiation and permits violation of patient confidentiality. If enacted, the legislation would:

Allow the EPA administrator to release confidential patient information to third parties, including industry;

Bolster industry’s flawed arguments to discredit research that documents the adverse health effects of environmental pollution; and

Impose new standards for the publication and distribution of scientific research that go beyond the existing requirements of many scientific journals.

Science, developed by the respected men and women scientists at universities across the United States, has always been the foundation of the nation’s environmental policy. EPA’s science-based decision-making process has led to dramatic improvements in the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the earth we share. All Americans have benefited from the research-based scientific advice that scientists have provided to EPA.

Congress should adopt policy that fortifies the scientific integrity of EPA’s decision-making and gives polluters a disproportionate voice in EPA’s policy-setting process.

We strongly urge you to oppose these bills.

Sincerely,

KATIE HUFFLING, RN, CNM, Director, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments.

HAROLD P. WIMMER, National President and CEO, American Lung Association.

GEORGES C. BENJAMIN, MD, Executive Director, American Public Health Association.

STEPHENV CRANE, PhD, MPH, Executive Director, American Thoracic Society.

CARY SIEBERT, MD, PhD, President & CEO, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

PAUL BOGART, Executive Director, Health Care Without Harm.

RICHARD ALLEN WILLIAMS, MD, 117th President, National Medical Association.

JEFF CARTER, JD, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility.

MARCH 27, 2017.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH AND BANKING MEMBER JOHNSON: We are writing to express our strong opposition to the draft legislation, the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017” (H.R. 1431). The bill, which would amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978, would hinder the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Science Advisory Board (EPA SAB) to reach timely, independent, objective conclusions that can form the basis of policy. While the bill is not identical to previous versions of this legislation, the bill would still weaken long-standing considerations for industry scientists while imposing unprecedented and unnecessary limitations on government-funded science and competition review process, with no discernible benefit to EPA or the public.

Our most serious specific concerns regarding the bill are described below, in the order in which the provisions appear:

P.3, lines 1-8, creating Section 8(b)(2)(C) in the underlying Act, promotes inclusion of panelists with financial conflicts, as long as they disclose their conflicts and obtain a waiver

As with previous versions of this legislation, the bill shifts the current presumption against including people with financial conflicts on the SAB. The bill appears to effectively mandate the hiring of industry scientists with financial conflicts, as long as the conflicts are disclosed, notwithstanding the reference to one portion of existing ethics law. This shift does not explore the range of problems that can occur when someone with a conflict influences policy guidance.

Policies and practices to identify and eliminate persons with financial conflicts, interests, and undue biases from independent scientific advisory committees have been implemented by all the federal agencies, the National Academy of Sciences, and international scientific bodies such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization. The bill’s provisions are inconsistent with a set of nearly universally accepted scientific principles to eliminate or limit financial conflicts. Following these principles is the way agencies, the public, and Congress should ensure their scientific advice is credible and independent.

Moreover, EPA already grants exemptions as needed to allow scientists to participate if their expertise is required despite their potential conflicts.

P.3, lines 23 to P.4, line 2, creating a Section 8(b)(2)(H) in the underlying Act, establishes an arbitrary and unwarranted bar on non-industry scientists who are receiving grants or contracts from EPA, or who may do so in the future.

This provision would bar participation by any academic or government scientist who is currently receiving grants or contracts from EPA, and bar any Board member from seeking any grant or contract from EPA for three years after the end of their term on the Board. The Board should consider an unwarranted limitation on current or future recipients of government funding would severely limit the ability of EPA to get the best, most independent scientists on its premier advisory board—as well as any committees or panels of the board—without any evidence that no-strings government funding, such as research grants, constitute a conflict of interest.

P.6, lines 1-21, amending Section 8(c) of the underlying act, expands the scope of the SAB’s work, and increases the burden.

This provision broadens the scope of documents that must be submitted to the SAB for review, including an ex post assessment proposed by the agency, a dramatic and unnecessary expansion. The expansion
would provide an expanded platform for the new industry-stacked panels envisioned by this bill to challenge proposed actions by EPA, including hazard and risk assessments. This provision would give industry unlimited time to present its arguments to the SAB. Industry representatives already dominate proceedings because of their greater numbers and resources. In addition, the requirement for the SAB to respond in writing to “significant” public comments is vague (e.g., who defines what is “significant,” and how); it would not only slow down the SAB with needless and burdensome process. It also misconstrues the nature of both the SAB’s role and the role of public comment in the SAB process. The role of the SAB is to provide its expert advice to the Agency. The role of the public comments during this phase is to provide informative input to the SAB as it deliberates, but the final product of the SAB deliberation is advice from the panel members, not an agency proposal or decision that requires response to public comment. Members of the public, including stakeholders, have multiple opportunities to provide input directly to the agency.

In short, the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017” would alter the nature of the SAB, which has been largely successful in providing the EPA expert review of key scientific and technical questions and would unduly hamper its work and undermine important public health, safety, and environmental measures.

We urge you to abandon plans to advance this legislation. I would be happy to discuss our concerns with you further.

Sincerely,

CLEAN WATER ACTION
Earthjustice
LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS (LCV)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS, 1230 New York Ave NW, Washington, DC 20005
Re Oppose H.R. 1430 and H.R. 1431—Attacks on Science and Public Health

United States House
Washington, DC

Dear Representative: On behalf of our millions of members, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) works to turn environmental values into national, state, and local priorities. Each year, LCV publishes the National Environmental Scorecard, which details the voting records of members of Congress on environmental legislation. The Scorecard is distributed to LCV members, concerned voters nationwide, and the media.

LCV urges you to vote NO on H.R. 1430 and H.R. 1431. These two bills are backdoor attempts to undermine the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to use science in decision-making and obstruct the process for developing effective public health safeguards.

H.R. 1430, the “HONEST Act,” would endanger public health by making it extremely difficult for EPA to use the best available science. The bill contains favorable exemptions for industry and would restrict the health studies that the EPA is able to use by requiring anyone sharing with EPA information willing to sign a vague confidentiality agreement. These provisions would severely limit the EPA’s ability to use data that includes studies with confidential health information. These types of studies are the basis for the best research on pollution’s effects on people. H.R. 1430 would undermine the ability to develop effective public health safeguards by allowing them to disregard the results of these studies, resulting in less protective standards.

H.R. 1431, the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017,” would undermine the ability of the Science Advisory Board to provide independent, objective, and credible scientific advice to the EPA. This bill would fail to recognize industry influences of the Scientific Advisory Board by weakening conflict-of-interest protections while unnecessarily and arbitrarily limiting the participation of subject experts. Additionally, new burdens imposed on the Board and provisions that allow industry to significantly prolong the Board’s scientific review process would delay key public health and environmental protections.

These two bills would significantly undermine the EPA’s role in protecting public health and the environment. LCV urges you to REJECT H.R. 1430 and H.R. 1431 and will consider including votes on these bills in the 2017 Scorecard. For more information, please call my office and ask to speak with a member of our Government Relations team.

Sincerely,

GENE KARPINSKI
President

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, less science, more pollution—that is, unbelievably, the Republican plan.

I want to just refer to what my colleague said. This is not long-ball time. This is emergency time where we have to deal with a worldwide environmental crisis, and this bill is just the latest attack on clean air and clean water. And as the threat of climate change becomes increasingly clear, Republicans are trying to reverse the progress that we have made to address this global challenge.

President Trump proposed gutting the Environmental Protection Agency, and this week he signed an executive order to ignore the effects of climate change, increase drilling on Federal lands, and undo efforts to promote renewable energy.

Meanwhile, Republicans in Congress have voted to block environmental protections that threaten their industry interests. President Obama’s Clean Power Plan with, essentially, a dirty power plan that will pollute our air and contaminate our water and put our children and our grandchildren at risk. Those actions further confirm Republicans’ placement on the wrong side of history.

It is time for America to lead, not to ignore reality. We should be investing in clean, job-producing energy. We should be at the forefront of the fight against climate change and not the back of the pack. My constituents and most Americans expect to drink clean water and breathe fresh air. They want to protect our planet for future generations. Republican, today, have it backward. We need more science and less pollution.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill and resist those attacks on our environment.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT), the former chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology’s Subcommittee on Environment.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, have you ever had that deja vu all over again? Haven’t we been doing this one since, what, 2013, 2014?

I accept I have been off the committee now for 4 years; yet we are talking past each other. I hear the gentlewoman and some of the others say things. It is a 12-page bill. It hasn’t changed that much in the last couple Congresses.

How many of us would like to go back and read the inspector general report that basically suggested going this direction because of the conflicts in these advisory committees?

If you really, once again—and this is sort of similar to yesterday’s discussion—if you really care about the environment, then you really care about the data and the information and sort of the ethics and honesty of those who are both reviewing the data and giving you advice.

So what happens when the inspector general of the EPA hands you a report and says: These committees, these advisory councils are rife with conflicts? People who are on these advisory boards are making money.

Now, accept much of what we do here in Washington, D.C., if not almost all of it, is about the cash, and it is one of the ugliest, nastiest secrets that we pretend, but we all pretend. It is always about the money.

Let’s try something novel. Let’s actually—this was an inspector general’s report under the Obama administration. Why wouldn’t we step up and respect it? It was very simple.

Hey, we need some more diversity on these advisory boards. And wouldn’t it be wonderful if we had people advising us on air quality policy in non-attainment areas, or in regional interests that also weren’t selling products, selling reports, making money off data with the EPA?

I mean, if it was reversed, if it was some other agency, if this same set of ethical lapses was reversed, I believe the left would be apoplectic. But the fact of the matter is that so many of these individual organizations that are represented on these advisory boards, they are making money off the EPA, even though they are advising in their own behalf, happen to be friends of the left. That makes it okay.

The ethical standards are the ethical standards. I have no concept how the left can oppose the concept of structured diversity.

Why shouldn’t those of us from the Southwest, where substantial portions of...
The EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017 and the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017. These bills would ensure an open and honest scientific process by allowing the public access to the science that underpins regulations developed by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and ensuring that scientists advising the EPA on regulatory decisions are not the same scientists receiving EPA grants. It is important for the EPA to use sound science in order to support their rulemakings. Far too often, the EPA relies in a science that lacks transparency and reliability to buttress their rulemakings. This is a consequence of the EPA conducting their scientific review of rulemakings behind closed doors. The EPA frequently ignores scientific integrity by limiting public participation, excluding state and private sector expertise, and pushing a specific agenda by appointing scientists who are biased. In some cases, scientists that have been appointed to review proposed regulations have received EPA grants which the EPA disregards as a conflict of interest.

The EPA should not be able to create costly regulations without being transparent, fair and open to public input when considering the science behind a rulemaking. However, the EPA has sacrificed the integrity of the rulemaking process by using biased science and purport to address these shortcomings so that future rules can be transparent and honest. For these reasons, NAHB urges the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee to support the Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017 and the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017, in order to bring transparency and integrity to the regulatory process.

Thank you for giving consideration to our views.

Sincerely,
JAMES W. TOHRIN III, Executive Vice President & Chief Lobbyist, Government Affairs and Communications Group.


Hon. Frank Lucas,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. Lamar Smith,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH AND REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: On behalf of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council (SBE Council) and its more than 100,000 members nationwide, I am pleased to voice our strong support for the Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017."

This important legislation reforms the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Science Advisory Board (SAB) and its sub-units by strengthening public participation, improving the process for selecting expert advisors, expanding transparency requirements by board members, opening the board's research to public review, and limiting nonscientific policy advice. The reforms proposed to the legislation are especially critical given the growing impact of EPA's regulations on America's small business sector, the controversial science used as the basis to drive regulatory decisions, and the need to ensure that sound science is guiding EPA actions.

Balance, independence and transparency are essential to EPA's scientific advisory process. The bill addresses key concerns with the SAB, such as placing limitations on its members who receive environmental research grants, applying conflict of interest standards, and ensuring balanced representation on the board's membership. These reforms are sensible and would not only strengthen the SAB's integrity and work, and by extension EPA's regulatory process, that supports solutions that improve the regulatory system. The fiscal 2018 budget act threatens to undermine transparency throughout the regulatory process. The “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017” is an important legislative initiative that strengthens transparency and objectivity to the SAB and EPA rulemakings.

Please let SBE Council know how we can further support your efforts to advance this important legislation into law. Thank you for your leadership, and support of America’s small business and entrepreneurial sector.

Sincerely,
KAREN KERRIGAN, President & CEO.

National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, Alexandria, VA.

The National Stone Sand and Gravel Association supports both the Honest and Open New Science Treatment Act of 2017 (HONEST Act) and the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017.

Both acts go a long way towards addressing many of the current issues our industry has with our regulatory system. I encourage the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to mark up both pieces of legislation.

Our association represents 100,000 jobs across the United States. The regulatory burden on our workforce dramatically impacts our ability to provide cost-effective materials for America’s roadways, bridges and ports. Our members pride themselves on their commitment to environmental stewardship and are heavily involved in sustainability and reclamation in their communities.

Federal regulations must balance industry’s voice and environmental and health concerns. Unfortunately, we often see problems in the scientific underpinnings of regulations when agencies select studies that are neither public nor reproducible as the basis of new rules. This practice chips away at the credibility of any regulatory action and makes it difficult for us to respect the regulatory process. Our members have the right to comment on regulations and it is not reasonable to ask hard working men and women of any industry to trust that an agency has selected good science without if an agency is not being transparent.

Stakeholder input in the regulatory process is required under federal law and valuable for the justification and the implementation of rules. NSSGA stands ready to work with Congress to ensure that industry, states and the scientific community can work together openly and honestly to create regulations.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL W. JOHNSON, President and CEO, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association.


Chairman Lamar Smith,
The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson,
The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH AND RANKING MEMBER BERNICE JOHNSON: The Portland Cement
This legislation seeks to reinforce the SAB process as a tool that can help policymakers with complex issues while preventing EPA from muscling impartial scientific advice. This is necessary to provide balanced, independent support. We applaud your leadership in this effort and will work with you to ensure passage.

Sincerely,

Zippy Duvall,
President

MARCH 9, 2017.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman Smith: We are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 1430, the “Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017” (HONEST Act), and H.R. 1431, the “EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017.”

For too long now, the Environmental Protection Agency has hidden key scientific information from being examined by the public, which has severely impacted the regulatory process. The HONEST Act will ensure a balanced and independent Science Advisory Board that is composed of experts from diverse perspectives.

Mr. Lucas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, I reiterate to my colleagues, especially those on the other side, that the goal really is not to empower one perspective or one faction over another. The goal, ultimately, of this bill—and, yes, this did come out of the inspector general’s report, the initial work effort of the bill is to add transparency, accountability, and builds on the work done in the 2014 Farm Bill to create an agriculture committee under the Science Advisory Board. This bill is necessary to ensure the EPA takes into account the best information possible with input from peer reviewers and independent stakeholders.

H.R. 1431 will ensure a balanced and independent Science Advisory Board and will help alleviate some of the unintended consequences surrounding EPA regulations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Fleischmann). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 233, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

Mr. Foster moves to recommit the bill and builds on the work done in the 2014 Farm Bill to create an agriculture committee under the Science Advisory Board. This bill is necessary to ensure the EPA takes into account the best information possible with input from peer reviewers and independent stakeholders.

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Pursuant to House Resolution 233, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

This amendment is a commonsense and logical addition to this bill. It will help ensure that members of the EPA’s Science Advisory Board will act in the best interests of the American people and our environment.

I think that we can all agree that, now more than ever, we need integrity in government. And this amendment would prohibit any member of the EPA’s Science Advisory Board from being employed by any entity, corporate or otherwise, which has interests before the Board. This prohibition would be in place during the member’s term on the Board and would extend for 3 years after they leave the Board.

My Republican colleagues have taken up this bill with the stated intent of protecting the scientific integrity of the EPA, and this amendment will go a long way to making sure that they keep their word.

The underlying bill also includes a similar prohibition on board members applying for a grant or contract from the EPA during their service or for 3 years after they leave. As the chairman just said, there is nothing wrong with a financial cooling-off period.

However, the authors of this bill are apparently concerned that members of the Board would be tempted to favor environmental coffers in the hopes of getting an EPA grant. Therefore, it also stands to reason that they should worry equally about a board member tilting the scales in favor of a specific industry in return for future financial compensation or career advancement, the classic revolving door problem.

So what this motion to recommit does is something that I think we all should be able to agree is a good thing. We have seen too many people in the President’s Cabinet who appear to have connections too close to the big interests they regulate rather than the interests of the American people.

This amendment would ensure that no one can unduly personally profit from their time at the EPA, and that the EPA’s Science Advisory Board will act in the best interests of the American people and their environment rather than their own self-interests.

Finally, I would like to close by bringing up a more general question of why we seem to be having variations on this repetitive theme of whether or not we can pollute our way out of the structural and economic challenges that our country faces.

Mr. Speaker, you and your party have been very successful at selling yourselves and your supporters on the idea that if we can just, once again, dump unlimited pollutants into our rivers and streams, into our groundwater, air, lungs, our blood streams and those of our children, then everything will be great again in America.

This week, we saw our President surrounded by earnest and hopeful young coal miners as he gutted environmental regulations and promised them that all their jobs were coming back. And then we have seen interviews on TV with desperate families in Appalachia using up their life savings to pay for fracking and coal jobs that they have been told will be coming back now that Donald Trump is President.

Then we have seen interviews with coal executives quietly pointing out that those jobs will not come back because of automation, the same way that machines took the jobs in rural America, manufacturing America, and increasingly middle class, white-collar America.

So until we realize that we are all in this together and that a fundamental restructuring of our economy is needed rather than a mindless retraction of the provisions on environmental quality on the land that we will pass on to our children, then I am afraid that we are destined to repeat this infinite loop of marginally productive debate. I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. I claim the time in opposition to the motion, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I look at this language—and I am a farmer by trade; I am not an attorney; I will confess that—but the phrase “or other entity” seems to be a very broad concept. How will that affect people who work for research foundations at institutions of higher education? How will that affect people who work for think tanks in places like Washington, D.C.? I personally believe the language is such that we must simply turn the bill inside out.

On that basis, I would ask my colleagues to reject the motion to recommit with instructions and to pass the underlying bill.

But I go one step further, and I offer this in the most sincerest of ways: if you look at the discussion today and if you look at the discussion that has gone on for some time on these issues, it is almost as though there are those with certain perspectives who are trying to force their will—their perspective of what is right and wrong scientifically or economically or socially—on the rest of the country, on the rest of us, and for that matter, on the rest of the world.

That is why I am the author of this bill. No one entity should have the power by manipulating the bureaucratic process or the rulemaking process to enforce its definitions of everything on the rest of us. We have both the right and the responsibility to judge this information and to make decisions about what is in our enlightened self-interest, as the old economist would say, or in the best interest of the country or of society as a whole.

That is why I want all of us—the great American people—to have access and some certainty about the people and the process that are driving everything in our world.

Reject the motion, pass the bill, create greater transparency, incorporate more input, and when it is necessary to have rules and regulations, generate good rules and regulations so that we all have a chance to prosper and to live up to our potential in this country. Don’t let the tyranny of the idealistic—whatever perspective they may have—drive us all into despair and destruction.

With that, I respectfully ask my colleagues to reject this motion and pass the underlying bill.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 189, nays 233, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 207]

YEAS—189

Adams
Aguilar
Aguilar
Bass
Bass
Bera
Bera
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bloomfield
Bonham
Bourdeaux
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Cicilline
Blunt
Boehner
Boyle
Braley
Bragg
Bragg
Browner
Butterfield
Campbell
Capito
Carbajal
Caraglian
Cardenas
Carter
Carroll
Castor (FL)
Castor (TX)
Chatfield
Chu
Clay
cclamation
The question was taken; and the vote was announced.

By unanimous consent, Mr. SESSIONS withdrew his request for a recorded vote.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

(The unanimous consent of the House was agreed to regarding the request for a recorded vote.)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1343, ENCOURAGING EMPLOYER OWNERSHIP ACT, AND H.R. 129, SUPPORTING AMERICA’S INNOVATORS ACT.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Rules Committee issued announcements outlining the amendment processes for two measures likely to come before the Rules Committee next week.

An amendment deadline has been set for Monday, April 3, at 10 a.m. for the following measures:

H.R. 1343, Encouraging Employee Ownership Act; and H.R. 129, Supporting America’s Innovators Act.

The text of these measures is available on the Rules Committee website. Feel free to contact me or my staff if anyone has any questions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.
On rollcall No. 208 on final passage of H.R. 1431, the EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and misread rollcall vote Nos. 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, and 208. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye” on votes 205 and 207. I would have voted “nay” on votes 203, 204, 206, and 208.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the week to come.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. McCARTHY), my friend.

(Mr. McCARTHY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

This bill will increase access for entrepreneurs. First, H.R. 1343, the Encouraging Employee Ownership Act, sponsored by Representative RANDY HULTGREN, will increase access to employee ownership. Second, H.R. 1219, the Supporting Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs Act, sponsored by Representative PATRICK MCSHANEY, will walk away from the negotiating table.

As I mentioned, discussions are ongoing on the MILCON/VA bill and the defense appropriations bill. As you know, together, these two bills make up roughly half of our total discretionary spending.

However, I was disappointed to hear that Democrats have apparently walked away from the negotiating table because of resistance in the era of President Trump—Democrats—“are now ready to let the lights of government shut down.”

The New York Times is reporting that, “as a minority party struggling to show resistance in the era of President Trump”—Democrats—are now ready to let the lights of government shut down.

I sincerely hope these rumors and reports are not true. I know the gentleman disagrees with ever having a government shutdown.

As I mentioned, discussions are ongoing about how to save the government. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend.

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding again.

I was encouraged by the bipartisan agreements we reached on the MILCON/VA bill and the defense appropriations bill. As you know, together, these two bills make up roughly half of our total discretionary spending.
colleague who wants to play a constructive role in the process. I firmly believe the government will not shut down. It will be funded as we continue further.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information and comments.

Frankly, I want to tell the majority leader, honestly, nobody on my side, maybe someplace else, but nobody on my side is wanting to shut down the government. We just don’t want to shut down the government.

Of course, I will remind my friend, the majority leader—and I appreciate his comments about our cooperation and ability to work together—the only way the government has been kept open over the last 5 years has been with Democratic votes. My friend didn’t have 218 votes on his side of the aisle that would do that. So I think that belies the fact that we want to shut down the government.

I would assure my friend that that is neither our intent or desire. As a matter of fact, we want to work quickly to avoid that happening. That is not good for, obviously, the American people. It is not good for managers trying to plan on how to deliver services, and it is certainly not good for our Federal employees. So I would want to work with you to make sure that doesn’t happen.

As we have in the past, we will be prepared to provide votes, as we have every time, to ensure that does not happen.

Let me ask my friend, as we work towards the end of not shutting down government and passing, hopefully, an omnibus which will complete the 2017 appropriations process and fund the government through September 30, let me ask him—he was quoting some information. I have a quote for him as well. I know he would be disappointed if I didn’t have a quote. This is not nearly as difficult as some of the others, however. It says:

House Republicans are considering making another run next week at the passing of the healthcare bill that they abruptly pulled from the floor last week, a setback to their efforts to repeal ObamaCare. Two Republican lawmakers say the leaders are discussing holding a vote, even staying into next weekend, if necessary, but it is unclear what changes would be made to the GOP’s healthcare bill.

That was in Bloomberg News on March 29.

Does the majority leader have any information or expectation that we would be considering another bill seeking to repeal the Affordable Care Act next week? I know the majority leader didn’t announce that for next week, and I know on Thursday we will break for the Easter break.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend.

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The gentleman does know, from the widespread disappointment, that ObamaCare is the law and disagrees with that, but the majority of Americans agree that it is collapsing and that we have to solve this problem.

As of today, I do not have anything scheduled for next week. But as we continue discussions with our Members as we move forward, I anticipate in the future that we would have that vote.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information.

If I hear a gentleman just said, my interpretation is that we don’t expect anything next week, but that does not mean that we don’t expect something in the future. Is that a correct reading of it?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend.

Mr. McCARTHY. That is correct.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017, TO MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, April 3, 2017, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING PENN STATE WRESTLING NATIONAL CHAMPS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Penn State men’s wrestling team for winning the NCAA Division I National Championship earlier this month in St. Louis, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, Penn State has been a force to be reckoned with in Division I wrestling. This is Penn State’s sixth title in 7 years. It is the second consecutive national title.

I could not be more proud of my alma mater or this team that gave us a season to remember.

Many college athletes dream about participating at the NCAA championships. It marks the pinnacle of their athletic careers.

Among the Nittany Lion national champions, All-Americans Bo Nickal, Jason Nolf, and Zain Retherford combined for a total of 82.5 points, which would have placed the trio sixth overall in the final team standings.

Penn State also made history with All-Americans true freshman Mark Hall and redshirt freshman Vincenzo Joseph earning their first titles to become the first freshmen NCAA champions in program history.

Congratulations to Coach Sanderson and the Nittany Lions on this outstanding achievement. Your hard work and dedication shows, and you are the pride of Happy Valley.

SUPPORTING PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my unwavering support for Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood is America’s most trusted provider of reproductive health care. One in five American women has chosen Planned Parenthood for health care at least one time in her life.

The heart of Planned Parenthood is in our local and rural communities. These healthcare centers provide a wide range of safe, reliable health care; and the majority is preventive care, which helps prevent unintended pregnancies through contraception, reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections through testing and treatment, and screen for cervical and other cancers.

In my district, Planned Parenthood was instrumental in providing the following services to over 59,000 constituents in 2016, including:

- 23,215 pregnancy tests and counseling;
- 5,798 breast exams; and
- 5,652 pap smears.

This is the end of Women’s History Month. That is why I am here today to stand with Planned Parenthood, and I will continue to fight.

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week was the first-ever celebration of National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

Over 40 years ago, after the last remaining Vietnam veterans returned home, many faced poor treatment from the country they were fighting to protect. These brave men and women are getting the welcome home finally that they deserve.

Earlier this week, the U.S. Senate introduced a bill that was passed, which introduced the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act, which unanimously passed both the House and Senate, and President Trump signed it into law earlier this week.

I was proud to join my colleagues in supporting this bill. The overwhelmingly bipartisan support is proof that finally the perception of Vietnam veterans has shifted over the years as folks begin to better understand the sacrifices they have made.

Over 9 million Americans served in the military during the Vietnam war, and over 2.7 million actually served in Vietnam. I personally know many who came from my district and now live in northern California.

Over the course of the war, the United States of America suffered
During the championship game, the Grandview Wolves proved that with hard work, dedication, and perseverance anything is possible. The team was led to the championship title through the committed leadership of their coach, Joel Uitzky, and his commendable role.

Again, congratulations to the Grandview High School girls basketball team on their continued success and for their victory in the Colorado 5A State Championship.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE
(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, addressing climate change is one of the most important long-term challenges for our future. But this week’s executive order from President Trump reverses recent progress and will worsen this slow-burning crisis. The order undercuts the Clean Power Plan, weakens restrictions on emissions, and expands Federal coal mining leases. It undermines the success of the Paris Agreement and damages our relations with the signatories, including China and India. At the same time, the order makes it harder for our government and military to plan for the already occurring consequences of climate change—including assessing its impact on national security policy.

That is why today I am introducing the CLIMATE Act to prevent the irresponsible executive order from being implemented. Whether the Trump administration recognizes it or not, the international community understands climate change is real and is rapidly reshaping the energy future. The administration’s decision to move our energy policy backwards only weakens the United States’ global leadership role, making it more likely that green energy jobs of tomorrow will be created elsewhere.

We must come together to support policies that grow clean energy jobs in the United States and ensure we pass on a healthier planet to the next generation.

COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM
(Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, rising above a leader’s decision is not about right or wrong but about what is best for our country. It is a matter of human dignity, especially the rights of our Jewish fellow Americans.

With this bill, we will deter threats and stand united against religious intolerance.

HONORING BARB LUTZ
(Ms. CHENEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Barb Lutz. Barb has spent her entire adult life faithfully serving our military as a Federal Civil Service employee, primarily at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, as well as in Europe.

Barb has held numerous positions at the base and is currently the executive assistant to the commander of the 20th Air Force and Task Force 214 at F.E. Warren. She is responsible for providing the commander and vice commander with executive support, as well as serving as protocol specialist for the headquarters staff.

After a distinguished 43-year career, Barb is retiring this week. When Barb’s current and former coworkers at F.E. Warren reached out to me about recognizing her, General Cotton best summed up how her colleagues feel about her when he said: “We all know Barb is a national treasure.”

I want to thank Barb for all she has done for Wyoming and for the country over her 43-year career, and I wish Barb and her family the best in retirement.
how lucky we all are to live in a country where I am free to speak my mind without fear of retribution or retaliation. It is one of the great privileges of being an American. Yet for far too many around the world, freedom of conscience and ability to speak their minds are distant dreams. And whichever we choose, we will have lost.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Russia, where Vladimir Putin’s thuggish regime has poisoned the promise of the post-Soviet era and day by day has slid Russia back into the dark shadows of autocracy. Just last Sunday, Putin’s thugs took to the streets and squares in protest of the Kremlin’s corruption. And in return, Russian police arrested hundreds of protesters, including Vladimir Putin’s political challenger, Alexei Navalny.

But the Putin regime’s barbarity isn’t just a polite policy difference. Russians of exceptional courage are dying, including as recently as last week, as the regime cultivates an atmosphere of terror and intimidation. Vladimir Putin’s campaign of murder is not limited to domestic political opponents. Like all dictators, Putin seeks to rally his nation’s support by channeling public fear and anger against external threats and against those who are not his servile and uncritical enablers. His thuggish regime has poisoned the conscience of his people. And Putin not only intends to regain the Soviet Union’s prestige and power, and his ultimate goal is clear: the end of the American exceptionalism remains fundamentally at odds with American values. After the Second World War, America laid the foundation for a new and better world, drawn together by common values and forged from the fires of that war. We did this not just because we are a generous people but because we are wise people.

Farsighted American statesmen realized that creating the architecture for peace in Europe was a far better investment than returning to isolationism and then one day having to pay the butcher’s bill, as we did twice during the first half of the 20th century. As Europe is changing, Vladimir Putin dreams of restoring the Soviet Union’s stature and power, and his ultimate goal is clear: the end of the postwar-American project in Europe and the return of power politics unencumbered by the rules of the road that we established to our benefit in concert with our allies.

And so the stakes, in my mind, could not be any higher. If we do not stand up to Putin now, his aggression will continue until one day he goes too far. On that day, we may face an unimaginable choice: stand and defend our alliance and the security of the NATO alliance. And whichever we choose, we will have lost.

Despite Putin telling us exactly who he is, I have heard some say we should try to work with Russia to find areas of common ground. Yet we have seen firsthand how the last administration’s reset has not led to better relations but to a tide of Russian aggression.

I do not believe Putin desires war with the United States. What he desires is the fruits of conquest without the cost. He holds the cards of a bluff, and he is gradually raising the stakes in an effort to get us to fold. Fortunately, it is the U.S., not Russia, who holds the stronger hand. We cannot afford to let Putin think the acquiescence he requires to succeed in his plot to overturn the world we created.

When it comes to Russia’s interference in our elections, we must put the country and the sanctity of our democracy far above partisan interests. For any American to collaborate against our own government with a government that seeks to undermine our country would, indeed, be nothing short of traitorous. As Ronald Reagan said, I appeal to my fellow Democrats to resist the urge to treat this critical issue as nothing more than an opportunity to score political points.

And I call on my fellow Republicans to unhesitatingly pursue investigations into efforts by Vladimir Putin to undermine our democracy, wherever they may lead.

I will close with this, Mr. Speaker. In our twilight struggle against the forces of tyrants, we must maintain what the former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky calls moral clarity. Sharansky contrasts free societies with fear societies, where citizens live in perpetual unease. While even free societies are not perfect, they must never play into the hands of fear society propagandists who assert the dubious sense of moral relativism.

After all of these years, we are still Ronald Reagan’s America—a light on a hill shining brightly as a beacon for all mankind. There is no moral equivalence between the United States and any society based upon fear, let alone Vladimir Putin’s Russia.

American exceptionalism remains buried deep in all our bones. We are not just a free society; we are the model of a free society. Our values and our deeds will endure long after each of us in this Chamber is gone.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict before us is a simple one: we cannot fall prey to false equivalencies or fail to recognize our adversaries for who they are. Let us steel ourselves today in this Chamber and rise to stop Mr. Putin’s aggression in its tracks, both against our own Nation and against those who have proven themselves to be our closest friends and allies.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for his statement here and for bringing up an issue that has been ignored: American exceptionalism and bringing us back through some of this history that we need to revisit from time to time. That statement is very valuable to us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Babin), an exceptional American in his own right.

TERMINATE GRANTS TO SANCTUARY CITIES

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from Iowa, my good friend for yielding time.

I rise to express my strong support for the announced policy by Attorney General Jeff Sessions that will terminate U.S. Department of Justice grants to sanctuary cities. These are the localities that have chosen not to cooperate with the Federal Government when it seeks to deport already-detained criminal aliens.

Under this Trump policy, your hard-earned tax dollars are sent to cities and counties that thumb their nose at the Federal immigration authorities and refuse to cooperate.

In President Trump’s first 2 months in office, this administration has acted on our behalf to push for immigration compliance with Federal immigration law, and to deport criminal aliens. The previous administration put up the welcome mat for criminal aliens. Thanks to Trump, the welcome mat has now been removed.

A few short days ago, the national news broke on how two illegal aliens from Central America raped a 14-year-old girl in the boys’ bathroom of a public high school in Rockville, Maryland. These two young men, Henry Sanchez-Milan, an 18-year-old from Guatemala, and Jose Montano, a 17-year-old from El Salvador, came across our southern border last year as unaccompanied minors. The Obama administration initially targeted them for deportation proceedings, but they were later released to join relatives in Maryland.

When asked about the situation, Rockville school officials said that the legal status of these two individuals did not matter, as Rockville has declared itself to be a sanctuary city, I beg to differ. It does matter. If the Federal Government had done its duty and immediately returned these illegal immigrants to their home country, this young girl would not have been brutally raped.

For the sake of this young girl, we must secure our borders. This vicious crime would never have taken place had the Obama administration followed the law and secured our borders. The good news is that the new administration is working hard to secure our borders, to deport criminal aliens, and to protect the lives of American citizens.

Cracking down on sanctuary cities is an important first step. In the first month of the Trump administration, ICE issued 3,083 detainers. These are orders for local authorities to keep illegal aliens who have previously been removed for deportation, 206 of these detaineess who have been removed. 206 of these detaineess were just declined, meaning that local authorities deliberated ignored ICE’s detainer requests and released these individuals back out onto American streets.

American exceptionalism remains buried deep in all our bones. We are not just a free society; we are the model of a free society. Our values and our deeds will endure long after each of us in this Chamber is gone.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict before us is a simple one: we cannot fall prey to false equivalencies or fail to recognize our adversaries for who they are. Let us steel ourselves today in this Chamber and rise to stop Mr. Putin’s aggression in its tracks, both against our own Nation and against those who have proven themselves to be our closest friends and allies.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for his statement here and for bringing up an issue that has been ignored: American exceptionalism and bringing us back through some of this history that we need to revisit from time to time. That statement is very valuable to us.
Mr. Babin. You are, Mr. King. You are a sponsor. And I thank you for your cosponsorship and trying to keep our American citizens, our constituents, safe.

Mr. King of Iowa. Reclaiming my time from the gentleman from Texas, I appreciate the approach that you brought to this Congress. It is not hard for me to get behind, and I support legislation that is brought by Mr. Babin. He has been looking at the safety and security of people and coming up with good, solid, principled ideas on how to restore and strengthen our national security.

Each of those two pieces of legislation, the numbers which I did not know until now, H.R. 81 and H.R. 82, are pieces of legislation that I and many other conservatives have signed on to in our endeavor to make Americans safe again. This great America, making sure that it is a great America again.

I would add to this, Mr. Speaker, that I am appalled at the audacity of the judges who are either out on the left coast or well beyond the left coast, that they would just take a step in, step out of any kind of a constitutional, foundational background in their arguments or decisions, without citing the statute is this, that Congress has the authority to control immigration in the United States of America.

If we want to pass a piece of legislation and it is in law that says the only people that we will let into America are green Martians, then that is the law, and that is what a judge is obligated is to determine when they read the law.

But on top of that, not only does Congress set the terms on what legal immigration is into America—and it is clear and it is defined—but we grant the President of the United States the authority to determine those who will not be allowed to come into America, just like any other sovereign nation-state in the world that controls its borders.

And if we don’t have the authority, if Congress doesn’t have the constitutional authority that is clearly defined, and if the statutes that are produced by Congress and signed into law by previous Presidents do not set that statutory authority on who comes into America but a judge someplace in Seattle or Hawaii can supersede the will of the American people, can supersede the Constitution, the Constitution of the United States, can supersede Federal law just because, in their whim, they think a law might mean something that it doesn’t say, that is what we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker. I intend to move forward on this and examine these judges more closely.

As a matter of fact—and I thank the gentleman from Texas. But we had a hearing earlier this week or last week—and my weeks run together, Mr. Speaker—and this hearing was a hearing where we discussed some of this statutory authority.

In fact, it was this week. I remember one of the witnesses, and the witness was a Sheriff Hodgson out of Maryland; and he testified that a State legislator in Maryland had learned that there was likely to be an ICE raid into a particular community, and the representative posted on their Facebook, essentially: Don’t go out of your homes. Be careful because you might be picked up and deported if you are illegally in America.

Then the heads-up from an elected State official, I asked him this question, and his answer concurred with my opinion, that it is a direct violation of U.S.C. 1324, which is a Federal ban on harboring illegal aliens. To harbor them, to encourage them to come here or stay here—and it can be either willfully or for financial purposes. If that is the case, they are facing a Federal felony of up to 10 years in a penitentiary community, and the representative concurred with me that I believe the Justice Department should be investigating, should be looking into State legislators or any citizen—they are subject to the same laws as all the rest of us—who is harboring illegal aliens. We should bring this on the highest profile level that we can.

And furthermore, we have a judge out in Washington, again, who, according to news reports, helped facilitate an illegal eviction, and that judge’s court to go out the back door when there were ICE agents waiting, guarding the front door. That also is a violation of 8 U.S.C. 1324, harboring illegal aliens.

So Congress passes laws, and these laws are to be respected; and we cannot be a real civilization if we don’t have respect for the rule of law. Mr. Speaker. And not only has respect for the rule of law been so eroded, we had a previous President, and that is President Obama, who openly and blatantly violated the supreme law of the land, the Constitution, according to his definition.

Twenty-two times Barack Obama said he didn’t have the authority to grant a legal status to the people who are defined as DREAMers, the deferred action for children of—I guess they say—well, it is children of aliens is who we are really Banding Obama, 22 times on видеотape and who knows how many times it wasn’t on videotape, said: I don’t have the constitutional authority to change the law. Congress has to do that.

When he was pressed to change the law and he said he didn’t have that authority those 22 times, then he concluded that he could get away with it
Anyway. He issued the order, the DACA order—two of them that are really openly and bluntly unconstitutional. DACA, the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans, is what is how they called it. Again, it is parents of those who were born right here to illegal parents, and we need so bad that thisCitizenship bill to put an end to that.

The President knew he didn’t have the authority for that DACA program, and he knew he didn’t have the authority for the DACA program, and he said so as many as 22 times. Then he issued those orders, and the executive branch of government began to carry out the President’s orders, which are in violation of the law. So he has commanded the executive branch of government to violate the law.

Subsequent to the DACA order going out, President Obama went to Chicago and gave a speech and said publicly—and this is on videotape, too. He said this; I changed the law.

Mr. Speaker, do you ever feel that President ever had constitutional authority to change the law. It is Congress that writes all the laws in the House and in the Senate. The President gets an opportunity to sign them into law, and, as President, he is supposed to carry out the Constitution to change the law. But no President should have the audacity to stand up in front of his hometown and the world and say; I changed the law.

Now, do we remember, Mr. Speaker, that the executive branch of government is acting under that statement or over the constitutional violations? No. There wasn’t a great outrage. I am greatly outraged, and I remain outraged, but the American people were relatively complacent about this.

Now, there were plenty of them that did some work on this, true, but it wasn’t like a big cultural movement. I would remind you about what happens when we are extremely offended by violations of decency and morality. That is when Republicans and Democrats get together and do something about it.

One of those things I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is this. I reach in my pocket and pull out—this is an acorn. I carry an acorn in my pocket every day, and I have done that for, oh, I don’t know how long now—pretty close to 10 years.

But I brought an amendment to the floor of the House of Representatives to cut off funding to ACORN after 2 years before we heard of the videotapes that came out of ACORN that were collected by James O’Keefe and Hannah Giles because I knew what was going on. I had had an investigator that was feeding me information. And I came to the floor and made an effort to cut off all the funding that was supporting ACORN, which admitted later on to 440- or maybe 444,000 false or fraudulent voter registration forms that they paid people commissions to produce.

Some of those forms included Mickey Mouse and the entire Dallas Cowboys football team, all registered to vote.

ACORN employees were paid on commission to collect the voter registrations. They were subverting our electoral process. They were advocating all kinds of things from within ACORN and helping to facilitate, as we know the allegation, prostitution and other vice. That is so bad that it is so bad that Democrats were outraged. I know, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to fathom this now. But Democrats were outraged. Republicans were outraged. And when those videos became replete throughout the America, did it not make a constitutional and contractual guarantee of our electoral process. So we came together here with moral and constitutional outrage and cut all funding to ACORN or any of their affiliates or subordinates, or successors, and that has been the appropriation process ever since.

I carry this acorn in my pocket to remind me, to remind me not to ever let something like that happen again. But also, it is a point of pride for me when I look at it because I am proud of the American people. Mr. Speaker. It was the American people that got that done with bipartisan outrage about what was happening to our Republic and to the legitimacy of our elections in this Republic.

And I would remind people, Mr. Speaker, that we have a Constitution that I have said is the supreme law of the land. It is the foundation upon which our country is built. But that foundation is crumbling. It sits on a bedrock, and the bedrock that it sits on is legitimate elections.

We can watch our Constitution erode by decisions in the Supreme Court and by loss of understanding of what its original meaning is and what it is to be a constitutional and contractual guarantee to succeeding generations, we can lose our Constitution that way, or we could just lose our country by allowing the bedrock that our Constitution sits on, legitimate elections, to be eroded and allowing the law against what the American people should be doing.

But when you have a President of the United States that takes an oath of office to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States so help you God, and it is specified in another section of the Constitution that he, meaning the President, take care that the laws be faithfully executed—we call that the Take Care Clause—well, the President, President Obama, did not take the laws be faithfully executed. He refused to enforce the law. He refused to enforce the immigration law, and he issued orders that ordered his subordinates throughout the executive branch of government, including the Border Patrol, custom border protection, ICE, and USCIS, to defy the law.

The law of the United States says that, when law enforcement encounters someone who is unlawfully present in the United States, not “may,” but “shall”—be placed into removal proceedings. That is the law.

Had that been the case and if the law had been followed, if the law had been followed ever since President Ronald Reagan signed the amnesty act in 1986—which, by the way, was a legal act. I thought it was poor judgment on the part of President Reagan. He let us down on a principle of the rule of law. Thirty-plus years ago I knew that we could be fighting for a long, long time to restore the respect for the rule of law, particularly with regard to immigration.

When I watched the debate take place here in this House and the Senate and in the House and in the Senate and I read what I could read about that, I reasoned that, even though we were losing in the House, the rule of law was losing in the Senate on the amnesty debate in 1986, and even though the rule of law lost in the Senate, that Ronald Reagan understood the principle that, if you reward people for breaking the law, there would have been more people that break the law.

If you say that this is the last amnesty ever, you also will have to continually fight the argument of we didn’t really mean that; there are these other circumstances.

The three—well, it actually started out to be 1 million people that were going to get amnesty in 1986. And the rationale, which I don’t actually think was constitutional, was we can’t enforce the law against these million people that are here illegally, but we need to have the rule of law. So what we will do is we will grant an amnesty to the million people that are here illegally. And to this point forward, everybody who enters into the United States, or is unlawfully in the United States will have to face the law, and we will deport everybody that has violated our immigration laws. We will enforce the law from this point forward, from 1986.

Ronald Reagan believed he was going to get that; and, by the way, he did
command the executive branch of government, and the Republicans did run the executive branch of government not only from 1986, but all the way up until 1993, when Bill Clinton took office.

But what happened was they didn’t get the enforcement. There was fraud. It was well over a million people—it was closer to 3 million people—who received amnesty under the 1986 amnesty act; and those 3 million people then were legalized in America, by law. And I don’t dispute the validity of the law, but they were rewarded for breaking the law. That is what the amnesty did.

So I have talked to a number of them along the way, and they will argue: Yes, we deserved amnesty. We came to America. We wanted to live here. It is a good thing. My family is better off.

Well, is the rule of law better off, is America’s Constitution better off, is our civilization better off because we decided that we would ignore the law and reward people for breaking it?

By the way, is the debate over? Did we restore the respect for the rule of law since 1986. Mr. Speaker? Or, instead, have we seen the respect for the rule of law be eroded day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, over the last 30-plus years since the amnesty act of 1986?

That is what happened. Ronald Reagan saw it in his lifetime. He recognized that a country would have liked to have had that bill back again. I have had the conversation with a glorious American, then-Attorney General Ed Meese, III, who also recognized that the advice that President Reagan got from his Cabinet on whether to sign the amnesty act in 1986, whether that advice was good, and I will tell you that the Cabinet members that I am aware of would like to have reversed that decision after they saw the actual results.

We are not that I am the most clairvoyant Member of the United States Congress, but I can assert with great confidence here into this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Mr. Speaker, I saw this coming in 1986. I wasn’t in public life. I just wanted to raise my family and run my business and live with the freedoms that are guaranteed to me as an American citizen under the Constitution, but I wanted the rule of law.

I had been raised with a deep and abiding respect for the law. My father would sit me down at the supper table and discuss, and across America, again, in our coffee shops, in our churches, in our parks and our streets, and we discuss this openly.

We should listen to other people’s ideas and we should consider what they have to say and we should evaluate that. That is what our Founding Fathers envisioned that the ideas will merge, what will happen is that sometimes there will be people on the right that are never going to compromise, and there will be some people on the left that are never going to compromise.

Maybe that doesn’t matter so much because the people in the middle get to hear both of those arguments and make their own decisions, and they can move left or they can move right. But over time, we build a consensus. And when we get to that consensus, that is when we can move legislation here in the House and over in the Senate and to the President’s desk for a signature, and then America continues to become an even better place.

But we have to have open dialogue to do this, and we have to have the rule of law that gives order to our society. If the rule of law is sacrificed because people are ruled more by their hearts than they are their heads, I would say: Come back to the history of America.

Study our Founding Fathers. Read the Federalist Papers. Deliberate on this Constitution that we have, deliberate on this supreme law of the land and understand how deep the thought that went into the words that are there that are our guarantees.

Our Founding Fathers understood that we had to continue to educate each generation and raise them up not only in an understanding of the Constitution—and I double assert its original meaning—but they needed to be raised with an American experience. That is why it is required that our President of the United States be born in America. And they born in America is important, how do we do that, for we want to ensure that all of our Presidents are raised with an American experience. That is how to interpret that.

You can go lobby your State Representative. You can lobby is so important. You can run for office, which is what I ended up doing. And I am here defending the Constitution and the rule of law.

But we also are a First World country. We are the leaders of civilization for the world. We are the leaders of western civilization for the world. We are the American civilization. The American civilization is a dominant component of Western civilization, and if we want to ensure that America out of the values of the world, we don’t have a lot of science and technology in progress to work with. We don’t have a lot of economic dynamism.

I know that there have been wars and there have been dictators that have popped up within Western civilization. But, fortunately, we haven’t had a dictator pop up in our American civilization. And one of the big reasons for that is because of our Constitution, and because we have public debate, and we come here to the floor of the House, and over there to the floor of the Senate, and across America, again, in our coffee shops, in our churches, in our work place, in our parks, and we want to do this openly.

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I am not here to slice or dice, Mr. Speaker, the actual locations of birth of any President. And we have seen that Congress has some authority to address it by statute, should we choose to do that. But I am asserting that it is essential that the American civilization be preserved, protected, and expanded; and that we have leaders that are raised with the American experience that will come here and defend the American culture and civilization.

And what is so different is that the leader of our thought process, the leader of the destiny and the direction of America is the President of the United States, our Commander in Chief.

The words that our President says really do matter. They really do matter. We saw it happen under the 8 years of Barack Obama. We are seeing it begin now under the beginnings of the 65 or 66 days of the Trump administration. Mr. Speaker, and we have noticed that the direction in America dramatically shifts to: What is the President thinking about? What is the President talking about? What is the President tweeting about?

I think there is a high degree of anxiety on the part of the mainstream media, because they are never really off the clock because this President might wake up at 3 in the morning and send out a tweet that resets things. And I am fine with that. I think it is important that we understand the thoughts of the President.

By the way, he isn’t all-powerful. I used to say to the previous President: You are only the President. It is the American people that run this shop, and through a lot of different mechanisms.

But the President does have a lot of authority and he gets to set the tone for the debate and he gets to define many things, but especially the foreign policy.

But we still have this constraint, and the power of the purse exists here, especially in the House of Representatives. If the House appropriates money, nobody gets any money. That is kind of like when they say: If mama ain’t happy, nobody’s happy. Well, if Congress doesn’t appropriate money, nobody gets any money.

So that power of the purse was designed by our Founding Fathers to be the controlling factor of the things that go on in this country. And if a President is out of line, we are obliged to shut the money off to those things that are out of line. Of course, the Senate will have to concur with any spending that the House should initiate, but just the same, it is the power of the purse that controls much of our destiny.

But we are to be guided and bound by the Constitution. Earlier this morning, as the chairman of the Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, I held a hearing on constitutional rights, in particular the Kelo decision that came down in—if I get my date right—June 23 of 2005.
That decision was about property rights in New London, Connecticut, that the local government had decided that they were going to act by condemning the private property locally so that they could hand that private property over for a private interest to do expansion and development on multiple homes within the area of New London, Connecticut.

I recall my outrage when the Supreme Court ruled that that was constitutional; for a local government to condemn private property for private use, all it had to do was be facilitated by local government.

I had not read the decision at that time. In fact, I hadn’t read the dissent. I had read part of the decision. But within a week, we brought a resolution of disapproval of the Supreme Court’s decision on Kelo to the floor of this House. And, yes, I was engaged in that debate and some of the shaping of the resolution.

But the Supreme Court of the United States, which is there to protect the Constitution itself, to interpret the Constitution and the law, effectively stripped three words out of the Fifth Amendment of our Constitution.

The Amendment reads like this: “...nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.”

Well, the people in New London Connecticut, particularly the Kelo family, had their property condemned, confiscated under eminent domain and handed over to private use and through the entity of local government. So I was outraged. America was outraged.

By the way, that is another time like this: “...nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.”

So here we are. The American people have risen up and we have said: We disagree with the Supreme Court. We want to restore our Constitution, but amending it is pretty difficult.

By the way, if you wanted to amend the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution to fix Kelo, to have the Fifth Amendment mean “nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation,” if you want the Fifth Amendment to mean that—I asked a witness today: If you wanted to rewrite the Fifth Amendment and amend our Constitution when the Supreme Court has so, I will say, subverted the meaning, they had de facto stricken those three words out?

How do you rewrite it? Do you start with: We really mean it this time that “nor shall private property be taken,” we really mean it “without just compensation,” we really mean it “for public use without just compensation”? What do we really mean it? Or are there words in the language that can prevent a court from doing what they decide to do from an activist standpoint?

I don’t think so. And a number of times I have tried to write amendments to the Constitution to fix problems that have been created by an activist court.

So I will say the Kelo decision in 2005 was a precursor to things that happened by the Supreme Court, although they are not connected and cited; and that would be June 2015—June 24 and June 25, 2015, when the King v. Burwell, the decision when the Supreme Court, on a Thursday—I believe if you look at the calendar, Mr. Speaker, it will be a Thursday, June 24, 2015, when the Supreme Court concluded and issued a decision that they said that they are going to rewrite the statute—the law that was actually passed here by hook, crook, and legislative shenanigan, but still within the boundaries of the Constitution.

The law gave no authority to the Federal Government to establish exchanges under ObamaCare, but the Court considered this, and they concluded that: We really meant to say “or Federal Government” when Congress wrote that the States may establish exchanges. The de facto result of the King v. Burwell decision was that the States added those three words, in effect—“or Federal Government”—may establish exchanges under the law. The Supreme Court added words to the law. If they can add words to the law, then they can subtract words from the law.

So I am appalled by this. This is Thursday, and before I can get my feet back underneath me, having been essentially knocked over by a Supreme Court truck believing that they would be able to rewrite the statute under the Constitution, before that can happen, I am pulling into a Catholic church in Logan, Iowa, to do a 10 a.m. meeting with some priests and members of the parish synchronized just by providence or happenstance with former Senator Rick Santorum, who has been a definitive voice on marriage.

We were both listening to the radio as we pulled into that church to do a joint event, and for the first time we had heard about the Obergefell decision, the decision that came down on Friday, June 25, 2015.

That decision goes even beyond the idea that the Court can insert words into Federal statute that was previously passed by the Congress and signed by the President. And now under the gay marriage decision of Obergefell, the Supreme Court not only found a new right in the Constitution, they created a command in the Constitution—a command that came down on Friday, June 25, 2015.

It is not in the Constitution about same-sex marriage. Our Founding Fathers never envisioned such a thing. There is no one that can assert that it was even in the imagination of any Founding Father. No one can assert that it was in the imagination of anybody that was in this Congress when the 14th Amendment was passed out of this Congress—out of the House and the Senate—and ratified by the American people with 75 percent of the legitimate States at the time.

No one can assert that that ever was out there in, let’s just say, the emaciations and penumbras of the Constitution, especially the 14th Amendment, the equal protection clause of the Constitution. They can’t assert that.

They asserted in the Roe v. Wade decision that this right to privacy becomes a right to abortion under any and all circumstances to do anything at all, but they could see something that nobody else had seen, and they wrote that into the decision.
By the way, our rights do come from God and not from government. If we think somehow that rights come from government, then it is okay for government to take our rights away. But they don’t come from government. Our Founding Fathers understood that, in fact, they were better than anyone ever had. They had a tough job. They had to first understand this divine right of humanity, natural law, as they described it. They had to first understand it, then they had to articulate it, then they had to make it their own, make it themselves. They had disagreements amongst themselves, but they reached a consensus that got to the Declaration and a consensus that got to the ratification of the Constitution.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am making this point that this America that we are is built upon the pillars of American exceptionalism. These pillars are inherited from Western civilization whose roots go to Western Europe, they go to Rome, they go to Greece, and they go back to Mosaic law. We have been a wise-enough civilization to adopt those values from outside of Western civilization that give us vitality, just like our English language has this unique vitality. One of the reasons for it is that it is adaptable, it is flexible. We are not stuck in time and place. We take on words into our language, and we have a list of new words that go into the dictionary because we create them to take care of the meaning that we need.

Daniel Hannan, a member of the European Parliament from the United Kingdom, has written a book about the English language. I think of Winston Churchill’s book, “A History of the English-Speaking Peoples.” I read that book carefully forward and back and digested it so to speak. When I finished it, I remember I looked up at the ceiling, and it was about 3:10 in the morning, and I thought: My gosh, wherever the English language has gone, freedom has accompanied the language.

Now, Churchill didn’t ever write that, that I recall, in his book, but that was a conclusion that came to me. I would call it an inescapable conclusion that might only mean “if you think like I do.” But he laid the case out without saying that the English language has gone, freedom has accompanied the language.

Well, Daniel Hannan’s book—the title of which I forget at the moment, Mr. Speaker—goes further. He says that, as he sits in the European Parliament—and he is multilingual—he will have earpieces on listening to the interpreter while he is listening to another language in this ear, and the language he gets interpreted into his ear will necessarily have the same values and meaning. His analysis is that the English language not only is a carrier of freedom, but it is a language that articulates freedom unique to any other, and that you can’t really understand the God-given freedom without having an understanding of the English language that has such a utility in our carrying out and talking about our values of language and liberty.

Mr. Speaker, “honor different” freedom. We have got two words, liberty and freedom. Many other languages only have one word, and they just use that word universally. But in our spirit is this—freedom is this: a civilization and part of this culture. We have got to jump the fences and go wherever he wants to go. But freedom is different. He has that freedom. But liberty is bridled by morality. We have liberty in America. We are bridled by the morality of the observation that there is a tradition and a culture that is part of Judeo-Christianity, descended, at a minimum, from Judeo-Christianity, and our values that are rooted in there, as I said, are traceable back to Mosaic law.

We have to have a morality within America if we are going to be an America that achieves and that we can aspire, that the arc of history takes us to soaring heights instead of flattening the arc of history out and perhaps diminishing into the Third World.

So I revere this country, Mr. Speaker, and I revere our Constitution and our rule of law. The people in this country, all of us who are part of this civilization and part of this culture, all of us who get up every day and go out and do things to lift others up, all of us who scrub out some of the things that aren’t so great and elevate those things that are great and pull ourselves together, whether it is a church, a dad and a child, whether it is a church group, whether it is home school, public school, or parochial school, whether it is work, whether it is your volunteer group, if you are out there handing out pamphlets to advance your cause and adding to the civil dialogue in America, keep a moral foundation behind it, and add to that civil dialogue, if we continue to do that, and if we protect, understand, and teach the values of America, in particular the understanding and the original meaning of our Constitution, we will continue to be an even greater country.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I am privileged to serve here and privileged to have the opportunity to go home and carry out some of the things that have been talked about here in this last hour.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.
MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Cuffe, for the Clerk, and Senators, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 67. Joint Resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to apprenticeship arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 353. An act to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s weather research through a focused program of investment on affordable and attainable advances in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities to support substantial improvement in weather forecasting and prediction of high impact weather events, to expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101–509, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announced the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress:

Deborah Skaggs Speth of Kentucky.

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REPEALING HEALTH CARE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Banks of Indiana). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Gohmert) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GoHmert. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to follow my good friend from Iowa, Steve King. I know Mr. King cares deeply about America. He not only cares deeply, but having been in the private sector in business, where he, like our President, was involved in building things and making things work and making things accessible, he has good solutions. I have no doubt if he were not in Congress, he would probably have gotten the bid on the sections of the wall that the President is taking bids on even now.

We are at an interesting time. It has been interesting to see some of the messages. Some are hurtful. I know the Longview newspaper immediately pick up on any disension in the Republican Party, especially if it is aimed at conservatives like me. I don’t know why we use the term “conservative.” It used to be just somebody with common sense that believed in keeping our word, believed in following the Constitution.

We seem to get in trouble when we don’t follow the Constitution. For example, it makes very clear that everyone who is an American citizen is supposed to be trusted, and that the rights of every person in every other country. That would turn into this remarkable experiment in a republican form of government that we have here.

It is really a democratic Republic—a Republic where you select representatives so that you don’t have big gangs running around as a majority wreaking havoc with them with them. We elect representatives so they can come together and, hopefully, read bills and not have to vote on them so they can find out what is in them, go ahead and read the bills in advance and have a chance to do with the writing of the bills, especially things that affect people’s health.

When we see messages like have come out today, it is unpleasant. One was apparently sent out from the White House, condemning the Freedom Caucus, apparently, because we have the audacity to want Republicans, including those at the White House, to keep our promise. I still remain in the Federal Caucus and a lot of others—and remain committed to our promise to repeal ObamaCare.

I realize there can be honest disagreement. Some think if we give more power to health insurance companies, more Federal Government, and give more power to the people we trust in the Federal Government, whom I do trust, then they can do what Congress is not willing to do, and that is repeal ObamaCare and have a system in place that will assure people can get health care that is affordable.

The fact is most people talk about how we have got to make sure people get health care. And then, over the years, they use the term “health care” synonymously with “health insurance.” Actually, the fact is we should be most concerned about people, all Americans, having access to affordable health care, whether they have insurance or not.

One of the problems that health insurance has gotten into over the last 50 years is that health insurance has ceased to be insurance. Under ObamaCare, health insurance was certainly not insurance.

If you look up the root of insurance, the word “insure,” insurance was intended to be something you could purchase very cheaply that would insure against an unforeseeable event some point in the future, maybe a catastrophic accident, a chronic disease, something that you don’t expect and you hope never happens. For the insurance company, it is actually a form of legalized wage; that you are paying a little amount, hoping that never happens, but just in case it does, insurance will be able to take care of it at that point.

We have long since lost the idea of true insurance, and people began paying for health insurance companies not to insure against an unforeseeable event in the future, but to pay them to manage their health care, to tell their doctors what medication they can prescribe, what procedures they would cover to help their patients, telling the patients which doctors they could see.

Actually, the truth is, as the Federal Government got more and more involved, we saw less and less insurance and more and more insurance companies managing people’s health care, and the managing insurance companies were actually following the lead of the Federal Government.

The more we passed laws regarding health care and insurance, the more the Federal Government had a say in people’s health care and well-being and the more insurance companies moved into health insurance companies and turned the Federal Government in Medicare and Medicaid moved into a governing role.

This morning, I am meeting with constituents that are very caring individuals and who provide health centers that are extremely affordable, very, very cheap, but provide quality care for people that can’t afford the care. They don’t have to go to the emergency room, which costs more than going to a clinic for minor matters. It saves a lot of money. It is a great thing.

Of course, emergency room care is about the most expensive care you can get, and people who don’t have insurance often go and line up at emergency rooms, which drives up the cost of everybody’s—hers and everybody’s health insurance. We can break the cycle of that.

I understand there are very well-meaning friends on the Republican side of the aisle that think if we just give the Federal Government, give Health and Human Services, more power to control all of this, we have a guy in place that I do believe can do great things to cure the ills of health care.

My problem is, if we don’t repeal the outrageous known as ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act—which is really unaufordable—if we don’t actually repeal it here in the House, have the Senate repeal it, then no matter how much those in the executive branch and Health and Human Services, including my friend, the Secretary, no matter how much they do to help Americans, the next liberal that comes in, the next Kathleen Sebelius who comes in thinking she knows more about what is best for you than you do, then all of those great reforms will go out the window. Because the Secretary will have more authority and more ability to make regulation under the Republican proposed bill, then I am quite certain that somebody that comes in, like Kathleen Sebelius, who knows better what you need than you do, will make sure that the regulations and the overreach become even more burdensome.

I totally understand the President’s frustration. He was told that the Republican bill would basically repeal ObamaCare. The truth is I totally agree with the President. We need to act to repeal ObamaCare. I stand with the President, through whatever hardship to repeal ObamaCare.

I have heard people referring already to the Republican bill as SwampCare. There are some good things in the bill,
One of the things I have got to say, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping in our bill—since we know and we have talked about all these years since ObamaCare passed that it cuts $716 billion from Medicare, and seniors need help. They are beginning to experience rationed health care the way the VA has been administering to our veterans for too long.

Hopefully, we will get that fixed. I don't know the person that President Trump appointed to head up the VA. She has had her fill of the system, so I am concerned she may not be able to deliver on reenergizing the VA to actually help veterans.

With all the problems that have existed across the Veterans Administration, which are a clear example of what happens when a federal government takes complete charge of a medical system, and with all the veterans we have in record numbers committing suicide because they just feel so hopeless—the VA needs to take that irreversible step of hopelessness. People that are seeing that in the VA now are coming and saying they want the Federal Government to have more control over people's health care, kind of like the VA, because that is such a good thing.

Do we need more people killing themselves in the general society at the levels of our precious veterans?

I mean, let's take care of our veterans. Let's drop that to zero for veterans, and let's work on it for the general population.

I do believe that the bill that my friend Dr. Tim Murphy helped push through, did such a great job on—it was bipartisan; we had people on both sides of the aisle working fervently on that bill—I am able to do some good. For 30 years or so the pendulum swung too far against people getting the mental health care they needed. So it is good to see that change.

But, Mr. Speaker, this bill—I left at the end of the week last week, and I know a lot of people were down, and I was in part, but the other side was. I really felt like this was going to be a good week, we were going to come together, we were going to discuss, we were going to find a way to come together. I thought on Tuesday—Monday evening, as I saw our leadership getting together with members of our party, I thought: Yeah, I bet we can get something by the end of the week. I got the feeling most of the Republicans felt if we don't have a bill that we can agree on and get passed for the good of the American people, let's actually take steps.

Okay, our leadership said we can't repeal ObamaCare. Well, let's repeal at least as much as we can. Let's at least repeal as much as we did 2 years ago. Let's at least not give more power to Health and Human Services. Let's at least take out some of the requirements from ObamaCare that have caused premiums to skyrocket. We are told: Well, trust HHS because they will be able to help bring down premiums so we don't have to do that action in this body ourselves.

For all of those who were ignorant and didn't understand, the Freedom Caucus was trying to reach an agreement so that we could vote a bill out of this House, but those of us in the Freedom Caucus all had heard over and over from constituencies: You have got to do something to bring down the cost of our health insurance, of our health care. Our deductible is too high, we will never be able to get to our insurance help. Our premiums are so high.

I heard from businesspeople that their costs have tripled in the last few years. They cannot afford to stay in business and keep paying these high premiums for their employees. They will have to leave them high and dry, which means they go to Medicaid. And I am really shocked that even people in the Obama administration would brag about adding millions of people to Medicaid, which has not helped that people needed. We were told: Oh, no, ObamaCare will drive them to great insurance. No; it has driven millions to Medicaid that is even worse than Medicare.

I do believe if we don't have more people killed by the VA, let's not talk about the VA. I don't know how many of the Republicans on this side of the aisle believe that so many States have good solutions. So what is our solution to help the States? Gee, if we give more power to the Federal Government, that they could start a high-risk pool that will be able to pull people out of the insurance policies where premiums are spiking, and then the Federal Government will run that for a while and then divest it back to the States.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, in my time in Congress and even my time on the bench as a judge and chief justice, I have watched government, and I just don't trust government. That was something Justice Scalia told me.

That was something Justice Scalia told to a group from my home in Tyler. There were probably 50 or 60 seniors who came up.

I asked: Is there something special you would like to see or do while you are here?

They said: Well, you seem to be friends with Justice Scalia. Do you think we could meet him?

Well, I will ask. Well, son of a gun, Justice Scalia found the time, and we met him over at the Supreme Court.

He said: Well, what questions do you have?

He didn't start with a speech.

He said: Well, okay, LOUIE said you wanted to meet me. Here I am. What questions have you got?

He leaned back against the table at the front of the room, and nobody said anything.

He said: Oh, come on, I have taken time. I want to come here and let you meet me.
I loved how abrupt he was and straight to the point. He said: Come on, here I am, have the courage, ask your question. One of our seniors said: Well, Justice Scalia, would you say that the United States is the most free country in the history of the world because of our Bill of Rights, that it is the best ever? Justice Scalia surprised me, but then I thought, well, yeah, he is exactly right. He said: Oh, gosh, no. The Soviets had a better bill of rights than we have. It had a lot more rights in there. No, no, no. The reason we are the most free country in the history of the world is because the Founders did not trust government. So they gave us a Constitution that tried to put as many obstacles as it possibly could between people in Washington—at the time, first New York, Philadelphia, then Washington. But people at the Federal level creating laws or regulations, they wanted to make it hard to pass laws. He went into further deliberation on that. It was very informative. He was exactly right. I studied the Soviet Government. I remember in college when I was at Texas A&M I did a paper—and I got an A on it—about the Soviet Constitution, the Soviet rights. They did have more rights spelled out. But the trouble is, their founders wanted government to do things, and trusted government implicitly so that it was totalitarian, so the bill of rights they wrote meant nothing. That is where we are headed here, it is with bureaucrats having taken charge over people’s lives, their health care, their financial situations, usurping or at least getting copies of people’s finance records. You used to have to get a warrant to do that. Now the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau just gets them when they want to. That should be illegal. It should be unconstitutional. It should require a warrant with probable cause established under oath that a crime has been committed and this person probably committed it. I used to sign warrants if probable cause was established. Not anymore. Under Obama, the Democratic Congress passed a law saying: Yeah, let them do whatever they want to somehow help us with our financial situation. Well, when you combine what they have done with what the NSA, CIA, and Justice Department have done to invade people’s rights, we are severely limited in the privacy we once had. I know there were people who were shocked that Congress passed a bill regarding internet privacy rights, but the fact is that our party should have done a better job of getting the message out of what it really did. It just clearly lied to us here. Other members of the Cabinet in the Obama administration clearly lied, and we couldn’t get our group together to remove perjuring people from the Cabinet? At least now, hopefully, we are going to get one document that shows the kind of crimes that were being committed in the last administration. But in the meantime, people are hurting. They need their premiums to come down. I know we can trust Health and Human Services in this administration to try to bring down costs. But the words of my late friend Justice Scalia: If you guys in Congress, with the power to repeal a bad bill, don’t have the guts to do it, don’t come running across the street to us and ask us to repeal your bad bill. Heck, just go to the floor, repeal the bad law, and leave us alone. That is all I am asking, Mr. Speaker. The courts have not worked out extremely well for people who love the Constitution in recent years, and I know the President is frustrated. He is probably nearly as frustrated as I am almost maybe. I am told that maybe some of these anti-Freedom Caucus tweets originated with his Chief of Staff Priebus. But I want to suggest, as Sam Rayburn did when he was Speaker: My friends, Mr. Speaker, the Republican brothers and sisters are not your enemy. They are your friends. They want to repeal ObamaCare, bring down costs, get more control back to people. If we pass a bill that doesn’t bring down premiums and give the American people hope and not give more power to the government and hope they do a better job in this administration, then we will deserve to be voted out. I just hope, Mr. Speaker, we will do what we promised to do. I hope those who are getting calls and emails demanding they call their representatives, tell their Congressmen to get on board with the bill. I hope they will trust us who are reading the bills on their behalf. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.
the duty to carry out its advisory and enforcement responsibilities in an impartial manner, the Committee is the only standing committee of the House of Representatives to which the House has delegated the authority to determine whether the counts in a State-subcommittee designated pursuant to Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, or a Delegate to, or the Resident Commissioner of the United States, the House of Representatives, or a Delegate to, or the Resident Commissioner of the United States, the House of Representatives.

PAR. 2. DEFINITIONS

(a) "Committee" means the Committee on Ethics.
(b) "Complaint" means a written allegation of improper conduct made by a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives.
(c) "Inquiry" means an investigation by an investigative subcommittee into allegations against a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives.
(d) "Investigate," "Investigating," and/or "Investigation" mean review of the conduct of a House Member, officer, or employee, including any accompanying findings or other supporting documentation.
(e) "Investigative Subcommittee" means a subcommittee designated pursuant to Rule 19(a) to conduct an inquiry to determine if a Statement of Alleged Violation should be issued.
(f) "Referral" means a report sent to the Committee from the Board pursuant to House Rules and all applicable House Resolutions regarding the conduct of a House Member, officer, or employee, including any accompanying findings or other supporting documentation.
(g) "Statement of Alleged Violation" means a formal charging document filed by an investigative subcommittee with the Committee containing specific allegations against a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives of a violation of the Code of Official Conduct, or of a law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to the performance of official duties or the discharge of official responsibilities.

(i) "Sanction Hearing" means a Committee hearing to determine what sanction, if any, to adopt or to recommend to the House of Representatives.
(j) "Sanctioning Committee" means a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives who is the subject of a complaint filed with the Committee or who is the subject of an inquiry or investigation under this Title.

RULE 3. ADVISORY OPINIONS AND WAIVERS

(a) The Office of Advice and Education shall handle inquiries; prepare written opinions providing specific advice, including reviews of requests for privately-sponsored travel pursuant to the Committee's travel regulations; develop general guidance; and organize seminars, workshops, and briefings for the benefit of the House of Representatives.

(b) Any Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives may request a written opinion with respect to the propriety of any current or proposed conduct of such Member, officer, or employee.

(c) The Office of Advice and Education may provide information and guidance regarding laws, rules, regulations, and other standards of conduct applicable to Members, officers, and employees in the performance of their duties or the discharge of their responsibilities.

(d) In general, the Committee shall provide a written opinion to an individual only in response to a written request, and the written opinion shall address the conduct only of the inquiring individual, or of persons for whom the inquiring individual is responsible as employing authority.

(e) A written request for an opinion shall be addressed to the Chair of the Committee and shall include a complete and accurate statement of facts. A request shall be signed by the requester or the requester’s authorized representative or employing authority. A representative shall disclose to the Committee the identity of the principal on whose behalf advice is being sought.

(f) Requests for privately-sponsored travel shall be treated like any other request for a written opinion for purposes of paragraphs (g) through (l).

(1) The Committee’s Travel Guidelines and Regulations, and relevant request submission and Committee approval process for privately-sponsored travel consistent with House Rules.

(2) A request for privately-sponsored travel of a Member, officer, or employee shall include a completed and signed Traveler Form that attaches the Private Sponsor Certification Form and includes all information required by the Committee’s travel regulations. A private sponsor offering officially-connected travel to a Member, officer, or employee shall provide well the Private Sponsor Certification Form, and provide a copy of that form to the invitee(s).

(3) Any individual who knowingly and willfully fails to file a Traveler Form or Private Sponsor Certification Form may be subject to civil penalties and criminal sanctions pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, the Committee's reprimand or censure or any other sanctions.

(4) The Office of Advice and Education shall prepare for the Committee a response to each written request for an opinion from a Member, officer, or employee. Each response shall discuss all applicable laws, rules, regulations, or other standards.

RULE 4. FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

(a) In matters relating to Title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, the Committee shall coordinate the work of the House of Representatives, Legislative Resource Center, to assure that appropriate individuals are notified of their obligation to file financial disclosure reports required under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act and that such individuals are provided in a timely fashion with filing instructions and forms developed by the Committee.

(b) The Committee shall coordinate with the Legislative Resource Center to assure that the Ethics in Government Act requires to be placed on the public record is made public.
Rule 6. Committee Staff

(a) The staff is to be assembled and retained as a professional, nonpartisan staff.

(b) Each member of the staff shall be professionally and demonstrably qualified for the particular position for which they are hired.

(c) The staff as a whole and each individual member of the staff shall perform all official duties in a nonpartisan manner.

(d) No member of the staff shall engage in any partisan political activity directly affecting any congressional or presidential election.

(e) No member of the staff or outside counsel may accept public speaking engagements or write for publication on any subject that is directly related to the staff member's duties with the Committee of such individual without specific prior approval from the Chair and Ranking Minority Member.

(f) Outside counsel may be dismissed prior to the end of a contract between the Committee and such counsel only by a majority vote of a majority of the members of the Committee, that the retention of outside counsel is necessary and appropriate.

(g) If the Committee determines that it is necessary to retain staff members for the purpose of a particular investigation or other proceeding, then such staff shall be retained only for the duration of that particular investigation or proceeding.

Rule 7. Confidentiality

(a) Before any Member or employee of the Committee, including members of an investigating subcommittee, or any other authority, with respect to the Committee, the Chair and Ranking Minority Member each may appoint one or more staff designated pursuant to section 102(b)(4) of Rule X of the Ethics in Government Act to write for publication on any subject that is directly related to the staff member's duties with the Committee or to any judicial proceeding, unless the Committee or subcommittee, in its discretion, closes the hearing to the public.

(b) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member each may appoint one or more staff designated pursuant to section 102(b)(4) of Rule X of the Ethics in Government Act to write for publication on any subject that is directly related to the staff member's duties with the Committee or to any judicial proceeding, unless the Committee or subcommittee, in its discretion, closes the hearing to the public.

Rule 8. Meetings

(a) The regular meeting day of the Committee shall be a Tuesday of each month, except when the House of Representatives is not meeting on that day. When the Committee Chair determines that there is substantial business to be transacted on additional days, a regularly scheduled meeting need not be held when the Chair determines there is no business to be considered.

(b) The Chair shall maintain for the meetings of the Committee, and the Ranking Minority Member may place additional items on the agenda.

(c) A majority of the Committee or any subcommittee shall occur in executive session unless the Committee or subcommittee, by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members, closes the hearing to the public.

(d) Any hearing held by an adjudicatory subcommittee, or any sanction hearing held by the Committee, shall be open to the public unless the Committee or subcommittee, by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members, closes the hearing to the public.

(e) No special session of the Committee shall meet at the discretion of its Chair.

(f) If insofar as practicable, notice for any Committee or subcommittee meeting shall be provided at least seventy-two hours before the meeting. The Chair of the Committee or subcommittee may waive such time period for good cause.

Rule 9. Executive Session

(a) Any reports required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act shall be filed by Members of the Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics that are forwarded to the Committee. The Clerk shall not be subject to paragraphs (d) through (q) of this Rule. The Office of Congressional Ethics retains jurisdiction over the timeliness and content of filings by the Members of the Board as the Board's supervising ethics office.

(b) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member each shall be authorized to grant on behalf of the Committee requests for reasonable extensions of time for the filing of Financial Disclosure Statements. Any such request must be reviewed by the Committee no later than the date on which the Statement in question is due. A request received after such date may be granted by the Committee only in extraordinary circumstances. Such extensions for one individual in a calendar year shall not exceed a total of 90 days. No extension shall be granted authorizing a non-income producing individual to file a statement later than 30 days prior to a primary or general election in which the candidate is participating.

(c) An individual who takes legally sufficient action to withdraw as a candidate before the date on which that individual's Financial Disclosure Statement is due under the Ethics in Government Act shall not be required to file a Statement. An individual shall not be excused from filing a Financial Disclosure Statement when withdrawal as a candidate occurs after the date on which such Statement was due.

(d) An individual who files a report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act more than 30 days after the later of—

(i) the date such report is required to be filed, or

(ii) if a filing extension is granted to such individual, the last day of the filing extension period authorized by such Act as a late filing fee of $300. The Chair and Ranking Minority Member are authorized to approve requests that the fee be waived based on extraordinary circumstances.

(e) Any late report that is submitted without a required filing fee shall be deemed procedurally deficient and not properly filed.

(f) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member each are authorized to approve extensions for waivers of the aggregation and reporting of gifts as provided by section 102(a)(2)(C) of the Ethics in Government Act. If such a request is approved, both the incoming request and the Committee response shall be forwarded to the Legislative Resource Center for placement on the public record.

(g) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member each are authorized to approve blind trusts as qualifying under section 102(f)(3) of the Ethics in Government Act. The correspondence relating to formal approval of a blind trust, the trust document, the list of assets transferred to the trust, and any other documents required to be included, must be forwarded to the Legislative Resource Center for such purpose.

(h) The Committee shall designate staff who shall review reports required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act and, based upon information contained therein, indicate in a form and manner prescribed by the Committee whether the Statement appears substantially accurate and complete and the filler appears to be in compliance with applicable laws and rules.

(i) Each report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act shall be reviewed within 60 days after the date of filing.

(j) If the reviewing staff believes that additional information is required because (1) the report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act appears not substantially accurate or complete, or (2) the filler may not be in compliance with applicable laws and rules, reporting individual shall be notified in writing of the additional information believed to be required, or of the law or rule with which the reporting individual is in compliance. Such notice shall also state the time within which a response is to be submitted. Any such notice shall remain confidential.

(k) Within 30 days after notice of any extension granted in accordance with clause (d), a reporting individual who concurs with the Committee’s notification that the required filing is not complete under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act is not complete, or that other action is required, shall submit the necessary information or take appropriate action. Any amendment may be in the form of a revised report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act or an explanatory letter addressed to the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

(l) Any amendment shall be placed on the public record in the same manner as other reports required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act. If such a request is approved, both the incoming request and the Committee’s notification that the report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act is not deficient or that other action is required, shall be provided an opportunity to respond orally or in writing. If the explanation is accepted, a copy of the response, if written, or a note summarizing an oral response, shall be retained in Committee files with the original report.

(m) The Committee shall be the final arbiter of whether any report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act requires clarification or amendment.

(n) If the Committee determines, by vote of a majority of its members, that there is reason to believe that an individual has willfully failed to file a report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act or has willfully falsified or willfully failed to file a report required to be filed under Title I of the Ethics in Government Act, the Committee shall refer the name of the individual, together with the information that gives rise to such determination, to the Attorney General pursuant to section 104(b) of the Ethics in Government Act. Such referral shall not preclude the Committee from initiating other such action as may be authorized by other provisions of law or the Rules of the House of Representatives.
RULE 8. SUBCOMMITTEES—GENERAL POLICY AND STRUCTURE

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules, the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee may consult with an investigatory subcommittee either on their own initiative or on the initiative of the subcommittee, shall have access to evidence and information before a subcommittee in the course of its investigation, and shall not thereby be precluded from serving as full, voting members of any adjudicatory subcommittee. Except for the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee pursuant to this paragraph, evidence in the possession of an investigatory subcommittee shall not be disclosed to other Committee members except by a vote of the subcommittee.

(b) The Committee may establish other noninvestigative and nonadjudicatory subcommittees, as authorized by the Committee to the Member from disclosing to the Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics the existence of an investigation in a written request for referral pursuant to Rule 17A(k). Such disclosures will only be made subject to written confirmation from the Board that the information provided by the Chair or Ranking Minority Member will be kept confidential by the Board.

(c) No motion made to take any of the actions enumerated in clause (a) of this Rule shall be entertained by the Chair unless a quorum of the Committee is present when the motion is made.

RULE 9. QUORUMS AND MEMBER DISQUALIFICATION

(a) The quorum for the Committee or an investigative subcommittee to take testimony and receive evidence, or conduct business shall consist of a majority plus one of the members of the Committee or subcommittee.

(b) A member of the Committee may sit with any noninvestigative or nonadjudicatory subcommittee, but only regular members of such subcommittee may vote on any matter before that subcommittee.

RULE 10. VOTE REQUIREMENTS

(a) The following actions shall be taken only upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee, as appropriate:

(1) Issuing a subpoena.

(2) Adopting a full Committee motion to create an investigative subcommittee.

(3) Adopting or amending a Statement of Alleged Violation.

(4) Finding that a count in a Statement of Alleged Violation has been proved by clear and convincing evidence.

(5) Sending a letter of reproval.

(6) Adopting a recommendation to the House of Representatives that a sanction be imposed.

(7) Adopting a report relating to the conduct of a Member, officer, or employee.

(8) Issuing an advisory opinion of general applicability establishing new policy.

RULE 11. COMMITTEE RECORDS

(a) All communications and all pleadings pursuant to these rules shall be filed with the Committee at the Committee’s office or such other place as designated by the Committee.

(b) All records of the Committee which have been delivered to the Archivist of the United States shall be made available to the public in accordance with the Rules of the House of Representatives.

RULE 12. BROADCASTS OF COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

(a) Television or radio coverage of a Committee or subcommittee hearing or meeting shall be without commercial sponsorship.

(b) Television cameras, operating from fixed positions, shall be permitted in a hearing or meeting room. The Committee may allocate the positions of permitted television cameras among the television media in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Radio and Television Correspondents’ Galleries.

(c) Television cameras shall be placed so as not to obstruct in any way the space between any witness giving evidence or testimony and any member of the Committee, or the visibility of that witness and that member to each other.

(d) Television cameras shall not be placed in positions that unnecessarily obstruct the coverage of the hearing or meeting by any other media.

PART II—INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITY

RULE 13. HOUSE RESOLUTION

Whenever the House of Representatives, by resolution, authorizes the Committee to undertake an inquiry or investigation, the resolution, in conjunction with these Rules, shall govern. To the extent the provisions of the resolution differ from these Rules, the resolution shall control.

RULE 14. COMMITTEE AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE—GENERAL POLICY

(a) Pursuant to clause 3(b) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee may exercise its investigatory authority when:

(1) Information offered as a complaint by a Member of the House of Representatives is transmitted directly to the Committee; or

(2) Information offered as a complaint by an individual not a Member of the House is transmitted to the Committee, provided that a Member of the House certifies in writing that such Member believes the information is credible in good faith and warrants the review and consideration of the House.

(b) The Committee, on its own initiative, undertakes an investigation.

(c) A Member, officer, or employee is convicted in a Federal, State, or local court of a felony;
The House of Representatives, by resolution, authorizes or directs the Committee to undertake an inquiry or investigation; or
(a) a referral from the Board is transmitted to the Committee.
(b) The Committee also has investigatory authority over:
1. certain unauthorized disclosures of intelligence-related information, pursuant to House Rule X, clause 11(g)(2) and (e)(5);
2. reports received from the Office of the Inspector General pursuant to House Rule II, clause 6(c)(3).

RULE 15. COMPLAINTS
(a) A complaint submitted to the Committee shall be in writing, dated, and properly verified (a document will be considered properly verified where a notary executes it with the language, “Signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on (date) by (the name of the person)” setting forth in simple, concise, and direct statements—
1. the full address of the party filing the complaint (hereinafter referred to as the “complainant”);
2. the name and position or title of the respondent;
3. the nature of the alleged violation of the Code of Official Conduct or of other law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to the performance of duties or discharge of responsibilities; and
4. the facts alleged to give rise to the violation.
(b) Any documents in the possession of the complainant that relate to the allegations may be submitted with the complaint.
(c) Information offered as a complaint by a Member of the House of Representatives may be transmitted directly to the Committee.
(d) Information offered as a complaint by an individual not a Member of the House may be submitted with the complaint.
(e) A complaint must be accompanied by a certification, which may be unsworn, that the complainant has provided an exact copy of the filed complaint and all attachments to the respondent.
(f) The Committee may defer action on a complaint against a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives when the complaint alleges conduct that the Committee does not wish to be reviewed by appropriate law enforcement or regulatory authorities, or when the Committee determines that it is appropriate for the conduct alleged in the complaint to be reviewed initially by law enforcement or regulatory authorities.
(g) A complaint may not be amended without the written consent of the Committee.
(h) The Committee shall not accept, and shall return to the complainant, any complaint submitted after the 60 days prior to an election in which the subject of the complaint is a candidate.
(i) The Committee shall not consider a complaint that has been the subject of an investigation undertaken by the Committee, of any alleged violation which occurred before the third previous Congress unless the Committee determined that the violation is directly related to an alleged violation which occurred in a more recent Congress.

RULE 16. DUTIES OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
(a) Whenever information offered as a complaint is submitted to the Committee, the Chair and Ranking Minority Member shall have 15 calendar days, or 5 legislative days, whichever occurs first, to determine whether the information meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, unless the Committee by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members votes otherwise. 
1. Recommend to the Committee that it dispose of the complaint, or any portion thereof, in any manner that does not require action by the House, which may include dismissal of the complaint or resolution of the complaint by the Committee, or by a Member of the House or by an employee of the House against whom the complaint is made.
2. Establish an investigative subcommittee.
3. Request that the Committee extend the applicable 45-calendar day period when they determine more time is necessary in order to make a recommendation under paragraph (1) or (2) of Rule 16(b).
(b) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member jointly determine that information submitted to the Committee meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, and the complaint is not disposed of within 45 calendar days or 5 legislative days, whichever is later, and no additional 45-day extension is made, then the Chair and Ranking Minority Member jointly determine that information submitted to the Committee is not a complaint and forward the complaint, or any portion thereof, to the subcommittee for its consideration. If at any time during the 45-calendar day or 5 legislative day period Chair and Ranking Minority Member places on the agenda the issue of whether to establish an investigative subcommittee, then an investigative subcommittee may be established only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee.
(c) Whenever the Chair and Ranking Minority Member jointly determine that information submitted to the Committee meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, and the complaint is not disposed of within 45 calendar days or 5 legislative days, whichever is later, and no additional 45-day extension is made, then the Chair and Ranking Minority Member places on the agenda the issue of whether to establish an investigative subcommittee, then an investigative subcommittee may be established only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee.
(d) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member jointly determine that information submitted to the Committee meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, and the complaint is not disposed of within 45 calendar days or 5 legislative days, whichever is later, and no additional 45-day extension is made, then the Chair and Ranking Minority Member places on the agenda the issue of whether to establish an investigative subcommittee, then an investigative subcommittee may be established only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee.

RULE 17. PROCESSING OF COMPLAINTS
(a) If a complaint is in compliance with House and Committee rules, the Committee staff may request information from the House or other sources prior to the establishment of an investigative subcommittee only when so directed by the Chair and Ranking Minority Member.
(b) The respondent shall be notified in writing regarding the Committee’s decision to dismiss the complaint or to create an investigative subcommittee.

RULE 17A. REFERRALS FROM THE BOARD OF OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS
(1) The Committee makes public any report and findings of the Board, the Chair shall notify in writing to the Board and the Committee, officer or employee of the House regarding the Committee’s decision or vote that the matter referred from the Board has been extended; and
(c) The Committee may request from the Office of Congressional Ethics that the Office of Congressional Ethics provide a written report and findings of the Board.
(d) The Committee makes public any report and findings of the Board unless the Committee determines that information filed meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, unless the Committee by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members votes otherwise. 
(e) If a complaint is in compliance with House and Committee rules, the Committee staff may request information from the House or other sources prior to the establishment of an investigative subcommittee only when so directed by the Chair and Ranking Minority Member.
(f) The respondent shall be notified in writing regarding the Committee’s decision to dismiss the complaint or to create an investigative subcommittee.

RULE 17A. REFERRALS FROM THE BOARD OF OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS
(1) The Committee makes public any report and findings of the Board, the Chair shall notify in writing to the Board and the Committee, officer or employee of the House regarding the Committee’s decision or vote that the matter referred from the Board has been extended; and
(c) The Committee may request from the Office of Congressional Ethics that the Office of Congressional Ethics provide a written report and findings of the Board.
(d) The Committee makes public any report and findings of the Board unless the Committee determines that information filed meets the requirements of the Committee’s rules for what constitutes a complaint, unless the Committee by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members votes otherwise. 
(e) If a complaint is in compliance with House and Committee rules, the Committee staff may request information from the House or other sources prior to the establishment of an investigative subcommittee only when so directed by the Chair and Ranking Minority Member.
(f) The respondent shall be notified in writing regarding the Committee’s decision to dismiss the complaint or to create an investigative subcommittee.
Committee to dismiss a matter is not consid-
ered inconsistent with a report from the Board that the matter is unresolved by the Board due to a tie vote.

(1) If the Committee establishes an invest-
igative subcommittee respecting any mat-
ter referred to the Board, then the report and findings of the Board shall not be made public until the conclusion of the investiga-
tive subcommittee process. The Committee shall issue a public statement noting the es-
tablishment of an investigative sub-
committee, which shall include the name of the Member, officer, or employee who is the subject of the inquiry, and shall set forth the alleged violation.

(2) If any such investigative subcommittee does not conclude its review within one year after referral, then the Committee shall make public the report of the Board no later than one year after the refer-
ral. If the investigative subcommittee does not conclude its review before the end of the Congress in which the report of the Board is made public, the Committee shall make pub-
lic any findings of the Board on the last day of that Congress.

(3) If the Committee agrees to a request from an appropriate law enforcement or reg-
ulatory authority to defer taking action on a matter referred by the Board under para-
graph (b), the Committee shall make public the written report and findings of the Board that the matter requires further review, the Com-
mittee shall make public the written report of the Board but not the findings; and

(4) If the vote of the Committee is a tie or the Committee fails to act by the close of any applicable period(s) under this rule, the report and findings of the Board shall be made public by the Committee, along with a public statement by the Chair explaining the status of the matter.

 RULE 18. COMMITTEE-INITIATED INQUIRY OR INVESTIGATION

(a) Notwithstanding the absence of a filed complaint, the Committee may consider any information in its possession indicating that a Member, officer, or employee may have committed a violation of the Code of Official Conduct or any law, rule, regulation, or other standard of conduct applicable to the conduct of such Member, officer, or employee in the performance of the duties of the discharge of the responsibilities of such position or office. The Committee may jointly gather additional information concerning such an alleged violation by a Member, officer, or employee unless and until such time as an investigation has been established. The Chair and Ranking Mi-
nority Member may also jointly take appro-
propriate action consistent with Committee Rules to resolve the matter.

(b) If the Committee votes to establish an investiga-
tive subcommittee, the Committee shall proceed in accordance with Rule 19.

(c) Any written request by a Member, offi-
cer, or employee of the House of Representa-
tives that the Committee conduct an inves-
tigative subcommittee—

(1) shall be the sole judge of any disqualifica-
tion of the Committee members, and nothing but the truth (so help you God)!” The oath or affirmation shall be admin-
istered by the Chair or subcommittee member designated by the Chair to admin-
ister oaths.

(2) During the inquiry, the procedure re-
specting the admissibility of evidence and rules shall be as follows:

(a) Any relevant evidence shall be admiss-
ible unless the evidence is privileged under
the precedents of the House of Representatives.

(2) The Chair of the subcommittee or other
presiding member at any investigatory sub-
committee hearing shall rule on any ques-
tion of admissibility or relevance of evi-
dence, motion, procedure, or any other mat-
ter, and may direct any witness to answer
any question tendered in the course of the proceedings.

(3) Whenever the Chair of the subcommittee
may appeal any rulings to the
members present at that proceeding. A ma-

majority vote of the members present at a proceeding on such appeal shall govern the
question of admissibility, and no appeal shall be
lie to the Committee.

(4) Committee counsel may, subject to sub-
committee approval, enter into stipulations
with the respondent and/or the respondent's
counsel as to facts that are not in dispute.

(5) Upon an affirmative vote of a majority
of the subcommittee members, and an
affirmative vote of a majority of the full Com-
mittee, an investigatory subcommittee may expand
the scope of its inquiry.

(f) Upon completion of the inquiry, an in-
vestigatory subcommittee, by a majority
vote of its members, may adopt a Statement
of Alleged Violation and transmit a report
concerning the subcommittee's findings to the House
of Representatives for consideration.

(4) Committee counsel may, subject to sub-
committee approval, enter into stipulations
with the respondent and/or the respondent's
counsel as to facts that are not in dispute.

(5) Upon an affirmative vote of a majority
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the scope of its inquiry.

(f) Upon completion of the inquiry, an in-
vestigatory subcommittee, by a majority
vote of its members, may adopt a Statement
of Alleged Violation and transmit a report
concerning the subcommittee's findings to the House
of Representatives for consideration.

RULE 23. ADJUDICATORY HEARINGS

(a) If a Statement of Alleged Violation is
transmitted to the Chair and Ranking Mi-
nority Member pursuant to Rule 22, and no
waiver pursuant to Rule 26(b) has occurred,
the Committee shall designate two members of the
Committee who did not serve on the investi-
gatory subcommittee to serve on an adju-
dicatory subcommittee. The Chair and Rank-
ing Minority Member shall be the Chair and Ranking Minor-
ity Member of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.

(b) The respondent shall be in writing and shall be
be the Chair and Ranking Minority Member
of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.

(b) The respondent shall be in writing and shall be
be the Chair and Ranking Minority Member
of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.

(b) The respondent shall be in writing and shall be
be the Chair and Ranking Minority Member
of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.

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be the Chair and Ranking Minority Member
of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
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of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
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ticipation of any subcommittee member.

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of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
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ticipation of any subcommittee member.

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of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
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of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
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committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.

(b) The respondent shall be in writing and shall be
be the Chair and Ranking Minority Member
of the adjudicatory subcommittee unless
they served on the investigatory sub-
committee. The respondent shall be notified
of the designation of the adjudicatory sub-
committee and shall have 10 days after such
notice is transmitted to object to the par-
ticipation of any subcommittee member.
(d) The subcommittee may require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers, documents, and other tangible objects as it deems necessary. A subpoena for documents may specify terms of return other than at a meeting or hearing of the subcommittee. A document subpoenaed shall be deposited in the possession of the subcommittee, pursuant to a suit clause, determines that the hearings or any part thereof should be closed.

(1) The adjudicatory subcommittee shall, in writing, notify the respondent that the respondent and respondent’s counsel have the right to inspect, review, copy, or photograph books, papers, documents, photographs, or other tangible objects that committee counsel intends to use as evidence against the respondent. A document subpoenaed shall be given access to such evidence, and shall be made available to the respondent’s counsel to examine and copy. No less than 15 calendar days prior to any such hearing. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no evidence may be introduced or withdrawn from an adjudicatory hearing unless the respondent has been afforded a prior opportunity to review such evidence or has been provided the name of the witness.

(2) After a witness has testified on direct examination at an adjudicatory hearing, the respondent or counsel may apply to the subcommittee for the issuance of a subpoena to a witness to appear at a hearing and to employ counsel. A subpoena to a witness to appear at a hearing shall be served sufficiently in advance of that witness’ scheduled appearance.

(3) Any other testimony, statement, or documentary evidence in the possession of the subcommittee which is material to the respondent’s defense shall, upon request, be made available to the respondent.

(g) No less than 5 days prior to the hearing, the respondent or counsel shall provide the adjudicatory subcommittee with the names of witnesses expected to be called, summaries of their expected testimony, and copies of any documents or other evidence proposed to be introduced.

(h) The respondent or counsel may apply to the subcommittee for the issuance of subpoenas for the appearance of witnesses or the production of evidence. The application shall be granted upon a showing by the respondent that the proposed testimony or evidence is relevant and not otherwise available to the respondent. The application may be denied if not made in writing and the testimony or evidence would be merely cumulative.

(i) No later than two weeks or 5 legislative days after the hearing, the respondent or counsel may make a motion to reconsider, that vote may be reconsidered by a majority vote of the members of the subcommittee. If the Chair makes prehearing rulings upon any question of admissibility or relevancy, such rulings are subject to reconsideration by a majority vote of the members of the subcommittee at the time of the ruling.

(j) The procedures regarding the admissibility of evidence and rulings shall be as follows:

(1) Any relevant evidence shall be admissible unless the evidence is privileged under the precedents of the House of Representatives.

(2) The Chair of the subcommittee or other presiding member at an adjudicatory subcommittee hearing shall rule upon any question of admissibility or relevance of evidence or other matter, and may direct any witness to answer any question under penalty of contempt. A witness, witness counsel, or a member of the subcommittee may appeal any ruling at any time to the members present at that proceeding. A majority vote of the members present at such proceeding on such an appeal shall govern. A majority vote and no appeal shall lie to the Committee.

(3) Whenever a witness is deemed by a Chair or other presiding member to be in contempt of the subcommittee, the matter may be referred to the Committee to determine whether to refer the matter to the House of Representatives for consideration.

(4) Committee counsel may, subject to subcommittee approval, enter into stipulations with the respondent and/or the respondent’s counsel as to facts, rules, the relevant statute, or the relevant rule.

(k) Unless otherwise provided, the order of an adjudicatory hearing shall be as follows:

(1) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee open the hearing and the purpose of the hearing.

(2) The Chair shall then recognize Committee counsel and the respondent’s counsel, in turn, for the purpose of giving opening statements.

(3) Testimony from witnesses and other relevant evidence shall be received in the following order: the respondent, the respondent’s counsel, the Committee counsel.

(l) The procedures regarding the admissibility of evidence and rulings shall be as follows:

(1) The Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee have the authority to conduct the hearing and the purposes of the hearing.

(2) The respondent’s counsel may outline the case in chief.

(3) The respondent’s counsel may then question witnesses, except by written request and vote of a majority of the subcommittee.

(m) Each witness appearing before the subcommittee shall be furnished a printed copy of the complaint, procedures, or any other information relevant to the hearing. Each witness shall be furnished a copy of the Statement of Alleged Violation.

(n) Testimony of all witnesses shall be taken under oath or affirmation. The form of the oath or affirmation shall be: “Do you solemnly swear (or affirm) that the testimony you will give before this subcommittee in the matter now under consideration will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (so help you God)?” The oath or affirmation shall be administered by the Chair or Committee member designated by the Chair or any other appropriate Committee action.

(o) At an adjudicatory hearing, the burden of proof rests on Committee counsel to establish the facts alleged in the Statement of Alleged Violation by clear and convincing evidence. However, Committee counsel need not present any evidence regarding any concept that is admitted by the respondent or any fact stipulated. Committee counsel or respondent’s counsel may move the adjudicatory subcommittee to make a finding that there is no material fact at issue. A finding by the adjudicatory subcommittee finds that there is no material fact at issue, the burden of proof will be deemed satisfied.

(p) As soon as practicable after all testimony and evidence have been presented, the subcommittee shall consider each count contained in the Statement of Alleged Violation and shall determine by a majority vote of its members whether each count has been proved. If a majority of the subcommittee does not vote that a count has been proved, a motion to reconsider that vote may be made only by a member who voted that the count was not proved. A count that is not proven shall be considered as disapproved by the subcommittee.

(q) The findings of the adjudicatory subcommittee shall be reported to the Committee.

RULE 21. SANCTION HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF SANCTIONS OR OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) If no count in a Statement of Alleged Violation is proved, the Committee shall prepare a report to the House of Representatives, based upon the report of the adjudicatory subcommittee.

(b) If an adjudicatory subcommittee completes an adjudicatory hearing pursuant to Rule 21 and reports that any count of the Statement of Alleged Violation has been proved, a hearing before the Committee shall be held to receive oral and/or written submissions by counsel for the Committee and counsel for the respondent as to the sanction the Committee should recommend to the House of Representatives with respect to such violations. Testimony by witnesses and other evidence may be received by oral testimony, interrogatories, and other evidence proffered by the Committee counsel. Depositions, interrogatories, and depositions obtained during the inquiry may be used in lieu of live witnesses and other evidence. Committee counsel need not be heard except by written request and vote of a majority of the subcommittee.

(c) Upon completion of any proceeding held pursuant to clause (b), the Committee shall consider and vote on a motion to recommend to the House of Representatives that the House take disciplinary action. If a majority of the Committee does not vote in favor of the recommendation that the House of Representatives take action, a motion to reconsider that vote may be made by any member who voted against the recommendation. The Committee may also, by majority vote, adopt a motion to issue a Letter of Reprimand or any other appropriate Committee action.

(d) If the Committee has issued a Letter of Reprimand, a report of the Committee is issued to the House of Representatives which constitutes sufficient action, the Committee shall include any such letter as a part of its report to the House of Representatives.

(e) With respect to any proved counts against a Member of the House of Representatives, the Committee shall refer the case to the House of Representatives for consideration.

(f) The House of Representatives may impose such denial or limitation of any right, power, privilege, or immunity of the Member if the Committee so recommends. Committee counsel or respondent’s counsel may move the adjudicatory subcommittee to make a finding that there is no material fact at issue. A finding by the adjudicatory subcommittee finds that there is no material fact at issue, the motion to reconsider that vote may be made only by a member who voted that the count was not proved. A count that is not proven shall be considered as disapproved by the subcommittee.
(6) Any other sanction determined by the Committee to be appropriate.

(f) With respect to any proved counts against an officer or employee of the House of Representatives, the Committee may recommend to the House one or more of the following sanctions:

(1) Dismissal from employment.
(2) Reprimand.
(3) Fine.
(4) Any other sanction determined by the Committee to be appropriate.

(g) With respect to the sanctions that the Committee may recommend, reprimand is appropriate for serious violations, censure is appropriate for less serious violations, and expulsion of a Member or dismissal of an officer or employee is appropriate for the most serious violations. A recommendation of a fine is appropriate in a case in which it is likely that the violation was committed to secure a personal financial benefit; and a recommendation of a denial or limitation of a right, power, privilege, or immunity of a Member is appropriate when the violation bears upon the exercise or holding of such right, power, privilege, or immunity. This clause shall not limit the authority of the Committee to recommend other sanctions.

(h) The subcommittee shall contain an appropriate statement of the evidence supporting the Committee’s findings and a statement of the Committee’s reasons for the recommended sanction.

RULE 25. DISCLOSURE OF EXCULPATORY INFORMATION TO RESPONDENT

If the Committee, or any investigative or adjudicatory subcommittee, at any time receives any document, information, or part thereof, derived in support of a complaint, allegation, or charge, that is available to the Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives, it shall make such information known and available to the Member, officer, or employee as soon as practicable, but in no event later than the transmittal of evidence supporting a proposed Statement of Alleged Violation pursuant to Rule 26(c). If an investigatory subcommittee does not adopt a Statement of Alleged Violation concerning a Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives, it shall make such information known and available to the Member, officer, or employee as soon as practicable.

RULE 26. RIGHTS OF RESPONDENTS AND WITNESSES

(a) A respondent shall be informed of the right to be represented by counsel, to be provided at the respondent’s own expense.

(b) A respondent may seek to waive any procedural rights or steps in the disciplinary process in its entirety or for charges before an investigatory or adjudicatory subcommittee.

(c) No later than 10 calendar days before a scheduled vote by an investigative subcommittee on a Statement of Alleged Violation, an investigator or the chairman of an investigatory subcommittee shall inform the respondent of the right to be represented by counsel. Any such request for representation must be in writing, signed by the respondent, and must state the basis of the need for representation.

(d) The respondent may seek to have an attorney or other representative present at any hearing or settlement discussions.

(e) The respondent shall have the right to contact the subcommittee or any member thereof in a confidential manner.

(f) The respondent shall have the right to make a statement, written or oral, at any stage of the hearing.

RULE 27. FRIVOLOUS FILINGS

If a complaint or information offered as a grounds for an investigation is frivolous by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Committee, the Committee may take such action as it deems appropriate, including any disciplinary action taken by the Committee.

RULE 28. REFEERALS TO FEDERAL OR STATE AUTHORITIES

If the Committee, or any investigative or adjudicatory subcommittee, at any time receives any document, information, or part thereof, derived in support of a complaint, allegation, or charge, that is available to the Member, officer, or employee of the House of Representatives, it shall make such information known and available to the Member, officer, or employee as soon as practicable.

(SENATE ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED)

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled joint resolution of the Senate of the following title:

S.J. Res. 34. Joint Resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to “Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services”.

(ADJOURNMENT)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly, the House adjourned until Monday, April 3, 2017, at noon for morning-hour debate.

(EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.)

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:
H2596

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE
March 30, 2017

940. A letter from the Acting Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting the Annual Report to Congress on the Activities of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation for the 2016 period pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2166(a); Public Law 106-396, Sec. 1 (as amended by Public Law 107-314, Sec. 932(a)(1)); (116 Stat. 2625); to the Committee on Armed Services.

941. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Defense Department Chemical Demilitarization Program Semi-Annual Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2017, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 151(b); (112 Stat. 144); to the Committee on Armed Services.

942. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter authorizing five officers to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 777(b)(3)(B); Public Law 104-106, Sec. 503(a)(1) (as added by Public Law 108-136, Sec. 509(a)(3)); (117 Stat. 1458); to the Committee on Armed Services.

943. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of Brivaracetam Into Schedule V [Docket No.: DEA-435] received March 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 110-297, Sec. 110 (111 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

944. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department’s interim final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of FDA-Approved Products of Oral Solutions Containing Dronabinol [(–)-delta-9-trans-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC)] in Schedule II [Docket No.: DEA-344] received March 29, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 121(a); (108 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

945. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled, “HCDC Should Improve Management of Housing Production Trust Fund to Better Meet Affordable Housing Goals”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 455(d); (87 Stat. 803); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

946. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled, “Internal Control Weaknesses Found in the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 455(d); (87 Stat. 803); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

947. A letter from the Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting the Bureau’s FY 2016 No-Fear Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 2324); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

948. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a notification of designation of acting officer and a notification of discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1521(j); Public Law 101-239, Sec. 277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

949. A letter from the EEO Director, Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration’s FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 2324); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

950. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a report entitled, “Debt Collection Recovery Activities of the Department of Justice for Civil Debts Referred for Collection Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016”, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552, Sec. 552, 452, Sec. 1(16)(A) (as amended by Public Law 99-578, Sec. 1(4)); (100 Stat. 3365); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

951. A letter from the Staff Director, United States Sentencing Commission, transmitting a report on the compliance of the federal district courts with documentation submission requirements of 28 U.S.C. 994(w)(1), pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 994(w)(3); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

952. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting notification that the Department takes no position on enactment of H.R. 654, the Pacific Northwest Correctional Enterprises Act of 2017; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar.

By Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. House Resolution 186. Resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to provide to the House of Representatives all unprocessed, unmodified financial information of President Donald J. Trump; adversely (Rept. 115-73). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself), Mr. ROYCE of California, Ms. ADAMS of Georgia, Ms. BASS of California, Mr. BEAUDRY, Mr. BEIRA, Mr. BLUNT of Missouri, Mr. FROMMER, Mr. FUSSELL, Mr. GARTNER, Mr. GRAMM, Mr. HARDEN, Mr. HENDRICKS, Mr. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. RICARDO ARMENDARIZ-VELASQUEZ, Mr. TONY L. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. YARMUUTH, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. EVANS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. FRONSDAHL, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. REED, Mr. BILIRAKIS of Florida, Mr. MOORE, Mr. MACARTHUR of New York, Mr. MULVEY of Maryland, Mr. COOPER, Mr. ESPAILLAT of New York, Mr. GUTIERREZ of Illinois, Mr. WATSON COLEMAN of New Jersey, Mr. KATKO of New York, Mr. VALADARO of Texas, Mr. PAULSEN of California, Mr. RASKIN of Maryland, Ms. BONNIE, Ms. EVANS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. TSENG of California, Mr. TOHNUNG, Mr. REED, Ms. SYMES of Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT, Mr. DESAULNIER of California, Mr. MAGUIRE of New York, Mr. PALLONE of New Jersey, Mr. HAVINGA, Mr. SINGH of California, Mr. BONNIE, Mr. DAHLIA ROSENBERG, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE of New Jersey, Mr. SPEIER of California, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. LEW, Mr. PAYNE of California, Mr. PELOSI of California, Mr. CHU of California, Mr. MALONE of New York, Mr. LEW of California, Mr. LEW of New York, Mr. NOLAN of North Carolina, Mr. PORTMAN of Ohio, Mr. COOK of California, Mr. BATES of Oklahoma, Mr. BARR of California, Mr. WODJEK of New York, Mr. HUSTRU of California, Mr. SCHIFF of California, Mr. SHERMAN of California, Mr. GILMORE of Virginia, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. SANCHEZ of California, Mr. EVANS of New York, Mr. FREEDMAN of New York, Mr. LEVINE of New York, Mr. COOK of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT of Washington, Mr. WINTER of California, Mr. SCOTT of California, Mr. EVANS of Georgia, Mr. INSELBERG of California, Mr. SCHUMACHER of California, Mr. RICHMOND of California, Mr. ROS-LeHTINEN of Florida, Mr. SCHAKOWSKY of Illinois, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Maryland, Mr. SPEIER of California, Mr. PELOSI of California, Mr. BERNSTEIN of California, Mr. TAYLOR of California, Mr. Mcconnell of New York, Mr. EVANS of New York, Mr. REED of New York, Mr. SCHIFF of New York, Mr. DINGELL of Michigan, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. EVANS of New York, Mr. MILLER of New York, Mr. SCHIFF of California, Mr. SINEMA of Arizona, Mr. ROCHA of California, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. BACON, and Mr. BERGMAN.

By Mr. BISHOP of Utah:

H.R. 1800. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to use Federal land to facilitate scientific research supporting Federal space and defense programs; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. TIDWELL of New York:

H.R. 1801. A bill to delay the effective date of the final rule of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection titled “Prepaid Account Covered by the Electronic Funds Transfer Act (Regulation E) and the Truth In Lending Act (Regulation Z)”; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. ESTY (for herself), Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. LAN-GEVIN of Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mrs. RADWANIEC of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1802. A bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. DUNN:

H.R. 1803. A bill to establish the Constitutional Government Review Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BARR:

H.R. 1804. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a 3-year recovery period for all race horses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.
By Mr. BARR:
H.R. 1805. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the holding period used to determine whether horses are section 1231 assets; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BARR:
H.R. 1806. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the expensing of race horses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. WEXER of Texas, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. BARR, and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana):
H.R. 1807. A bill to exempt from the Lacey Act and the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain activities that fall between areas of jurisdiction of the States of Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CURBelo (for himself and Mr. COURTNEY):
H.R. 1808. A bill to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. FOXE, Mr. ROBITA, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVIS of California, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):
H.R. 1809. A bill to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CURBelo of Florida (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):
H.R. 1810. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TAYLOR (for himself and Mr. CORREA):

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. TONKO, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CRIST, Mr. BURSTON of Florida, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. HABABUSA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KVAHNJE, Ms. CARDEÑAS, Mr. B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. Mckenney, Mrs. Murphy of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PLUMMER, Mr. QUIOLEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SUOZI, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CLAY, Ms. MICHILEL LJUAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. CARTwright):
H.R. 1816. A bill to provide that the Executive Order entitled “Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth” (March 28, 2017), shall have no force or effect, to prohibit the use of Federal funds to enforce the Executive Order, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, the Judiciary, and Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mr. GARTZ, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CULBerson, Mr. KELLY of Arizona, Mr. LYNCH of Massachusetts, Mr. SPEIER of California, Mr. TUCKER of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. COOPER of South Carolina, and Mr. LAUENHELM):
H.R. 1817. A bill to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Authorization Act of 1990 to authorize the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to enter into contracts, grants, and other agreements with States, political subdivisions of States, and other public or private entities, for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Clean Air Act and the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 and 1992, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KINZINGER (for himself and Mr. LOEB):
H.R. 1814. A bill to encourage spectrum licensees to make unused spectrum available for use by rural and smaller carriers in order to expand wireless coverage; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FREEDMAN (for himself, Mr. BONAMICI, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. BRYER, Mr. MOORE, Mr. CORREA, Mr. EVANS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. DAVIES, Mr. HERRERA, Mr. GALLEGOS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. VELÁzQUEz, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. McGovern, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. BARRAGAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. PELMUTTER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. SCHAkowski, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. BUXBAUM):
H.R. 1815. A bill to amend section 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to limit immigration enforcement actions against domiciliary and non-domiciliary immigration officers at sensitive locations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mr. HUNTER):
H.R. 1818. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into a contract for the procurement of heavy icebreakers; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):
H.R. 1820. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to transfer certain funds that would otherwise be made available from the General Fund Transfer Act to impose a fee for remittances to certain foreign countries, for the purpose of supporting the efforts of the Treasury Department to protect American citizens and residents against fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 1822. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the taxation and regulation of marijuana products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 1824. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to reduce the gap between Federal and State marijuana policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, in the case of consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York (for himself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KIND, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. HARPER, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, and Mr. MEHANEY):
H.R. 1825. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to redistribute Federal funds that would otherwise be made available from the Affordable Care Act to those States electing to provide those Medicaid benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. LORIondo, Mr. GARTZ, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):
H.R. 1826. A bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARTwright (for himself, Mr. GRIJALBA, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. CARDENAS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. DELBRÜne, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BRYER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. MATRIU, Mr. MccOLLM, Mr. MccOvARN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NOR顿, Mr. POCAN, Mr. REED, Mr. TRAVERN, Mr. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. LOWENTHAL):
H.R. 1830. A bill to protect taxpayers from liability associated with the reclamation of surface coal mining operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. POLIS, Mr. AMASH, Ms. TITUS, and Ms. CULBerson):
H.R. 1832. A bill to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers to provide recommendations and opinions to veterans regarding participation in State marijuana programs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BARTON (for himself and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):
H.R. 1831. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the standard charitable mileage rate to be paid to elderly, disabled, frail, and at risk individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:
H.R. 1833. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to limit the liability of health care professionals who volunteer to provide health care services in response to a disaster; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 1835. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the taxation and regulation of marijuana products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.
H.R. 1827. A bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide a partial exemption to veterans from the eligibility requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas (for herself and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 1828. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a national program for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself and Mr. RUSSELL):

H.R. 1829. A bill to temporarily authorize recently retired members of the armed forces to be appointed to certain civil service positions, require the Secretary of Defense to issue certain notifications, and for other purposes; to be considered by the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 1831. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit hospitals in all Urban States to be considered Medicare dependent hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. MENKS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. NADLER, Ms. LEE, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. CASAR of Florida, Mr. WATSON of Georgia, and Mr. TSONGAS):

H.R. 1832. A bill to authorize the appropriation of funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Ms. VRÁLÁZQUEZ, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. CARSON of Georgia, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. ADAMS):

H.R. 1833. A bill to encourage initiatives for financial products and services that are appropriate and accessible for millions of American small businesses that do not have access to the financial mainstream; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. MICHAEL RODGERS (for herself and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama):

H.R. 1834. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a National Oncology Medical Home Demonstration Project under the Medicare program for the purpose of changing the Medicare payment for cancer treatment in order to enhance the quality of care and to improve cost efficiency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:

H.R. 1835. A bill to establish a United States voluntary and assessed contributions to the United Nations if the United Nations imposes any tax or fee on any United States person or organization to promote proposals for such a tax or fee; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. NADLER (for himself, Mrs. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ISA, Mr. DEUTCH, and Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 1836. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to provide fair treatment of radio stations and artists for the use of sound recordings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. NORCROSS (for himself and Mr. McKINLEY):

H.R. 1837. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a pilot competitive grant program for the development of a skilled energy workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NUNES (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. STEWART, Mr. SCHMARENDI, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. TUPPON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BUCHSHON, Mr. HENNSARLING, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. LOBRSACK, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. FARRAHAN, and Mr. SAM JOHNSTON of Texas):

H.R. 1838. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize payments for ambulatory surgical centers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. O’ROURKE:

H.R. 1839. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to clarify the timing of deposits into the Federal Employees Retirement System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 1841. A bill to provide for the regulation of marijuana products, and for other purposes; to the Committee in the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 1842. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to include State crimes of violation as grounds for an enhanced penalty when sex offenders fail to register or report certain information as required by Federal law, to include prior military offenses for such purposes, to waive the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. REED, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. MERHAN, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. HARRIS):

H.R. 1843. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for the payment of Revenue Service from carrying out seizures relating to a structuring transaction unless the property to be seized derived from an illegal source or the funds were structured for the purpose of concealing the violation of another criminal law or regulation, to require notice and a post-seizure hearing for such seizures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RUIZ (for himself and Ms. STEFANIC):
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

Pennsylvania, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Emmer, Mr. Engel, Mr. Espaillat, Ms. Esty, Mr. Faso, Mr. Parenteau, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Frankel of Florida, Mr. Francis of Arizona, Ms. Garbarino, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Gallego, Mr. Garramendi, Mr. Gonzalez of Texas, Mr. Gottlieb, Mr. Graves of New York, Mr. Himes, Mr. Huffman, Ms. Jackson Lee, Mr. Jeffries, Mr. Johnson of Ohio, Ms. Eshoo, Mr. Johnson of Texas, Mr. Jordan of North Carolina, Mr. Joyce of Ohio, Ms. Kapua, Mr. K挹ring, Mr. Kelly of Pennsylvania, Ms. Kelly of Illinois, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Khanna, Mr. Khuree, Mr. Kildeer, Mr. Kilmier, Mr. King of New York, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, Ms. Kuster of New Hampshire, Mr. Lance, Mr. Langevin, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. Lawson of Florida, Ms. Lee, Mr. Levin, Mr. Lewis of Georgia, Mr. Ted Lieu of California, Mr. Lipinski, Mr. Loebsack, Mr. Lowenthal, Mrs. Lowey, Ms. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, Mr. Lynch, Mr. MacAulay, Mr. Mays of Pennsylvania, Mr. McEachin, Mr. McGovern, Mr. McHenry, Mr. McNerney, Ms. Mcsally, Mr. Meeks, Ms. Meng, Ms. Moore, Mr. Moulton, Ms. Napolitano, Ms. Napolitano, Mr. Natorial, Mr. Nolan, Mr. Norcross, Ms. Norton, Mr. O’Halleran, Mr. O’Rourke, Mr. Pallone, Mr. Danny K. Davis, Mr. Davis of Illinois, Mr. Payne, Mr. Perlmutter, Mr. Perry, Mr. Peters, Ms. Pingree, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Polis, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Ms. McCollum, Mr. Quigley, Mr. Raskin, Miss Rice of New York, Mr. Panetta, Ms. Rosen, Mr. Roskam, Mr. Ross, Mr. Rouda-Allard, Mr. Royce of California, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Ruppersberger, Mr. Rush, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, Mr. Sahln, Ms. Sanchez, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. N. shaking, Mr. Schow, Mr. Schriver, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Schweikert, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Mr. Seharian, Mr. Sherman, Ms. Sinema, Mr. Sires, Mr. Smith of West Virginia, Mr. Smith of Wisconsin, Mr. Smith of Nevada, Mr. Smith of Virginia, Mr. Stivers, Mr. Swalwell of California, Mr. Takano, Ms. Tenney, Mr. Thompson of Pennsylvania, Mr. Thompson of California, Ms. Titus, Mr. Tonko, Mrs. Torres, Ms. Tson-Gee, Mr. Turner, Mr. Veasey, Mr. Vela, Ms. Velázquez, Mr. Walker, Mr. Waltz, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Welch, Mr. Williams, Ms. Wilson of Massachusetts, Mr. Yarmuth, Mr. Yoder, Mr. Young of Iowa, Mr. Young of Alaska, and Mr. Zeldin:

H.R. 1847. A bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under such Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act, improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. Wilson of South Carolina:

H. Res. 234. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of effective education in civics and government in elementary and secondary schools throughout the Nation; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. Thompson of Mississippi:

H. Res. 235. A resolution directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the Department of Homeland Security’s research, integration, and analysis activities relating to Russian Government interference in the elections for Federal office held in 2016; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

H. Res. 236. A resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Japan partnership and supporting the pursuit of closer trade ties between the United States and Japan; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII.

15. The Speaker presented a memorial of the Legislative Assembly of the State of North Dakota, relative to House Concurrent Resolution No. 3009, urging Congress to amend the 2014 farm bill to allow counties to use raw yield data from insurance companies to supplement the national agriculture statistics survey to calculate payments under the Agriculture Risk Coverage program when an insufficient number of county yields are available at a reasonably accurate rate; and to referred to the Committee on Agriculture.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representa-

tives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mrs. Carolyn B. Maloney of New York:

H.R. 16. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. Bishop of Utah:

H.R. 1800. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution provides Congress with the authority and responsibility to "provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States," and "to promote progress of Science." This measure will help ensure that public lands already in use for important scientific and defense-based research will remain available for public, academic, and commercial use, to support those important public purposes.

By Mr. Tipton:

H.R. 1812. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clauses 18 and 18 of section 1 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. Dunn:

H.R. 1803. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States of America.

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1804. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1805. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1806. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. Goehmert:

H.R. 1807. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, providing the Congress the authority to regulate Commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Ms. Esty.

H.R. 1822. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1835. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States of America.

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1836. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1838. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. Barr:

H.R. 1839. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. Lewis of Minnesota:
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Mr. CURBelo of Florida:
H.R. 1810.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Mr. TAYLOR:
H.R. 1811.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:
H.R. 1816.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. DeFAZIO:
H.R. 1817.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:
H.R. 1819.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. DENHAM:
H.R. 1818.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. MACARTHUR:
H.R. 1817.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:
H.R. 1822.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H.R. 1822.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. MCMAHON of New York:
H.R. 1822.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. TAYLOR:
H.R. 1823.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. BARTON:
H.R. 1821.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:
H.R. 1822.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 1821.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. COLLINS of New York:
H.R. 1825.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. CONNOLLY:
H.R. 1826.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. DELANEY:
H.R. 1827.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:
H.R. 1826.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. KILMER:
H.R. 1829.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H.R. 1832.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. MOONEY of West Virginia:
H.R. 1834.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. McCAIN of Arizona:
H.R. 1831.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:
H.R. 1830.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. KINZINGER:
H.R. 1831.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. JENKINS of Kansas:
H.R. 1830.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:
H.R. 1835.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. CONNOLLY:
H.R. 1836.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. DELANEY:
H.R. 1837.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:
H.R. 1836.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. KILMER:
H.R. 1839.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:
H.R. 1832.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mrs. MOONEY of West Virginia:
H.R. 1833.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. McCAIN of Arizona:
H.R. 1834.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:
H.R. 1835.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. CONNOLLY:
H.R. 1836.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. DELANEY:
H.R. 1837.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:
H.R. 1836.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

By Mr. KILMER:
H.R. 1839.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. YOHOS.

H.R. 1847.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution which reads: "The Congress shall have Power To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes."

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 51: Ms. Sewell of Alabama.

H.R. 60: Mr. Crawford, Mr. Trotts, Ms. Barragan, Mr. Abraham, and Mr. Veila.

H.R. 112: Mr. Dutton.

H.R. 179: Mr. Norcross.

H.R. 247: Mr. Rouzer and Mr. Bacon.

H.R. 377: Mr. Abraham, Mr. Perry, Mr. Biat, Mr. Jody R. Hice of Georgia, Mr. Gosar, and Mr. Harris.

H.R. 400: Mr. McCaul.

H.R. 490: Mr. Wagner.

H.R. 519: Mr. Newhouse.

H.R. 545: Mr. Perry, Mr. Griffith, and Mr. Mast.

H.R. 548: Mr. McKinley.

H.R. 662: Mr. Meek.

H.R. 692: Mrs. Hartlerode.

H.R. 747: Ms. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico and Mr. Nunes.


H.R. 807: Mr. Soto, Mr. Poe of Texas, and Mr. Sam Johnson of Texas.

H.R. 816: Mr. Loebsack.

H.R. 849: Mr. Pittenger, Mr. LaMalfa, Mr. Hultgren, Ms. Herrera Beutler, Mr. Rodney Davis of Illinois, Mr. Poe of Texas, Ms. Barragan, and Mr. Smith of Missouri.

H.R. 873: Mr. Gohmert.

H.R. 909: Mr. Vargas.

H.R. 959: Mr. Capuano and Ms. Royal-Allard.

H.R. 966: Mr. Young of Alaska.

H.R. 1017: Mr. Raskin.

H.R. 1022: Mr. Huffman.

H.R. 1148: Mr. Schrader and Mr. Cardenas.

H.R. 1150: Mr. Cook.

H.R. 1158: Mr. Pocan and Mr. Poliquin.

H.R. 1232: Mr. Grijalva.

H.R. 1235: Ms. Kuster of New Hampshire, Ms. Esty, and Mr. Cicilline.

H.R. 1245: Mr. Raskin.

H.R. 1298: Ms. DeLauro, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mrs. Noem, Mr. Meek, Mr. Young of Iowa, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Rensing-Brenner, and Mr. DeFazio.

H.R. 1314: Mr. Bair.

H.R. 1315: Mr. Smith of Texas.

H.R. 1334: Mr. Duncan of Tennessee.

H.R. 1337: Mr. Hultgren.

H.R. 1358: Mr. Brendan F. Boyle of Pennsylvania and Ms. Shea-Porter.

H.R. 1454: Mr. Duffy.

H.R. 1498: Ms. DelBene and Mr. Gutiérrez.


H.R. 1516: Mr. Gene Green of Texas.

H.R. 1525: Mr. Newhouse.

H.R. 1542: Mr. Hice, Mr. Olson, Mr. Tipton, and Mr. Cole.

H.R. 1543: Ms. Herrera Beutler and Ms. Slaughter.

H.R. 1551: Mr. Kelly of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1552: Mr. Messer, Mr. Cole, Mr. Francis Rooney of Florida, and Mrs. Wagner.

H.R. 1588: Mr. Jones.

H.R. 1612: Mr. Deutch, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Larson of Connecticut.

H.R. 1614: Mr. Cardenas and Ms. Wasserman Schultz.

H.R. 1628: Mr. Soto, Mr. Kristoff of Tennessee, and Mr. Abraham.

H.R. 1629: Ms. Lee.

H.R. 1635: Mr. Rokita and Mr. Hudson.

H.R. 1636: Mr. Brooks of Alabama and Mr. Soto.

H.R. 1644: Mr. Keating, Mr. Sires, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Chabot, and Mr. Poe of Texas.

H.R. 1659: Mr. Graves of Louisiana.

H.R. 1667: Mr. Schneider.

H.R. 1671: Mr. Rodgers of Alabama.

H.R. 1698: Mr. Marshall, Mr. McKinley, Mr. Ted Liu of California, Ms. Teng, Mr. Duffy, Mr. Bost, Mr. Levin, Mr. Harris, Mr. Bishop of Utah, Mr. Graves of Missouri, Mr. Soto, Mr. Sarmiento, Ms. Herrera Beutler, Ms. Castro of Florida, Mr. Gohmert, Mrs. Love, Mr. Thomas J. Rooney of Florida, Mr. Brooks of Alabama, Mr. Culbeto of Florida, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Reischert, Mr. Quigley, Mr. Broun of Michigan, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Bergman, Mr. Trott, Mr. Ross, and Mrs. Bratton.

H.R. 1729: Mr. Gosar, Ms. Norton, and Mr. Raskin.

H.R. 1731: Mr. Shuster.

H.R. 1762: Mr. McGovern and Mr. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York.

H.R. 1796: Mr. Loebback.

H.R. 1796: Mr. Goodlatte and Mr. Collins of Georgia.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. Franks of Arizona.

H. Con. Res. 8: Mr. Fortenberry.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. Hultgren, Mr. DeFazio, Mr. Meek, and Mr. Rodney Davis of Illinois.

H. Con. Res. 13: Ms. Cheney, Mr. Budd, and Mr. Austin Scott of Georgia.

H. Res. 92: Mr. Sires and Mr. Suozzi.

H. Res. 184: Mr. Neal, Mr. Larson of Connecticut, Mr. Takano, and Ms. Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas.

H. Res. 199: Mr. Poe of Texas and Mrs. McMorris Rodgers.

H. Res. 202: Mr. Poe of Texas and Ms. Jackson Lee.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, 32. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Miami Beach, Florida, relative to Resolution No. 2017-20758, strongly opposing the letter issued by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education on February 22, 2017 which withdrew and rescinded prior policy guidance by the Obama Administration that required schools to allow transgender students access to sex-segregated facilities and activities based on their gender identity; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.
The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.
Our Father in Heaven, we sing of Your steadfast love and proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations. Make us one Nation, truly wise, with righteousness exalting us in due season.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to walk in the light of Your countenance. Abide with them so that Your wisdom will influence each decision they make as You restrain them from speaking in haste. Keep them from evil so that they will not be brought to grief, enabling them to avoid the pitfalls that lead to ruin. May they put country before self, people before politics, and patriotism before partisanship. Empower them to glorify You in all they say and do.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:
I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 30, 2017.

To the Senate:
Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

OREN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. HELLER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HONORING OFFICER NICK RODMAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to begin this morning by paying tribute to a fallen hero. Yesterday, Officer Nick Rodman of the Louisville Metro Police Department passed away after a crash in west Louisville on Tuesday night.

Officer Rodman had served in the department for 3 years, where he followed in a strong family tradition of law enforcement. In his life, he showed compassion and dedication, which are among the best virtues of public service.

According to LMPD Chief Steve Conrad, Officer Rodman is the second officer in the department’s history to be killed in the line of duty.

Officer Rodman’s tragic death reminds us of the tremendous debt of gratitude we owe to all of the courageous men and women like him who daily put themselves into harm’s way to defend our communities. They deserve our utmost respect.

This morning, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest sympathy to Officer Rodman’s family, friends, and fellow officers. They will all be in our prayers.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, the Senate will soon act to prevent workers from being forced into risky government-run savings plans. Then we will turn our attention to an additional opportunity to protect the American people from Executive overreach with another resolution under the Congressional Review Act.

On its way out the door, the Obama administration issued a regulation that prohibited States from allocating certain health preventative-care funds in a way that best serves local communities. It substituted Washington’s judgment for the needs of real people, controlling Americans’ access to healthcare services while hurting the community health centers that so many Americans—especially women—depend upon. This regulation is an unnecessary restriction on States that know their residents’ own needs a lot better than the Federal Government.

Fortunately, by sending the CRA resolution before us to the President’s desk, we can once again return power back to the people, and we will do so without decreasing funding for women’s healthcare by a single penny.

I would like to recognize my colleague, Senator JONI ERNST, who introduced the Senate companion to the House resolution we will vote on, for her leadership on this important issue. I look forward to supporting it later today.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, many Members came to the floor yesterday to debate the Gorsuch nomination. We will have all of next week to continue the debate. I encourage my colleagues to continue discussing this important nomination.

Two months ago today, before Neil Gorsuch had even been nominated, I spoke on the Senate floor about the rhetoric we could expect to hear from the other side after the President’s nominee was announced.

*This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor. 

S2119
I predicted then that we would see many on the left ['try to] paint whomever is actually nominated in apocalyptic terms." It "doesn't matter who this Republican President nominates," I said then. It "doesn't matter who any Republican President nominates." I said, "I'm the president of the Federalist Society. That includes Justices who were appointed by Republican Presidents. That includes Justices who were appointed by Democrat Presidents. We have a large clientele. We have a large group. We are a large organization. We are a large group of people. It is my role to support him. By the way, all current members of the Senate are members of the Federalist Society, Democrats should not oppose anyone—anyone the President nominated. The Democratic leader even joined in, saying he would oppose anyone from the President's list of candidates and would "fight it tooth-and-nail, as long as we have to" in order to keep Justice Scalia's seat open, even for the entirety of the President.

Remember, that was before Judge Gorsuch was even selected, before we knew his credentials, before we had heard from the current and former colleagues of his, before we had examined his judicial record, and well before his hearing before the Judiciary Committee.

Our friends across the aisle made it clear then that their opposition to this nominee would have nothing to do with the nominee himself. In fact, I said we could expect to hear a number of convoluted excuses as to why they wouldn't support the President's yet-to-be-named nominee—excuses that would amount to little more than their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the election.

Sure enough, that is just what we have seen over the past few weeks. They are opposing this well-qualified nominee despite his impressive credentials, bipartisan support, and excellent testimony before the committee.

Judge Neil Gorsuch is such an outstanding candidate, so noncontroversial, so well-esteemed by people across the political spectrum that Democrats have been forced to talk about pretty much anything: President Trump, think tanks, you name it—anything but the nominee himself.

Yesterday's comments by the Democratic leader are a good example. He gave a lengthy speech about why he wouldn't support Judge Gorsuch, but when you boil it down, his remarks had little to do with Judge Gorsuch at all. Essentially, he concluded that because Judge Gorsuch has earned the praise of legal groups like the Federalist Society, Democrats should not support him. By the way, all current sitting Justices have participated in every one of those organizations of whom I mean that again: All current sitting Supreme Court Justices have participated in Federalist Society activities. That includes Justices who were nominated by Democratic Presidents, including President Clinton and President Obama.

So, yes, Judge Gorsuch has received high praise from a number of conserv-
their court. In the past, when a President's nominee didn’t get enough support for confirmation for whatever reason, the President just picked another nominee. If it comes to that, that is what this President should do. If Judge Gorsuch fails to garner 60 votes, the answer isn’t to irrevocably change the rules of the Senate, the answer is to change the nominee. It is not Gorsuch or bust.

The Republicans are playing a game of unnecessary and dangerous brinksmanship. If it comes to a rules change—and I sincerely hope that it does not for the sake of the grand traditions of this body, for the sake of the advice and consent clause of the Constitution, but if it does—it will be squarely on the shoulders of the Republican Party and the Republican leader—a Republican Party that broke 230 years of precedent when it refused to even consider President Obama’s nominee, Merrick Garland, who almost a year left in Obama’s Presidency. There was no vote—not even a hearing—and Republicans accuse Democrats of the first partisan filibuster of a Supreme Court nominee? What Republicans did to Merrick Garland they also did to a filibuster that they didn’t even grant him the basic courtesy of a filibuster. Merrick Garland actually was a consensus nominee with Republican buy-in for the Supreme Court.

Second, President Trump totally dispatched with the notion of “advice and consent” by pledging, before he was even elected, to nominate a Supreme Court Justice off of a preapproved list of conservative judges put together by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. Contrast that with Bill Clinton, who sought and with the advice of the Republican Judiciary Chairman, Orrin Hatch, in nominating Justices Ginsburg and Breyer. He didn’t pick his first choice, Bruce Babbitt, because Orrin Hatch said that would be a bad idea and could not bring the kind of unity we needed. How about Democratic President Obama, who took, again, the advice of Orrin Hatch when he picked Merrick Garland. There was bipartisan consultation. That is why the process worked. There is none now. The Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society are not simply mainstream organizations, as everyone knows, but they are organizations on the hard-right of the Republican side who often threaten Republicans if they don’t vote the right way—the far-right way. So we are not talking about “advice and consent.” We are talking about something that was done without any consultation and a political move by a President to shore up his base with the hard rightwing.

What President Trump did was worse than simply ignoring article II of the Constitution. President Trump actively sought the advice and consent of rightwing special interest groups instead of the Senate. That is another Supreme Court-related precedent that the Republicans discard. Because President Trump made that choice, now Republicans are saying they have no choice but to change the rules? It is illogical and self-serving. For all the handwringing of my friends on the other side of the aisle, they cannot imagine Democrats voting against Judge Gorsuch. I would like to remind them that only three of the current Senators on the Republican side voted for either of President Obama’s confirmed nominees. Only three of the current Senators on the Republican side voted for either one of President Obama’s confirmed nominees. Most voted for neither, and every single one of them lined up to conduct an “audacious” partisan blockade of Merrick Garland.

It is true the norms and precedents and traditions have been eroded by both sides. We changed the rules for lower court nominees in 2013 after years of unprecedented obstruction by Republicans on routine circuit and district court judges. Still, I am on the record as regretting that decision. But this is in an order of magnitude much greater than that. This is the Supreme Court. This is the Court that is the final arbiter of U.S. law and the Constitution. We Democrats have serious principled concerns about Judge Gorsuch, his record, his long history of ties to ultraconservative interests, and his almost instinctive tendency to side with special power interests over average citizens. We have principled concerns about how Judge Gorsuch was groomed by hard-right conservative billionaires, like Mr. Phillip Anschutz. We have principled concerns about how Judge Gorsuch was selected off a preapproved list of conservative judges made by organizations who spent three decades campaigning to move our judiciary far to the right.

Judge Gorsuch had a chance to answer these concerns in his hearings. We were all waiting and hoping, but our questions were met with practiced evasions. He couldn’t even answer whether Brown v. Board was decided correctly. Again, the Republicans are creating a false choice between nuclear or the nuclear option—in an attempt to avoid the blame if they change the rules, and it just doesn’t wash. The Republicans control this body. They are in the driver’s seat, and they are the only reason that we are here today. They held this seat open for over 1 year so that this President could install someone handpicked by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society—a lifetime appointment for this President, whose campaign is under investigation by the FBI for potential ties to Russia. I just repeat to my Republican colleagues: You don’t need to change the rules if Judge Gorsuch doesn’t get 60 votes. You are not required to do so. You just need to change the nominee and do some bipartisan consultation as Presidents of both parties have done in the past.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Now on the ACA, Mr. President. The HHS Secretary appeared before the House appropriators yesterday and testified that, under his direction, the Department of Health and Human Services may try to undermine our Nation’s healthcare system in several ways. Specifically, he hinted that he might make it easier for insurers to offer coverage without certain essential benefits and refused to say if he would continue certain programs that stabilize our healthcare markets. That is in line with steps this administration has already taken to undermine the healthcare law, such as when they discontinued the public advertising campaigns that encouraged people to sign up for insurance. All of these things harm our Nation’s healthcare system, and they should be ceased immediately.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

DISAPPROVING A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 67, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 67) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, all time is expired.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. RUBIO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.
The legislative clerk called the roll. Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote? The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Roll Call Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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NAYS—49

| Baldwin       | Gillibrand| Nelson|
| Benning      | Harris   | Peters |
| Blumenthal   | Hassan   | Reed   |
| Booker       | Heitkamp | Schatz |
| Brown        | Heitkamp| Schum  |
| Cantwell     | Kaine   | Shabazz|
| Cardin       | Kaine    | Shinse |
| Casey        | Klobuchar| Stabenow|
| Coons        | Leahy   | Stabenow|
| Curker       | Manchin | Stabenow|
| Cortez Masto | Markley | Stabenow|
| Donnelly     | McCaskill| Stabenow|
| Duckworth    | Menendez| Stabenow|
| Durbin       | Morley  | Stabenow|
| Feinstein    | Murphy  | Stabenow|
| Franken      | Murray  | Stabenow|

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 67) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 43. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 43, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title V of the United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting sub-recipients.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

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NAYS—50

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| Curker      | Manchin | Stabenow|
| Cortez Masto| Markley | Stabenow|
| Donnelly    | McCaskill| Stabenow|
| Duckworth   | Menendez| Stabenow|
| Durbin      | Morley  | Stabenow|
| Feinstein   | Murphy  | Stabenow|
| Franken     | Murray  | Stabenow|

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the motion to proceed is agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I yield back all Republican time in relation to H.J. Res. 43.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The time is yielded back.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this vote had to be held open in order to allow time for Vice President PENCE to come down and break a tie.

My colleagues and I came to the floor weeks ago to make clear that this harmful legislation should not come to the floor. Republicans didn’t listen to us, and they didn’t listen to women across the country who made it clear that restricting women’s access to the full range of reproductive care is unacceptable. We are not going to give up. We are going to keep holding them accountable, and we are going to keep making sure that women’s voices be heard.

I want to thank all of my colleagues who have already come and will continue to come to the floor today to stand against this shameful, dangerous resolution.

The march that was held after President Trump was inaugurated was one of the most inspiring events I have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. Millions of people—men and women—marched in Seattle and in my home State, here in Washington, DC, and in cities and towns in between and all across the world. They carried signs, they chanted, and they made it absolutely clear that when it comes to women’s rights and healthcare, people across the country do not want to go back

Republicans have been threatening for years now to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, but it took just a few weeks for families nationwide to stand up and fight back and shut down a deeply harmful plan that would have taken healthcare away from tens of millions of people, spiked our premiums, targeted seniors for higher costs, and cut off access to critical services at Planned Parenthood.

I was so inspired by the countless people who bravely shared their personal stories about their health and their loved ones in order to make clear just how damaging—and even deadly—TrumpCare would have been. I am proud to say that women led the way and made it known, in no uncertain terms, that Republicans would be held fully accountable for the disastrous TrumpCare legislation.

And try as they might, last week, Republicans couldn’t ignore them. This was an absolute, undeniable victory for women and families in this country.

But while TrumpCare was dealt a significant blow last week, it is clear the terrible ideas that underpin it live on. Today, in this Republican Congress. It is unprecedented that we are here, with the Vice President breaking a tie vote on an attack on women’s health across this country.

We are here today, once again, because President Trump and Republicans in Congress are not getting the message. Today, continuing on their extreme, anti-women agenda, Senate Republicans are rushing now to roll back a rule that protects family planning providers from being discriminated against and denied Federal funding.

Let me explain a little bit about what family planning providers mean to our communities. Those providers that are part of the title X program—which has, by the way, bipartisan history—deliver critical healthcare services nationwide, and they are especially needed in our rural and our frontier areas.

In 2015 alone, title X provided basic primary and preventive healthcare services—services like Pap tests and breast exams and birth control and HIV testing—to more than 4 million low-income women and men at nearly 4,000 health centers. In my home State of Washington, tens of thousands of patients are able to receive care at these centers each year, and they often have nowhere else to turn to go get their healthcare. In fact, 90 percent of women who receive care at health centers funded by title X consider it to be their only source of healthcare.
So taking resources away from these providers, which this resolution would do, would be cruel, and it would have the greatest impact on women and families who need it the most. It would undo a valuable effort by the Obama administration to ensure that these providers are evaluated for Federal funding based on their ability to provide the services in question, not on ideology. In doing so, this resolution would make it even easier for States led by extreme politicians to deny funding to providers Federal dollars, not because of the quality of care that they get or provide or their value to the communities they serve, but based on whether the politicians in charge—the politicians in charge-agree that women should be able to exercise their constitutionally protected right to reproductive healthcare.

This is wrong. It is dangerous, and we cannot let this stand.

If Republicans think that millions of people up and down the country who have suddenly stopped paying attention, they are sorely mistaken. And if they think that Senate Democrats are not going to fight back, they have another thing coming. They can expect every single Democrat in the Senate that the hope some Republicans who are concerned about losing healthcare providers in their States—to fight back against this resolution with everything they have.

This vote won by a tie vote, and the Vice President was the tie vote. It will take one Republican this afternoon on the final vote to say yes for the women in their State and States’ rights to say no. That is all we are asking for the women of this country.

While I have the floor, I want to say we should all be aware there is more headed our way. In a matter of weeks, we all know that government funding is going to run out. Everybody understands that I know that since they didn’t get their way last week and they are pushing this resolution so hard today to the point where they bring the Vice President to break a tie, it is a safe bet that extreme Republicans are going to try to attach riders that try to take away Planned Parenthood funding in the spending bill for the rest of this year.

So I want to be very clear from the outset: That is a complete nonstarter. We have been here before. We have shown what we can do in the Senate—and we are going to fight these efforts every step of the way.

So I urge people across the country to let their Senators know that this is not acceptable. Stand up for women and families and for their rights to take care of their own reproductive healthcare at the facility that provides for them in their own communities.

I urge my colleagues: Don’t make the same mistake again. End the damaging political attacks on women, and stand with millions of women and men and families. They need us.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. SULLIVAN. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 43) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today in a near empty Chamber. Indeed, there is no Republican colleague here today. Our Republican colleagues have yielded back all their time, and the question is whether they have yielded back all their time is that they apparently have no interest in appearing here and talking about a resolution of disapproval of a rule that is vital to ensuring that women have access to the family planning provider of their choice. It is really that simple.

Defunding Planned Parenthood is what we have done on this side. Defunding Planned Parenthood has been the interest on the other side of the aisle.

They have also taken an inordinate interest in reinstating gender ratings in health insurance and are now damaging title X networks through this resolution. They have demonstrated an unmitigated desire to cut women’s access to healthcare in order, apparently, to win political points. But their actions today show that the politics of this issue and, most importantly, the people of America are not on their side.

Title X is a critical program delivering important family planning and preventive healthcare services in underserved areas of our great Nation. In 2015 alone, title X programs provided basic primary and preventive healthcare services. We are talking about Pap tests, breast exams, birth control, and health services that more than 4 million low-income women and men at nearly 4,000 health centers across the country. For 40 percent of women, their visit to a family planning health center is the only healthcare they receive annually. Think of that number for a moment. Forty percent of those women have no access elsewhere except at these healthcare centers.

By overriding this regulation, Republicans will allow States and title X grantees to pick and choose who provides contraceptive criteria that have nothing to do with the quality of services patients will receive. It is no wonder that none of them is here to talk about it. Now, if they were here—and they have said so in public—they might argue that they support this resolution because they oppose abortion. So let me be clear. This regulation is about access to family planning services, not about access to abortion.

I know many of my colleagues disagree with me that abortion should be safe and legal. They have shown that disagreement by their repeated attempts to undermine Roe v. Wade and make it harder for women to access constitutionally protected healthcare.

While they may disagree, it is still the law of the land. In any event, this regulation is not about access to abortion. This regulation is about ensuring that States cannot discriminate against qualified providers that are an essential part of a safety net that serves women who have no place else to go. Those providers are willing to provide necessary, culturally sensitive care that otherwise would simply be without access to that care.

Title X funding does not go to abortion services. It goes to provide much needed family planning services. There is no doubt that this program does that I believe my colleagues would agree is absolutely vital to the health of women. I know we agree on wanting to reduce teen and unintended pregnancies. Without the contraceptive care provided by title X sites, the teen pregnancy rate would be 30 percent higher and the unintended pregnancy rate would have been 33 percent higher. We should agree on that point.

We should also agree on wanting to find ways to save money in the healthcare system. In 2010, health services provided at title X centers resulted in net savings of $7 billion in Federal and State funds. Those savings are indicative of the fact that every dollar invested in publicly funded family planning saves taxpayers $7. That is a great deal for the taxpayers of our Nation. That is a humane and profoundly significant deal for the women whose lives are bettered. We should all agree that preventing disease and saving health and lives is not only about dollars and cents. It is about the future of our Nation.

Title X began as a bipartisan program to support family planning services 40 years ago. Title X was less divisive and when this Chamber was less divided. I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of ensuring these services. States cannot restrict an already overburdened network of safety net providers.

Family planning services are provided through State, county, and local health departments, as well as hospitals, family planning councils, Planned Parenthood, and federally qualified health centers. Providers that focus on reproductive health comprise 72 percent of all title X-supported sites, and they are critical to delivering high-quality family planning services.
They are particularly able to offer the full range of contraceptive methods and to help women start and effectively use the methods that will work best for them individually.

There is simply no excess capacity in that safety net system now. For Republicans to allow States to remove providers from the networks based on arbitrary criteria is simply unwise and, in fact, unconscionable. The foundation of the program’s success is the long-standing intent that its provider network be designed by the communities it serves to help patients have access to trusted, highly qualified, family planning providers.

Just a few years ago, I met with some providers and volunteers from Planned Parenthood of North Hartford. I was deeply impressed with their dedication, their skill, and their humanity. In a high-need, low-income community like Hartford, the need is acute. The care is limited. Young men and women who come to this clinic have chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, depression, high blood pressure, and headaches. Left untreated, they have to be hospitalized in emergency rooms at much higher costs.

The clinicians recognized that there was an additional need for health services and for other providers in the community to meet them, but they were currently unable to do so. So they decided to initiate full-scope primary care services in Hartford, in addition to the comprehensive women’s health services, so as to fully serve the men and women who choose to come to Planned Parenthood of North Hartford for their reproductive health and family planning care needs.

Patients there are seen for acute conditions and chronic problems, physicals, preventive vaccines, annual exams, and care is limited. Young women and men who come to this clinic have chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, depression, high blood pressure, and headaches. Left untreated, they have to be hospitalized in emergency rooms at much higher costs.

The clinicians recognized that there was an additional need for health services and for other providers in the community to meet them, but they were currently unable to do so. So they decided to initiate full-scope primary care services in Hartford, in addition to the comprehensive women’s health services, so as to fully serve the men and women who choose to come to Planned Parenthood of North Hartford for their reproductive health and family planning care needs.

Patients there are seen for acute conditions and chronic problems, physicals, preventive vaccines, annual exams, as well as services to quit smoking. If there were ever a cost-effective program anywhere in the United States, then the North Hartford project is a sterling example.

Just to give one example, recently, a young woman came to this Planned Parenthood for birth control. She was found to have high blood pressure. So her provider started her on blood pressure medication and counseled her on dietary and lifestyle changes. She started exercising regularly and improved her diet, lost 30 pounds, and no longer needed the medication to control her blood pressure. Is that kind of control her blood pressure. Is that kind of care they need to save dollars and save lives?

Community health centers like that in North Hartford simply cannot accommodate all the family planning patients who would lose coverage or funding if title X funds to Planned Parenthood were eliminated. That is a lesson of this Planned Parenthood that is undeniable.

That may well be why our Republican colleagues have yielded back all of their time.

The real facts are undeniable. The real need is irrefutable. My colleagues and I are here today not because we are talking about money or a change in how the funding program is used. We are standing up and speaking out against shortsighted efforts that would restrict access to family planning services for some of the most vulnerable patients—many of them voiceless in these halls. Otherwise, in areas that are least able to absorb this cruel and inhumane change in the rules.

I ask my colleagues to oppose this resolution and to stand strong for women’s and men’s healthcare across the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, the Congressional Review Act, or CRA, resolution we are debating today is the latest in the unrelenting attack on the American grassroot against funding—or defunding—Planned Parenthood. They have tried everything: passing stand-alone bills, attaching poison pills to other legislation, gutting the American Rescue Plan, defunding its provider network on arbitrary criteria is simply unwise and, in fact, unconscionable. The foundation of the program’s success is the long-standing intent that its provider network be designed by the communities it serves to help patients have access to trusted, highly qualified, family planning providers. That is a lesson of this Planned Parenthood that is undeniable.

Today, we are debating whether to repeal an administrative action that protects abortion providers, like Planned Parenthood, that receive title X funding. Just a little while ago, Vice President PENCE was here to break a tie because Republicans in Congress couldn’t get enough men to tell women what to do with their bodies.

For nearly 50 years, title X funding has helped low-income Americans access vital health services like birth control and cervical and breast cancer screenings. Title X funding has been a lifeline for millions of women in all parts of the country. But if this Congressional Review Act resolution is passed, Planned Parenthood clinics across our country can be prohibited from receiving title X funding, even though it is currently illegal to use Federal dollars to fund abortion services. Let me repeat: No Federal dollars can be used to fund abortion services, period.

I understand the strong anti-abortion belief held by some of my colleagues, but I don’t understand why this translates into relentless attacks on an organization that uses no Federal funds for abortion. Planned Parenthood uses Federal funds to provide vital health care services to millions of people, mainly women. Yes, I acknowledge there are men who go to Planned Parenthood also.

In 2014, Planned Parenthood provided over 600,000 cancer screenings and over 4 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections. But this is a factual argument, and we have learned over the years that many of my Republican colleagues simply will not listen to facts when it comes to Planned Parenthood.

Let me share a few stories from my constituents about the transformational impact Planned Parenthood has had in their lives. Perhaps after hearing these stories, we will think twice about attacking the vital services Planned Parenthood provides all across our country.

Hawaii is home to a large military community. Taylor from Honolulu is a military spouse who wrote to me that she and other military dependents turn to Planned Parenthood because of long wait times and confidentiality concerns within the military healthcare system. Taylor wrote:

My friend was experiencing severe cramping and pelvic pain to the point where she had to utilize a sick day. When she visited the military medical services provider through the military, they scheduled her for an appointment for four days out. She was sent home with no pelvic exam or ultrasound. The pain persisted, and she sought help from a civilian provider who diagnosed her with pelvic inflammatory disease.

Annually, 100,000 women become infertile as a result of PID, so receiving quick treatment for this condition is critical.

Taylor continued:

Defunding Planned Parenthood means that individuals who experience common reproductive healthcare issues like this would be denied the chance of receiving quick, necessary and comprehensive medical care. Had it not been for Planned Parenthood, she could have lost her ability to have children in the future.

Do my Republican colleagues want to deprive military spouses of vital healthcare services?

I also heard from Tiffany, a student at the University of Hawaii, who went to a Planned Parenthood clinic after a pregnancy scare. She wrote:

I was afraid because I knew that having a child was beyond my means. I was just starting out my university years at 21, and I have extremely conservative parents who would have surely not approved of my actions. I knew how difficult having a child was for someone in my situation, especially while going to school, and risking sacrificing my future, my key to stepping out of poverty, was not an option. I was unemployed and had Medicaid at the time as well, and Planned Parenthood accommodated my financial situation.

Thankfully, I discovered I was not pregnant, and Planned Parenthood took the extra time to sit me through my options without any judgment whatsoever. I was also prescribed birth control, offered an STD test, and was given Plan B in the event I ever missed my birth control. The sense of relief, reassurance, and care I felt walking out of the clinic left me with a very strong impression, especially after so many days of anxiety.

Do my Republican colleagues want to take away resources that help thousands of young women like Tiffany fulfill their full potential?

I ask my colleagues to oppose this resolution and to stand strong for women’s and men’s healthcare across the country. Perhaps after hearing these stories, we will think twice about attacking the vital services Planned Parenthood provides all across our country.
Some of my colleagues have argued that all these thousands of women who go to Planned Parenthood clinics can go to community health centers if Planned Parenthood clinics have to close because of defunding. This morning, I met with over a dozen leaders from Hawai'i's community health centers. So I asked them, could you take in all of Planned Parenthood's patients? Their answer was an unequivocal no. Our communities cannot afford to lose Planned Parenthood.

A vote for this CRA is a vote to deprive women like Taylor and Tiffany and millions more throughout our country of these important healthcare services. Let's stop these attacks on women's healthcare. I urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENTING OFFICER (Mrs. Fischer). The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues in opposing this misguided measure, which would leave millions of women and families with fewer healthcare options, and it would drastically decrease women's access to basic primary and preventive health services, including lifesaving cancer screenings and HIV testing.

Make no mistake about it, as my colleague who is speaking right now, the primary target of this legislation is Planned Parenthood. For years now, we have seen Republican leaders in Congress attempt to defund this essential healthcare provider, which serves millions of women nationwide, including nearly 12,000 women in New Hampshire, most of them with incomes below or near the poverty level. The sad irony of these attacks is that study after study has shown that restricting access to birth control and other family planning methods actually increases the number of abortions.

The authoritative Guttmacher Institute estimates that in 2014 alone, contraceptive care provided under title X funded centers, the U.S. rates of unintended pregnancy and abortions. Without contraceptive care provided by title X funded centers, the estimated 33 percent higher, and the teen pregnancy rate would be 30 percent higher.

At the end of the Obama administration, teen pregnancy in the United States was at its lowest point since we have been keeping track. As Senator Hirono has said, these services don't provide abortions. Federal law expressly forbids the use of Federal funds to pay for abortion, except to save the life of the mother.

So the real issue here is not about abortion. This is about ensuring that American women have access to the basic healthcare they need, where they want to receive it. This is just a mean-spirited effort to keep women from seeing the provider they want to see and getting care at rates they can afford. For 40 percent of women, their visit to a family planning center is the only care they receive annually.

In 2015 alone, title X provided basic primary and preventive healthcare services, Pap tests, breast exams, birth control, and HIV testing to more than 4 million women and men at nearly 4,000 health centers. Planned Parenthood plays an essential role in delivering health services to low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable individuals, including in rural areas.

I am sure that every person in this Chamber has received letters and emails and phone calls from constituents on this issue. They are pleading with us: Don’t take away our access to healthcare from Planned Parenthood.

I received a letter from Sandra Sonnichsen of Goshen, NH. She writes:

Planned Parenthood was my only affordable source of gynecological healthcare for the majority of my life. I was kind, wise, and thoughtful care. I think it is not extreme to say they saved my life. Abortions were not involved. They were necessary to keep me alive.

Meaning Planned Parenthood—remain very important, especially for poor or uninsured women. There are not enough alternate low-cost women's clinics available. Not providing birth control services to women who need them doesn't solve an economic or social solution. Don't let it be defunded.

In a follow-up call, Sandra said that without Planned Parenthood, she would not have had any healthcare at all. Because her mother died of breast cancer, Sandra is deeply grateful that Planned Parenthood offered her the opportunity to get the care she needed.

I also heard from Meredith Murray of Exeter, NH. She says:

Nine years ago I graduated from college and immediately began my journey to become a medical provider. During this time in my life, I was surviving almost entirely on student loans. And I knew that during this time, especially, I needed to ensure that I was doing all I could to prevent pregnancy. . . . With my insurance—an IUD would have cost $900. That was not possible for me to afford. Then I remembered—Planned Parenthood. . . . I was informed, due to title X funding, my IUD would be completely covered. I continued to use Planned Parenthood services for the next 5 years for my routine screenings while in medical school. The care I received was phenomenal. As I proceeded through my medical training, I strived to be as kind, compassionate, and knowledgeable as those who work Planned Parenthood health centers. I am now a practicing medical provider, married, and still using an IUD because Planned Parenthood offered it. It is a good investment.

I received this letter from Samantha Fox of Bow, NH. She writes:

In 2007, I was a 19-year-old just barely starting out when I was denied health insurance due to a preexisting condition. Had I been able to access affordable care affordably, my preexisting condition, a reproductive system disorder, would have been easily manageable. . . . At that time, I was able to access care through Planned Parenthood which likely preserved my ability to conceive in the future. And finally, let me share this message from Robin Parise of Rye, NH. She says:

I started utilizing the services at Planned Parenthood for birth control when I was about 17 years old. Planned Parenthood made sure I was protected and healthy. They gave me access to vital protection and healthcare when I could not get it anywhere else. They regularly reminded me to have exams and to pick up my prescription. Planned Parenthood is the reason my husband and I were able to graduate from high school and college, and sure what our lives would be like now without their support.

I don't know. Do the people who are voting for this CRA believe it would be better to have allowed the people whom I just talked about—to prohibit their access to these healthcare services so that their lives would have been disrupted, so they might not have finished college, so we wouldn't have another doctor in the world, so they wouldn't be able to afford healthcare? I hope we will listen to our constituents who have been speaking out in passionate support of Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics.

This is about respecting women's constitutionally protected right to make our own reproductive choices. We must not allow Congress to strip away investments in family planning clinics by allowing States to discriminate.

Finally, I want to point out that we haven't heard from any of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are voting for this measure about why they think it is so critical. I don't know. Maybe they are not willing to come to the floor and tell my constituents why they should be denied access to healthcare from the provider they want. Well, I am disappointed that we haven't heard from anyone who is willing to stand up and defend this vote. I hope they are going to have to defend it to the American voters.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENTING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I want to thank my colleagues who are here speaking out against this shameful resolution that is before us today that goes after women's rights and their opportunity to make their own healthcare decisions with their own provider.

I, too, want to echo the comments that were just made. I find it amazing that the Republicans have yielded back all of their time. They are not going to come out here and defend their vote; they are just going to walk away. In fact, it seems clear to me that President Trump is clearly focused on attacking women's healthcare—so much so that he sent his women's health adviser, Vice President Pence, here just moments ago to break a tie on this latest disgusting attack on women's healthcare. It is truly appalling.
Women and men across the country are watching what is happening here today, watching what Republicans are trying to do, and they are paying attention.

NOMINATION OF NEIL Gorsuch

Madam President, I wish today’s resolution was the only shameful attack on women’s health to talk about, but sadly that is not the case. So I do want to take a few minutes at this time to talk about another one that is very critical to women and families—not just today, but actually for years and years to come it will be happening, and that is the Supreme Court.

Last week I announced I would be voting against Judge Neil Gorsuch’s nomination to the Supreme Court, and I will oppose a cloture motion ending debate. I did not reach that conclusion lightly. I consider my decisions about whether to support a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court among the most important and consequential choices I make as a Senator. But I made it in part because this is not a normal nomination.

This process really began about 12 months ago when Senate Republicans refused to even consider President Obama’s nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Merrick Garland. And because since President Trump entered office, he has shown complete disregard for the law, for our Constitution, for the well-being of families across the country, leaving me unable to trust that he is acting in our Nation’s best interest, I am unable to support his choice for the Supreme Court.

In addition to my deep concerns about this process and this administration, I also have strong concerns about this nominee specifically. Today, as Republicans appear to be rushing Judge Gorsuch’s nomination through the Judiciary Committee as fast as they can, I want to lay out why putting Judge Gorsuch on the Supreme Court would be an attack on women’s health, rights, and opportunity, one that has the potential to undo decades of progress we have made toward making sure women are equally able to participate in and contribute to our country.

The Trump administration has broken almost every one of its promises, but one it has certainly kept is its promise to do everything in its power to turn back the clock on women’s health and women’s rights. Extreme Republicans in Congress are doing the same, and we, apparently, are in store. Right now, we are debating whether to undo a rule that prevents discrimination against family planning providers based on the kinds of services they provide to women. Congressional Republicans have already gotten up to attack riders to the coming budget bills in order to cut off access to critical services at Planned Parenthood for millions of patients in this country.

There are similar attempts to undermine women’s access to healthcare in cities and States nationwide.

More often than we would like, the Supreme Court is going to be the place of last resort for protecting women’s hard-fought gains. The buck has to stop with the Supreme Court on women’s health and rights.

I do not want Judge Neil Gorsuch anywhere near the bench. Time and time again, he worked with the extreme rightwing and against the tens of millions of women and men who believe that in this 21st century, women should be able to make their own choices about their own bodies. When the Tenth Circuit ruled in the case of Hobby Lobby v. Burwell that a woman’s boss—a woman’s boss—could decide whether her insurance would include birth control, Judge Gorsuch didn’t just agree, he thought the ruling should have gone further. That alone would be enough for me to oppose this nomination, but unfortunately there is more.

Judge Gorsuch has argued that birth control coverage included in the ACA as an essential part of a woman’s healthcare—one that has now benefited 55 million women—is what he calls a “clear burden” on employers that would not long survive. When it comes to Planned Parenthood, he has already weighed in on the side of defunding our Nation’s largest provider of women’s healthcare. What was his reasoning? Well, Judge Gorsuch thought that in light of completely discredited sting videos taken by extreme conservatives, women in the State of Utah should have a harder time accessing the care they need. Just this week, the makers of those videos admitted the way, got 15 felony charges. Women deserve independence and objectivity in a Supreme Court Justice, and that is clearly not it.

Attempts to control women’s bodies aren’t always about reproductive rights. Sure enough, Judge Gorsuch is on the wrong side here as well. He concurred in a ruling against a transgender woman who was denied regular access to hormone therapy that she needed. He rejected the idea that under our Constitution, denying healthcare services is cruel and unusual punishment. Think about that. That is not the kind of judgment I want to see on the bench, and I think most families would agree.

I also want to be clear as well about what Judge Gorsuch’s nomination could mean for a woman’s constitutionally protected right to safe, legal abortion. In Roe v. Wade, which was, by the way, reaffirmed just last summer by the Court. In his nomination hearings, Judge Gorsuch wouldn’t give a clear answer on whether he would uphold Roe v. Wade, which has meant so much to so many women and families over the last four decades.

Judge Gorsuch has donated repeatedly to politicians who are dead-set on targeting women’s constitutionally protected healthcare decisions, and he has even made deeply inaccurate comparisons between abortion and assisted suicide.

I remember the days before Roe v. Wade very clearly. I heard and saw firsthand the stories of women faced with truly impossible choices during those times. Women from all across the country have shared deeply personal stories about what it would mean to go backward. I know that millions of women who have already done so much to lead the resistance against this administration and its damaging, divisive agenda are going to fight this nomination as hard as they can. They know the Trump Presidency will be damaging enough for 4 years, but Judge Gorsuch’s nomination could roll back progress for women over a lifetime. I am proud to stand with them and do everything I can to make sure they are heard loud and clear here in the Senate, and I oppose Judge Gorsuch’s nomination in light of everything it would mean for women now and for generations to come.

Today here in the Senate, we just saw a historic moment. The Senate Republicans put forth a resolution that would allow States to deny funding to providers in their States who provide healthcare services to women—fund- ing that is desperately needed. They got only 50 votes, and those in opposition got 50 votes, so they brought over the Vice President of the United States, and he broke that tie in order for it to be here to debate this resolution now. This vote will now occur, under the order, later this afternoon, and he will be brought back once again to deny women the healthcare choices they deserve to have. It is a sad day for the Senate.

I want my friends, colleagues, and the women who have stood up and have spoken out since the day after the election, marched here in Washington, DC, and across the country on 13th to say that we stand with them. My voice will not be silenced. I will continue to fight back.

I will say one more time that it will take one more Republican on the other side this afternoon—one to stand up and say, ‘I will ensure that women have access equally in their States for the healthcare they deserve.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise to express my strong opposition to H.J. Res. 43, a resolution of disapproval with respect to the title X regulation—a resolution which effectively endorses discriminatory practices toward family planning and safety net providers.

The Title X Federal grant program is dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related
preventive health services. Last year, title X funding made it possible for nearly 4,000 health centers to provide basic primary and preventive healthcare services to over 4 million low-income women and their families. I am talking about critical services, such as Pap tests, cervical cancer screenings, contraception, breast exams, and HIV testing.

In Maryland, there are 55 title X funded health centers that span the State. These include federally qualified health centers, local health departments, Planned Parenthood clinics, and school-based health centers. In fiscal year 2015, Maryland received over $3.8 million in title X funding and provided health services to over 64,000 patients. These are low-income, underinsured, and uninsured individuals who would otherwise lack access to such basic healthcare.

As many of my colleagues know, Planned Parenthood, a high-quality health care provider, has been under an overt attack by the Republicans, who want to eliminate the organization’s Federal funding. Just last week, the Republicans’ Affordable Care Act repeal-and-replace bill threatened to defund Planned Parenthood, which is a trusted healthcare provider, by eliminating clinics’ Medicaid reimbursements. This week, Republicans want to roll back protections that were put in place for family planning clinics and allow discrimination against our Nation’s family planning providers.

What I find even more disappointing is that this is a major policy shift for our Nation, and we are using a procedure known as the Congressional Review Act to make that decision. Yet those who support this are not even taking to the floor to defend it. This is outrageous that one would use a procedure to repeal this type of funding and not even be on the floor to defend those actions.

In December of 2016, the Obama administration finalized the regulation before us today to protect family planning providers from such discrimination. The regulation was intended to protect access to care in States that have issued their own regulations and legislation that block family planning providers from receiving title X funds. By overriding this regulation, Republicans will empower States to pick and choose who can receive funding, which is to say, they will be based on arbitrary criteria that will have nothing to do with the quality of services the patients will receive. Republicans are actively condoning discrimination against providers, which will, ultimately, deny women and their families access to family planning and preventive health services.

It is not just Democrats who are concerned. Multiple healthcare providers have come out against this resolution because discrimination against any healthcare provider is wrong. Let me name just a few of the groups that oppose this action: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. They are all alarmed because they know low-income, underinsured, and uninsured patients will be unable to access needed healthcare.

In Maryland, for example, 84 percent of the 64,000-plus patients served with title X funds have incomes at or below 100 percent of the Federal poverty line. That means that they earn $11,770 a year or less. Under this bill, how do you expect these families to be able to get their healthcare needs met if this resolution of disapproval is passed? Ninety-four percent of title X patients in Maryland earn less than $29,425 a year. Overturning this regulation will hurt our most vulnerable communities.

Let’s be clear about this. This is not about abortion. There is no Federal funding for abortion. This is about low-income women who have access to pregnancy testing, contraceptive services, pelvic exams, high blood pressure and diabetes screenings, STD and HIV/AIDS screenings, infertility services, and health education. It is a war on women and a war on access to preventive healthcare.

The American people deserve better from their elected officials. I am committed to fighting these reckless attempts to repeal a reasonable regulation that has been promulgated to prevent discriminatory policies that will harm thousands of low-income women and their families in Maryland and across our Nation.

I urge my colleagues to reject this procedural resolution, which will allow discrimination and deny adequate care to low-income families.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, since coming to Washington, I have observed something interesting about Republican politicians. Republicans talk a lot about women who are wrong about something, but when it comes time to vote on laws to help real, live, American women, a lot of Republicans turn their backs.

Take PAUL RYAN, Speaker of the House of Representatives. Just a few months ago, Speaker RYAN was adamant that American women deserve respect. “Women,” he said, “are to be championed and revered.”

“Championed and revered”—so what exactly does championing and revering women mean to Speaker RYAN? Does it mean not supporting policies that will make us healthier, that he will help us access basic medical services, that he thinks we can make our own decisions about our bodies without government interference? No.

Over the past few months, Speaker RYAN has worked overtime on the American Health Care Act—a bill that would make it harder for millions of women to access healthcare. That miserable bill even included a special provision singling out women’s health clinics and stripping them of the funding they use to provide women’s health services.

Last week, PAUL RYAN failed to get that bill out of the House, but Republicans are back to take another shot at cutting women’s access to healthcare. This time the plan is to undermine the title X family planning program. This plan, just like their healthcare bill, is incredibly unpopular, even with Republicans who had to rush Vice President PENCE over from the White House this morning to cast a deciding vote to start this debate on attacking women’s healthcare.

Title X is a bipartisan program started back in 1970. It is the only Federal grant program dedicated to providing Americans with high-quality, low-cost family planning services. Title X funds have provided over 200 million lifetime exams, performed over 1.1 million HIV tests, and gave over 1 million breast exams. And PAUL RYAN’s way of making sure that women are “championed and revered” is to try to reduce their access to these lifesaving services.

Last December, the Department of Health and Human Services passed a very simple rule to keep States from pulling political shenanigans to shut down women’s health centers. The rule prevents States from blocking a healthcare provider from the program “for reasons other than its ability to provide Title X services.” In other words, follow the law. If a provider is doing a bad job at delivering family planning services, by all means, kick them out of the program. But you don’t get to kick someone out because you don’t like the name of your organization or you don’t like their politics or because of your politics or because of any other dumb reason that has nothing to do with their ability to deliver women’s health services.

In February, House Republicans voted to overturn this rule. So PAUL RYAN’s version of championing and revering women is to let States close down women’s health centers. Now Senate Republicans plan to do the same thing. Sure, Republicans give a bunch of reasons, but American women who vote and who know when we see it. So let’s just call it like it is. Republicans want to weaken the title X program because they want to make
it harder for women to access reproductive health clinics, like Planned Parenthood, that also provide safe, legal abortion services.

Just so we are clear, there are over 3,900 title X funded health centers. Only 10 percent of those health centers are affiliated with Planned Parenthood. The vast majority of centers getting title X money have nothing to do with Planned Parenthood, and the vast majority of Planned Parenthood’s activities have nothing to do with abortion. Women should be able to choose a reproductive health provider without the interference of Republican politicians, and millions of women choose Planned Parenthood every year.

The Congress representing those women should stop demonizing Planned Parenthood and stand with Planned Parenthood.

Yes, as it stands, title X makes sure that if women’s healthcare centers, including Planned Parenthood, offer first-rate care then their work will be reimbursed. The Senate should reject any efforts to change that.

Women in this country work their tails off. They should be able to choose their own healthcare providers. They don’t need “pro-lifers” to choose for them. They don’t need to be “revered” into passive silence. Women want the respect that they deserve and to be able to access medical care without Republican politicians getting in the way.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to speak for just a few minutes about H.J. Res. 43. I see this as a misguided and unfortunate attack on healthcare for women. Certainly that is what I am hearing from women from the State of Vermont.

Three months into the 115th Congress, the Senate has yet to consider real legislation aimed at addressing the many challenges we Americans face today. Instead, the Senate, with simple-majority votes—permissible through the rarely used Congressional Review Act—is rolling back key protections for the American people that were put in place by the last administration. Never mind that the current administration has the power to address certain aspects of regulations that they wish to rewrite. No. They could address these. They could seek a rewriting of them. They could seek legislation. But, instead, Republicans in Congress are intent on using this blunt instrument to make very careful and deliberative work. These raw power plays are part of the Trump-Republican “know-nothing, anti-science” agenda, in which the winners are the American people and the losers are not the women of my State. They are not the average person you might meet. Instead, they are typically the wealthy and powerful special interests and big polluters. They win, and the losers are real Americans.

Today, we are considering the 12th such resolution, one that rolls back protections under the Title X program. Title X of the Public Health Service Act is the only Federal grant program dedicated to providing services to low-income women. It delivers comprehensive family planning and preventive health services. In rural areas—and every single State has a rural area, but my State is especially rural—we know that Title X is crucial in making sure women have access to the basic healthcare they need. Unfortunately, in recent years, some States have made exceptions about which providers may deliver services under Title X, excluding family planning clinics. That means the burden would fall on women seeking healthcare, the Obama administration finalized a regulation in December 2016 that protects these providers from this type of discrimination, and women from these hardships. The resolution we are considering today would undo this regulation, once again allowing States to discriminate against providers, thereby limiting access to healthcare services for millions—that is not hyperbole; it really is millions—of women and their families. Worse still, the resolution would prevent a similar rule or regulation from being implemented in the future.

In Vermont, our sole Title X provider is Planned Parenthood. Even in a State as rural as Vermont, no one has to drive longer than 45 minutes to reach a clinic. That is important to us. We consider 5 inches of snow a heavy dusting, but we often have up to 15 inches of snow. Nobody should have to drive farther than that to reach healthcare.
This type of access is critical for those who need these services. It is especially important because for 40 percent of women, their visit to a family planning health center is the only healthcare they receive during the year. Vermonters are lucky because our State recognizes that this issue isn’t about abortion, it is about ensuring the best network of providers for the people of our State. But other States have already worked to undermine Planned Parenthood clinics like Planned Parenthood.

The passage of this resolution will allow these discriminatory efforts to advance, especially discriminatory efforts against women and their families in every single State we represent. This resolution would not only affect the lives of millions of American women, but it would also affect the lives of men and young people who trust healthcare, especially for low-income individuals, is difficult.

It is easy—easy—for Senators to vote to cut off this healthcare for women and children and people in rural areas because too often, if we need healthcare, can walk 2 minutes down this hall and walk to the Capitol physician and say “I am a U.S. Senator. I need healthcare,” and we are going to get it. While that may be the reality for 100 people in this body, it is not the reality for millions and millions of people in every single State we represent.

What this partisan resolution would do is force women and families in States to lose family planning clinics for their healthcare to find another doctor—and very often few are available—or what is more likely, go without care at all. So they don’t get preventive care, they don’t get check-ups, they don’t get the first indication that they may be facing melanoma or some other serious health problem. That undermines all of our efforts, which we should be joining, to strengthen our Nation’s healthcare system, to try to make our healthcare system at least as good as many other countries’, and to ensure access to care for everyone.

This Republican resolution marks just the latest overreach and intrusion into women’s healthcare.

We even voted for a resolution to allow people to spy on what you do on the internet, and then sell that information for their own profit, destroying your privacy, but making money doing it.

Until the House failed to even take it up, the Senate was scheduled to consider a reconciliation bill this week that would have defunded Planned Parenthood and allowed health insurers to deny coverage for maternity care, thus requiring women to pay more for health insurance.

In the last Congress, it was more of the same—deny coverage for maternity care, and then go out and say: We believe in the right to life. Clearly not so much for the mother when she needs maternity care.

Should we really walk back from the remarkable progress we have made as a nation in women’s health? Of course, I don’t. But I am concerned that we will still see the same irresponsible attack surfacing again and again.

Look, it is 2016; it is not 1917. It is time for the mean-spirited and ideological assault on women’s healthcare to end. Women are not second-class citizens. My wife is not, my daughter is not, and my three granddaughters are not. They deserve the same access to care as men.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution that will degrade the healthcare and access to healthcare, of so many Americans.

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

Mr. President, I rise to oppose the title X Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval.

This resolution would permit discrimination against family planning healthcare providers that provide primary and reproductive healthcare services to millions of women around the country. It will allow States to take away Federal funding from family planning clinics and make it much harder for millions of American women to meet with their healthcare providers and access basic care.

I am struggling to understand, amidst all these problems we are having to solve in this country and around the world, why this Congress seems to have such a singular fixation on controlling women’s access to basic healthcare. This legislation is so far out of touch with the actual needs of our constituents. If we cut funding for women’s health clinics, is that going to create more good-paying jobs? Is it going to open more factories in our upstate rural towns? I don’t believe it will. It is certainly not going to make anyone healthier.

There are millions of American women, including thousands of women in States like New Hampshire that rely on title X health clinics for treatments, preventive care, and for family planning services. They need these health clinics because they provide contraception, counseling, cancer screening, and medical expertise right there in their communities. Many of the women who use these services have nowhere else to go for access because title X clinics are often the only affordable option for them and may even be the only place with a driving distance of their communities. Yet, once again, my colleagues are pushing legislation to limit women’s options for accessing healthcare and making it harder for thousands of New York women to get the healthcare they need and deserve. I continue to be amazed by how little empathy there seems to be for millions of women in our country who don’t have the resources to travel to a major hospital outside of their communities and desperately need these local clinics to stay healthy.

Let’s be very clear about who this legislation would hurt the most. This bill will hurt women in small towns and rural communities more than anyone else. It will cause lower income women to struggle even more. Every single one of my colleagues has many women in their States who rely on title X clinics and would suffer if these clinics lose their Federal funding taken away.

So I urge my colleagues in this Chamber: When it is time to vote on this legislation, think about the women who live in your States. Think about the women who live in small towns and rural communities who are just trying to access basic women’s healthcare services that they can afford. Think about the women who don’t have big hospitals or big cities nearby. Think about the women who don’t have enough money to travel. The bill is going to hurt them. It will make their lives harder, not easier.

We all have the responsibility to stand up for the women in our States, and that includes defending their access to healthcare and basic family planning services. I urge my colleagues to vote against this very discriminatory resolution.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the Congressional Review Act measure, which would allow discrimination against title X family planning providers, which in turn could roll back access to family planning and preventive health services for women and their families in New Hampshire and across our country.

Throughout my time in public service, I have always fought to ensure
that women have meaningful access to the healthcare they need. I have fought to ensure that they can make their own healthcare decisions, and, in doing so, control their own destinies.

To compete economically on a level playing field, women must be able to make their own decisions about if—or when—to start a family. They should not have to pay more than men do for healthcare. They should be able to visit providers of their own choice who understand the healthcare needs of these women to fully participate not only in our economy but also in our democracy, women must be recognized for their capacity to make their own healthcare decisions, just as men do.

During my time as Governor of New Hampshire, I restored family planning funds and pushed to restore State funding for Planned Parenthood, and I am going to continue fighting to ensure that women have the care they need, while standing firm against efforts here in Congress to roll back the progress that has been made.

Unfortunately, the vote we are taking today is a continuation of a partisan agenda that has been focused on restricting the care that women and their families can receive. The fact that Vice President MIKE PENCE was called in to cast the deciding vote to advance this measure shows just how far Republican leadership will go in order to undermine women’s access to critical healthcare.

For more than 40 years, title X has provided women and their families with comprehensive family planning and preventive health services. When the legislation was originally passed in 1970, it was part of a bipartisan effort, with the support of prominent Republicans. In the years that have followed, title X has been essential in delivering important services to some of our Nation’s most underserved communities. That is why, in New Hampshire, title X and Planned Parenthood still have broad support in our communities, even if they have been the subject of political gamesmanship here in Washington.

Title X has support from Granite Staters because they have seen the real difference it has made in their lives and in the lives of their neighbors. They know some parts of the State there are no other options or, if other options do exist, they don’t provide women with the same expertise and commitment to reproductive health that title X providers do.

For those in rural communities, for low-income women and men, and for members of the LGBTQ community, title X supported health centers have been a major source of preventive care and reproductive health services, including cancer screenings, birth control, HIV and STI testing, and counseling services. And title X’s important public health services translate into savings for taxpayers. In 2010, title X investments resulted in net savings for Federal and State governments of $7 billion.

The measure we are voting on today would undermine this progress and the safety net for countless citizens. This measure would allow States to discriminate against providers and take away investments in family planning clinics, ultimately taking away these key services for those who need them most.

Last year, more than 4 million women and men at over 4,000 health centers across our Nation received care through title X. This includes around 20,000 patients in New Hampshire, including roughly 4,000 patients receiving care through title X supported Planned Parenthood centers. Those services can’t just be replaced by other providers, even community health centers that do great work. But two counties in New Hampshire don’t have a community health center at all. Others don’t have the capacity to replace this work or this specialized experience that can make a critical difference to a woman’s health.

In New Hampshire and other States, Planned Parenthood and the community health centers are often partners, working in tandem to get patients the reproductive healthcare they need. But when I hear from community health centers throughout the country, they tell me they would not be able to pick up the slack if Planned Parenthood is defunded.

Make no mistake about it, this CRA, which would let States discriminate against providers in the title X program, combined with the consistent attempts to defund Planned Parenthood by some in Congress, would be a disaster for women in New Hampshire and all across the Nation. That is why a number of leading advocates have come out against these efforts to overturn title X regulations, including the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association, the Human Rights Campaign, and dozens more. I share their concerns and oppose the measure we will consider today, and I am going to continue to fight against these attempts to roll back access to reproductive health and preventive services.

It is critical that we have a healthcare system that ensures that all women and their families can get the care they need. If we cannot do is eliminate services and discriminate against providers who have been providing critical, cost-effective healthcare to millions of Americans for decades. I strongly oppose this effort to undermine the program, and I will vote against this measure today.

We need just one more vote, and I urge my colleagues to listen to the voices of their constituents and vote no today. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, last week the Senate watched the House and the American people watched the House because the House was on the verge of taking away access to healthcare for 24 million Americans.

Then last Thursday, a week ago from today, the House voted to postpone that vote. We are not sure we will have the votes to take healthcare away from 24 million Americans, but maybe we will vote tomorrow, Friday.

That was 6 days ago. Friday came, and the House said we are not going to do that vote today because we don’t have the votes.

Why didn’t they have the votes? Because across the country, millions of Americans said that taking away healthcare is the wrong thing to do—to take away healthcare from Medicaid expansion, the Oregon Health Plan; to take away healthcare by restricting standard Medicaid as it existed before ACA; to take away the healthcare bill that has been so appreciated; to undermine the ability of low-income working families to buy policies with significant subsidies on the income-exchange—all of that.

The House set it aside. I thought that was more than generous because this week, we are not going to have a diabolical bill destroying healthcare here on the floor of the Senate. But the majority party decided: No, we can’t go a week without destroying healthcare, so we are going to put up this Congressional Review Act that would take healthcare away from 5 million mostly low-income women who gain access to healthcare through Planned Parenthood. We won’t bring up on the floor the bill that failed in the House for 24 million Americans; no, we will just focus on 5 million mostly low-income women and take away their healthcare.

That is what this vote is about right now, later today. Clearly this attack on women’s healthcare for America is wrong, just as it was wrong to try to destroy healthcare for 24 million Americans. It is an attack on women’s right to choose what to do with their own bodies. It is an attack on the basic decency and compassion of the American people.

Since 1970, the title X family planning provider network has been dedicated to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and critical health services such as screenings for breast and prostate cancer and sexually transmitted diseases. Just in 2015 alone, title X provided basic primary and preventive healthcare services, including Pap tests and breast exams and birth control and HIV testing, to more than 4 million low-income women and men at nearly 4,000 health centers across the country. That is a huge impact on the health of the individuals served through title X.

Title X services prevented 87,000 preterm or low birth weight births. I can tell you, when my wife Mary was carrying each of our two
children. I so much hoped that we would not have a complication that would result in a low birth weight birth or a preterm birth in which the child might not even survive. So failing to provide that care is really setting back not just the health of thousands of babies, but maybe affecting whether they live or die.

Title X services prevented 2,000 cases of cervical cancer. That is a big deal, cervical cancer, and it is a good deed to have title X services preventing it.

For every 100 women in America, their visit to a title X family planning health center is the only healthcare they receive annually.

So let’s be honest about what repealing this rule means. It means family planning providers can be discriminated against by States that want to withhold Federal funding from family planning providers for reasons other than their ability to offer family planning services. It means less access to quality care and less access to afford- able care.

By overriding this regulation, Republicans empower States to pick and choose who provides services on a criteria that has nothing to do with the quality services received. Millions have done this in the past, and it resulted in dramatically fewer women accessing critical family planning and healthcare services.

We know what this is about. It is about the Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, an organization that provides care and resources to 5 million women every year. They have been doing it for 100 years. And they are the target. But what has been their mission? Their mission has been to provide easy and affordable access to address reproductive health and enable women to make their own decisions about their healthcare. But now, thanks to this Congressional Review Act proposal before us today—certainly my Democratic colleagues—are truly appalled. Once again, this is a sad day for the majority is continuing its assault on women’s access to preventive healthcare. That doesn’t sound like women’s empowerment to me.

Title X was enacted in 1970. It passed the Senate unanimously at that time and was signed into law by a Republican President. Title X is the only Federal program dedicated solely to providing comprehensive family planning and other related preventive healthcare services so important to women, as well as preventive services for men.

Last year alone, 4 million women and men at 4,000 health centers all across our country got basic care because of title X funding—critical Pap tests to head off cases of cervical cancer, counseling to help women plan for a healthy pregnancy, exams for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV testing, vaccinations. These services prevented 87,000 preterm or low birth weight babies and 2,000 cases of cervical cancer. These health services also save money. The taxpayer saves $7 for every $1 invested in preventive healthcare.

For more than 2 million people, the title X funded clinic is their only source of healthcare. This matters to small towns and rural communities all across Michigan as well as across the country. Title X funds clinics in three-fourths of all the counties in the United States. In Michigan, you can benefit from the services in the beautiful Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where I will be this weekend, where Title X funds support the health department in Iron County, or the Planned Parenthood clinic in Marquette—at the opposite end of the State, down in the southeastern corner—where funds support the health department in Monroe County.

So what are we voting on today? Plain and simple, this is an effort to take away women’s family planning and other healthcare services. Right now, title X funds are awarded solely based on the provider’s ability to serve the patient, as it should be. Republicans want to discriminate against certain family planning services, certain providers, and reduce access to this care, frankly, based on politics or their own personal beliefs.

The vote this afternoon is very simple: It is about basic healthcare for women. A “yes” vote is a vote against women in Michigan and all across our country. A “yes” vote will take away healthcare. A “yes” vote will take away healthcare for millions of Americans.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the majority is continuing its assault on women’s reproductive healthcare rights, this time using the Congressional Review Act to reverse a rule and tear a hole in our safety net for access to family planning and preventative healthcare. The resolution before us would overturn the Department of Health and Human Services’ rule, which reinforces regulations that prevent States from denying title X funds to health clinics like Planned Parenthood, even though none of these funds are used for abortions. Repealing this rule would limit access to healthcare, which would harm public health in communities that rely on this funding.

Congress created the Title X Family Planning Program with bipartisan support in 1970 to help provide comprehensive basic primary, family planning, and preventative services to uninsured and low-income women in America. Are you going to attack the healthcare of those women? Are you going to injure the babies they are carrying? There will be more low birth weight and preterm babies. That is the result of this rule being repealed.

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I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no.
again, instead of working on the many pressing issues at hand, Republicans are continuing their tired, dangerous obsession with attacking women's health.

Once again, women's health is being used as political football, with Republicans attempting to cut off access to vital healthcare services. Once again, millions of families across the country are watching Congress, wondering why there isn't just one more Republican who will stand up for them.

The Senate just held a vote open for nearly an hour to force a vote that would allow politicians to discriminate against family planning providers. Of course, whenever they can't make a vote, when women's health is being attacked, whom do Senate Republicans call to break that tie in the Senate? Vice President MIKE PENCE.

We have actually seen this before. We all remember what happened in the nomination of Secretary DeVos, and we all know this is enough to make us ashamed. This is wrong. It cannot stand.

Families have spoken time and again, and they have made it absolutely clear that when it comes to women's health and access to healthcare, they don't want to go backward. But today, thanks to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, thanks to Vice President PENCE, the Senate will hold a vote on whether critical healthcare services should be denied from millions of women across the country.

Let's not forget, it hasn't even been a week since people nationwide completely rejected TrumpCare, that disastrous bill that would have undermined women's rights and healthcare in so many ways.

Now, here in the Senate today, we are about to vote on whether a young woman should be able to go to the provider that she trusts to get birth control. Whether it is Pap tests, breast exams, birth control, or HIV testing, which should be more or less available to women across the country; whether healthcare providers are evaluated for Federal funding based on their ability to provide services or ideology; whether women are able to exercise their constitutionally protected rights to reproductive healthcare; and whether the Senate is going to turn back the clock today on women's health.

For 48 Democrats, and I know even for some Republicans, it is disappointing, deeply disappointing, that we are even having this vote today—a vote that was jammed through, with 48 Democrats and 2 Republicans voting no and Vice President PENCE voting to break the tie.

Put simply, rolling back this rule today will put at risk women's lives, like a constituent of mine from Tacom, WA. She wrote me a letter recently to tell me the many reasons this is so important to her:

When she was 20, she was uninsured. She had no other options. A family planning center was there for her. During a routine Pap test, her doctor discovered a precancerous condition in her cervix. That led to surgery, which saved her life and saved her fertility.

Without access to that provider, she would not have been able to get a regular Pap smear and checkup and most likely would have developed cervical cancer. She would not have been able to get pregnant, go on to have a daughter, become a community college counselor, and today, at the age of 65, be cancer-free.

I hope that some of my Republican colleagues are listening and that they think of women just like this, whose lives are healthier and have been saved because of the services of so many family planning centers. That is who I will be thinking about. That is what has always kept me going.

I urge people across the country right now to let Senators know that this vote today, this rule is not OK. It is not acceptable. Make phone calls. Go on Facebook. Tweet about it. Everything helps. Tell your Senator today that in about an hour, with their vote, to stand up for you, for your family, and for women across the country.

We need only one more Republican—one more to join us. This vote that we are about to have in about an hour is dead even, on the razor's edge. Fifty Senators—48 Democrats and 2 Republicans—will vote to reject this harmful, disgusting resolution. We just need one more to break the tie on the side of women and men and families, and put an end to this damaging political attack on women.

I am sure people will hear about this. I am going to be here on the floor. Many of my colleagues are going to be out here talking about it. People nationwide will have the opportunity to know exactly where every Republican stands on this.

I urge our Republican colleagues: Stop pretending what you are doing, taking away the ability of women in communities across our country to go to the provider they trust for the care that is most important to them, their families, and our country's future. I urge them to make the right choice.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, most Americans and I think last week's vote in the House indicated—that there is something special about healthcare. This just isn't the right of every American to own an SUV; it is the right of every American to have access to healthcare. That is really at the heart of our healthcare debate.

There are some who believe that health insurance ought to be another product on the shelf, and if you have enough money, you can buy it. But there are others, like me, who believe it is more fundamental.

Healthcare in America, as far as I am concerned, should be a right—not a privilege, a right—so that it doesn't go just to wealthy people. Everyone should have that peace of mind.

I have told the story many times on the floor of the Senate—and many of us are products of our own life experience. My wife and I got married when I was working as a lawyer in a small town, in Washington. God sent us a beautiful little girl right away, but she had some medical problems—serious ones—and I didn't have any health insurance. I was a law student, had no real income, a wife, and a baby with a medical problem.

I ended up sitting in the charity ward of the local children's hospital with a number in my hand, waiting to see who would come through the door to provide me with healthcare for my little girl. I had never felt worse in my life as a father, as a husband, to think that I had reached this point where I didn't have health insurance, and I wasn't sure that I was bringing the very best medical care to my little girl.

I think that is at the heart of this debate on our healthcare system in America and its future. What we are talking about today is part of it, as well, because we had decided 40 years ago anyway that we were going to make sure, if you were poor in America, as a woman, you would still have access to basic healthcare. Poverty would not exclude you from healthcare. So we created this title X program to provide healthcare primarily for low-income families but for women and children. The services that are provided are basic life-and-death services—everything from breast and cervical care screening, high blood pressure screening, anemia, diabetes testing, and so on.

There is not much debate as to whether we should provide those services, but you know what this is all about. It is not about what I just read. It is about family planning, and it is about abortion. That is what this is really all about.

The Republicans who are voting to deny women access to healthcare are saying: We are doing this to reduce the incidence of abortion.

There is something they should admit: You cannot spend one penny of Federal money for abortion services, except in cases of rape, incest, or where the life of the mother is in danger. Not here in the United States, not overseas. And they say: Instead is, well, we don't want to provide any money to any place that might use their own funds for abortion services, like Planned Parenthood. So we have this amendment before us.

Thousands of women and families in my State of Illinois, as Senator MURRAY has explained, it means the Republicans—who were all for choice in
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healthcare—don’t want women of limited means to have their ultimate choice of Planned Parenthood for their services. So the Republicans have brought in the Vice President of the United States to vote in the Senate Chamber to say that they are for this.

For those who are following the Senate, that doesn’t happen very often. It has to be a big deal. And it must be a big deal to the Vice President and to the Republican Party to bring back one of our colleagues, who has been on the mending process, to care, and to bring in the Vice President to make that difference.

Their argument is: Well, we are just trying to reduce the number of abortions. Well, if you have taken anything beyond Birds and Bees 101, there are some things that you might want. We had a study in St. Louis that was reported in 2012 that tells many people who are at least aware of the basics of what children are trying to do. Information that they already knew and knew intuitively. Here is what it found:

The abortion rate in the St. Louis area declined by more than 20 percent from 2008 to 2010, coinciding with a research study that gave free birth control to thousands of area women.

Although the drop in abortions in St. Louis cannot be attributed solely to the project, the abortion rate for the rest of Missouri remained constant.

Contraception is key to reducing unintended pregnancies and abortions, said Dr. Jeff Peipert. “We need to remove cost barriers,” Peipert said. “I think all women should have equal access.”

Teenage participants—

In this study—

experienced a birth rate of 63 babies per 1,000 girls, compared with the national rate of 34.3, according to the study published in the journal Obstetrics and Gynecology.

There was an average of six abortions a year in each of the 1,000 women in the project, compared with the national rate of 20.

Coincidence? I don’t think so.

When you make family planning accessible to potential mothers and to the families, people are educated and make informed choices. There are fewer unplanned pregnancies. There are fewer teenage pregnancies. There are fewer abortions.

So the Republicans, by reducing the access of women to clinics and agencies that provide family planning, force women to reduce the likelihood they will get the information they need and the likelihood that abortions will increase—exactly the opposite of what they say they are trying to do.

Common sense dictates that—whatever your position is on abortion and choice—if you believe that an uninformed and uneducated young mother is the right person to make this decision as to whether they are going to have a family, I think you understand what all of us do. Information, assistance, and quality healthcare is critically important for women to make the right choice for themselves and their families and to avoid unplanned pregnancies.

We are now experiencing the lowest rates of unplanned pregnancies in the United States in the last 30 years and the lowest incidence of teenage pregnancies in the last 30 years, and the abortion rate is going down. It works. It is connecting.

This vote that the Republicans are forcing us to take—which the President, I am afraid, would sign, if it were sent to his desk—really gets at the heart of the issue, if you want to reduce the number of abortions in America, if you want to make them safe, legal, and rare, as they say, for goodness’ sake, provide basic family planning information and services to women who otherwise might not have it.

This is a war against Planned Parenthood and a few other facilities that is mindless. It really is stopping information from people who desperately need it. Without that information, there will be bad results—bad results that often lead to abortions.

So I would just say flat out that we don’t talk a lot about the A-word, “abortion,” on the floor, but that is really the core of the debate. That is what is really behind it.

I hope that one more Republican colleague will decide that if you are truly against abortion, you should be in favor of family planning and giving basic information and counseling to young women who need it. That was proven in St. Louis. It is proven by our human experience. I hope my colleagues will join me in opposing this effort.

I thank the Senator from Washington for leading this debate on the floor. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior assistant legislative clerk will call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon on the pending business of the CRA that would allow States to discriminate against women’s health providers. Before I begin, I want to recognize the members of the HELP Committee. Senator MURRAY, who understands this issue as well as anyone in our caucus and speaks powerfully about it, has been such a great leader on these issues, even in these difficult times when we are in the minority. I think our entire caucus is grateful to her and all of the members of the HELP Committee. It is an outstanding group of people.

As my colleagues have explained, this CRA would empower States to discriminate against healthcare providers, specifically Title X family planning providers. The practical result of this measure is that State legislatures would pass laws to deny certain providers the funding they need to operate, which would prevent access to family planning and preventive care facilities of American women.

This CRA is just another example of the Republican war on women. It would let States treat women as second-class citizens who do not deserve the same access to healthcare as men. Some States say this is about abortion, but let me be clear. This is not about abortions. In fact, title X funding cannot be used to pay for abortion services. Some of our Republican colleagues who are sort of tied in a knot on abortion say they are for other kinds of health services, contraception and things like that, but this would take that away. Our Republican friends could not get TrumpCare through, which sought to shut down Planned Parenthood for a year. Now they have moved on to this measure. It is simply wrong.

Title X clinics are a critical resource for women, especially in rural areas. This bill would hurt those areas most. Many of my Republican friends represent rural areas. I would like to remind them that in many of these places—and I have several in Upstate New York—these clinics are the only family planning and preventive care services that are available. Sometimes they are the only healthcare services available at all. I am sure that is why two of my Republican colleagues, with a great deal of courage—the Senators from Maine and Alaska—voted against moving to debate on this measure.

They know that it would hurt women and hurt families in their States, particularly in the rural areas, and, of course, Maine and Alaska are both rural States.

For the second time this year, the Republicans had to beckon Vice President Pence down here to the Senate to break a tie on a bill that would allow States to discriminate against women’s health providers. The next time the President says, “No one has more respect for women than I do,” sent Vice President Pence down here to the Senate to break a tie on a bill that would allow States to discriminate against women’s health providers. The next time the President says, “No one has more respect for women than I do,” sent Vice President Pence down here to the Senate to break a tie on a bill that would allow States to discriminate against women’s health providers. This bill would hurt those areas most.

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I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to express my opposition to the resolution of disapproval that is currently before the Senate. In December, I voted against federal title X funding for healthcare providers across our Nation who provide vital preventive care and family planning services.

Let me put it in simpler terms. Republicans in Congress are once again rushing to advance legislation that will make it harder for Michiganders to get the healthcare they need. Just last week, we saw Speaker Ryan and President Trump in their efforts to take away healthcare from 24 million Americans and to defund Planned Parenthood, but this is a new week, and we are seeing a new assault on healthcare.

Today’s resolution is just the latest in a long series of attacks against Planned Parenthood. A vote to repeal this legislation is a vote to make it harder for millions of Americans to access birth control, cancer screenings, and testing for sexually transmitted infections.

“Title X funding” sounds arcane, but it is actually pretty straightforward. It is a bipartisan program which was established more than 40 years ago and which provides individuals with family planning and preventive health services. Not one penny covers abortion. Let me repeat that again. Not one penny covers abortion—not one. This is established Federal law, and anyone who says otherwise is simply lying to you or has no idea of what he is talking about.

We should take a step back and ask, what can we agree on here? I think every Senator would agree that we want to reduce unintended pregnancies and teen pregnancies and save money and prevent cancer. Today, unfortunately, we are voting to do the opposite.

Right now, we have the lowest rate of teen pregnancies in our Nation’s history, and we are getting ready to heavily restrict a successful program that saves $7 for every public dollar invested. Preventive screenings are quick, affordable, and save lives. Cancer devastates families, ends lives, and is expensive to treat. Historically, low teen pregnancy rates have not happened by accident. They have happened because of concerted efforts to promote education and prevention and give women a say in their own health.

The pain inflicted today will not be felt uniformly; it will disproportionately hurt people in rural and under-served areas in which these clinics are more often than not the primary sources of healthcare. Michigan has 19 Planned Parenthood clinics, and half are located in areas that are federally designated as “rural and medically underserved.” As a result of Title X funding, Michigan family planning clinics prevent over 18,000 unintended pregnancies and over 1,000 cases of sexually transmitted diseases and cervical cancer each and every year.

Every woman has a fundamental right to make her decisions about her reproductive health. The government has absolutely no right to stand in her way. I strongly oppose this resolution and implore my Republican colleagues to join me in stopping this misguided effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in speaking about the harmful effects of this resolution of disapproval.

I thank the Senator from Michigan for his words and for the very important point that we are seeing the lowest number of teen pregnancies that we have seen for a long, long time. Why would you want to mess with something that is finally reducing the number of teen pregnancies? I thank Senator Murray, who has been here diligently leading in this effort, because rolling this rule back will result in something very simple: It will result in less access to care for women and families.

Title X funding supports vital family planning and related preventive care for low-income, uninsured, and young people across this country. Every year, more than 4 million people, including many who are living in rural and medically underserved areas, go to over 4,000 health centers that rely on this funding. This includes 41 service sites in Minnesota that provide access to cancer screenings, birth control, and testing for sexually transmitted infections. In fact, 40 percent of women who receive care at title X clinics consider it to be their only source of healthcare—40 percent—which is incredibly important in rural areas.

One thinks of, just recently, in the last few years, the Zika scare. People wanted to go and get birth control. They wanted to know what they could do to prevent themselves from getting Zika in order to save the lives of their babies. This is true, and this is what will happen if they make these cuts.

The regulation we are voting on today should be common sense. It simply makes clear that funds will be awarded solely based on a provider’s ability to serve a patient, and it guarantees that women have access to the care they are entitled to under Federal law.

We should be strengthening our efforts to provide better and more affordable care that best serves patients. Instead, repealing this rule will take essential services away from women when they need them most. By overriding this regulation, States will now pick and choose who provides these services, which will be based on arbitrary criteria that has nothing to do with the quality of services patients will receive. That should be our benchmark—the quality of services.

When States have done this in the past, it has blocked access to critical family planning and healthcare services for many women, including those in rural areas who rely on the health centers that need these funds.

As Senator Murray said this morning, we are seeing a new assault on reproductive care is unacceptable.

We have a situation in which this existing rule has yielded the lowest number of teen pregnancies in years. We have a situation in which two of our Republican colleagues have joined us in opposition to this repeal. We have a situation in which the Vice President of the United States had to come in and break a tie.

Do you know what I would say? I would say that this resolution should be disapproved of, that rolling this rule back will result in less access to care for women and families, and that this rule should stay in place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Cassidy). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, just as I have many times before, to stop another rightwing attack on title X funding and to defend access to healthcare for millions of women.

Not even a week has passed since the American people successfully beat back Republican efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and give insurance companies permission to charge women higher premiums simply because of their gender. Yet apparently less than a week is not too soon for Republicans to launch yet another attack on women’s access to healthcare. This morning, my Republican colleagues needed the Vice President of the United States to come to Capitol Hill and cast a vote to overturn protections for 4 million patients served by title X funded health centers every year.

For many low-income women, title X funding is the lifeline that ensures their access to birth control, testing for sexually transmitted infections, cancer screenings, and other basic health services. In fact, 85 percent of the people served by family planning centers like Planned Parenthood have incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level. Approximately 20 percent of these patients identify as Latina, and approximately 14 percent identify as Black.

In 2015 alone, title X funded nearly 800,000 Pap tests, breast exams to 1 million women, nearly 5 million tests for STIs, and 1 million HIV tests. Title X did not pay for a single abortion. Indeed, no Federal funding goes to abortion-related care. And indeed, for every dollar that title X funding spent, we saved nearly $4 and prevented nearly 2 million unintended pregnancies per year.

Family planning services at New Jersey’s title X funded health centers
helped prevent 20,500 unintended pregnancies in 2014, which would have likely resulted in 10,000 unintended births and 7,400 abortions. Without publicly funded family planning, the number of unintended pregnancies in New Jersey would be 21 percent higher. Title X funded centers provide significant cost savings to the Federal and State governments. Services provided at title X supported sites in New Jersey accounted for nearly $232.9 million in such savings in 2010 alone.

I hate to see President Trump know that when my Republican colleagues vote to defund Planned Parenthood, they aren’t voting to stop a single abortion; they are voting to defund the family planning care that helps avoid unwanted pregnancies and reduce the need for abortion.

A vote to defund title X is a vote to defund breast cancer exams. A vote to defund title X is a vote to defund cervical cancer screenings. A vote to defund title X is a vote to defund testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

The American people—those who voted for President Trump—voted for more affordable healthcare, certainly not less. Not one of my Republican colleagues came to the floor to defend the case in favor of repealing title X—not one. But if my Republican colleagues prevail in this cynical vote, they will jeopardize access to affordable family planning services; they will force many health centers to stop providing care to patients; and they will leave doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers working on the frontlines to abandon those who need them the most.

I, for one, refuse to allow the GOP to pander to the extreme elements of their party and in doing so limit a woman’s access to affordable, accessible healthcare. This vote is about every one of our sisters, our daughters, our granddaughters. This vote is about women across this country, and I don’t understand how we can take away their access to the healthcare they so critically need.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I see my colleague from Illinois is here. While she is setting up, I just want everybody to realize what is happening here. Many health centers, I am hearing, would be in danger of closing down, and I don’t think that the Republicans—with the Vice President voting to break the tie this afternoon—put it in place, will allow the discrimination of healthcare providers for women across the country.

I have many Democratic colleagues here making the case for those women, mostly low income, who have no other access, particularly in our rural and urban regions. I just want to note that there are no Republicans out here saying why this rule needs to be passed. They aren’t talking about why the Vice President to break the tie, and it is out of here. We are noticing. Women are noticing. People are noticing.

I thank all of my Democratic colleagues and a few brave Republicans who are with us for their support to get this done. We need one more Republican to be able to defeat this.

I yield to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, this vote to allow States to defund Planned Parenthood and other title X funded health programs is simply shameful and dangerous, and millions of Americans across this country, including tens of thousands of women and men in Illinois, are going to suffer as a result.

This vote is particularly devastating to the 2.7 million Americans who depend on Planned Parenthood for their basic preventative healthcare each year. I personally understand what is at stake with this vote because I have been there. When I was working my way through college as a waitress, with the help of Pell grants and student loans and student work-study, I relied on Planned Parenthood for my basic healthcare, for services that are just as simple as a physical that I needed to get that waiting job. I went to Planned Parenthood because that is all I could afford on a student’s budget, and I needed to get that second job.

While I can relate to the obvious good that Planned Parenthood does, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle simply cannot. They don’t understand what is at stake.

Let’s take a look at my home State of Illinois. In Illinois alone, Planned Parenthood serves 64,000 patients annually. Of those, 34,000 seek testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and nearly 7,000 are seeking out cancer screenings. So by defunding this organization, what they are really doing is stripping thousands of Illinoisans and Americans across this country from access to essential healthcare. That is simply unacceptable.

We can’t play politics with women’s healthcare. Planned Parenthood should be able to do its job and continue providing quality care and services without fear of partisan or discriminatory attacks.

The bottom line is that Planned Parenthood is one of the Nation’s largest women’s healthcare providers, and it is here. It is essential to the health of our families and our country.

This vote makes taking away not just Planned Parenthood’s funding but funding from any organization that receives title X easier, turning women around the country into second-class citizens and harming millions of Americans in the process. Why would we make it easier to take away a health center that helps our women’s public health system and serves as a lifeline for affordable, preventive services like physicals, cancer, and cervical cancer screenings? Women and men all over the country need these services. Our States and our local communities need these services because they meet a need that would otherwise not be met.

I want the men and women across this country to know that I am not going to give up. Democrats are not going to give up. I will continue to fight to protect title X funding and the people who depend on it. It is just too important.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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.

Ms. CANTWELL. 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. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues here on the Senate floor, and I thank the Senator from Washington for her leadership on this issue. I rise to join my colleagues in voicing strong opposition and deep concern on H.J. Res. 43, a resolution of disapproval we are considering today in the U.S. Senate.

This resolution will threaten access to healthcare for thousands of women and families in the State of Washington and millions of people across the Nation.

H.J. Res. 43 would make it easier for States to discriminate against healthcare providers who serve low-income and vulnerable patients under title X of the Public Health Services Act.

Title X is the only Federal funding program dedicated to supporting the family planning safety net, and it was widely supported by the public when it was enacted with strong bipartisan support. So despite what my colleagues say on the other side of the aisle, this issue is something where all my colleagues should make sure we are not taking away access to healthcare.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle in the House—and I know my colleague, the senior Senator from Washington, can testify to this, have used Planned Parenthood as a bargaining chip in a litany of high-stakes legislative negotiations. They even tried to shut down the Federal Government because they didn’t want to fund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, during the 114th Congress, Republicans voted 22 times to defund Planned Parenthood. They have used Planned Parenthood as a bargaining chip in a litany of high-stakes legislative negotiations. They even tried to shut down the Federal Government because they didn’t want to fund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, during the 114th Congress, Republicans voted 22 times to defund Planned Parenthood. They have used Planned Parenthood as a bargaining chip in a litany of high-stakes legislative negotiations. They even tried to shut down the Federal Government because they didn’t want to fund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, during the 114th Congress, Republicans voted 22 times to defund Planned Parenthood. They have used Planned Parenthood as a bargaining chip in a litany of high-stakes legislative negotiations. They even tried to shut down the Federal Government because they didn’t want to fund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, during the 114th Congress, Republicans voted 22 times to defund Planned Parenthood. They have used Planned Parenthood as a bargaining chip in a litany of high-stakes legislative negotiations. They even tried to shut down the Federal Government because they didn’t want to fund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, during the 114th Congress, Republicans voted 22 times to defund Planned Parenthood.
provide good healthcare for America. They provide a good economic strategy for America.

In our State, 34 Planned Parenthood centers provide contraceptive care, breast cancer screening, and STD and HIV treatment. They have prevented thousands of unintended pregnancies thanks to their efforts and outreach. In the very isolated communities of Fullman, Moses Lake, and Shelton, and many more, they are often the only family provider that will furnish care to low-income individuals. Major medical organizations—representing obstetricians, gynecologists, family physicians, and pediatricians—have also made it clear that this resolution is driven from medical science and will hurt patients.

I urge my colleagues to continue their senseless political crusade. I hope they will be smart enough to understand that a healthcare strategy and an economic strategy I hope they will defeat this resolution.

GONZAGA BULLDOGS

Mr. President, what a great moment—my colleague from Washington is here, and my colleague from Nevada is here. I want to make something. We definitely want to cheer Gonzaga Bulldogs in Saturday's game. But so many people say: Where is Gonzaga? It is in Spokane, WA, and we are proud of Spokane. It is a city that hosts Hootepster, a Thirty-three basketball game that many people attend, and an enormous Bloomsday race that so many people come to from across the country right on the first of May. I think some more around 60,000 people are in that race. But we are also so proud that we also have a Gonzaga School of Law graduate here on the Senate floor—the Senator from Nevada. Gonzaga also produced Ms. Cortez Masto, my colleague from Washington.

So for everybody from Spokane, congratulations and good luck on Saturday's game.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I say to my colleague from the great State of Washington, I do know where Gonzaga is, and I am with you. As a graduate from the Gonzaga School of Law, I am going to the final four. And this time we are going to win. I am very excited.

Congratulations to the players, the coach, and all those at the school.

Mr. President, I take the floor today to urge my colleagues across the aisle to stand up for their constituents and vote against the measure on the floor, which will restrict access to safe, affordable, basic healthcare to millions of Americans across this country. This measure will allow States to discriminate against title X family planning clinics for no other reason than petty partisan politics that degrade women's access to healthcare and turn it into a Republican talking point.

These clinics provide essential family planning and health services to millions of American women, men, and families—many of who are poor and low-income and in rural areas. This measure will cause these families to suffer by limiting their access to healthcare.

In my home State of Nevada, there are 23 clinics that risk losing funds as a result of this measure. These clinics are in Nevada's major cities and in our rural areas, like Hawthorne, Lovelock, Pahrump, Tonopah, Elly, Winnemucca, and Fallon. For many families in our rural areas, these clinics are the only healthcare facilities where they can access family planning services, as well as basic primary and preventive healthcare services.

The votes today empower States to discriminate against providers and, in turn, threaten the health and safety of the men, women, and families who rely on these clinics for basic and, at times, lifesaving services. We should be promoting access to healthcare, especially for our rural and low-income communities. We should not be expanding access to care, especially for Americans living in rural areas.

Republicans' actions today are an affront to American women and families. Their political shortsighted approach will do nothing but cause harm to Americans. It is time for Republicans to stop playing politics with women's health and actually put Americans' health and safety first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, instead of focusing on bipartisan reforms to improve access to healthcare for the American people, Republicans are again pursuing divisive policies that jeopardize women's health and put politics, politicians, and the government between a woman and her doctor. This measure that we are debating this afternoon at the critical healthcare program known as the Title X Family Planning Program.

The Title X Family Planning Program provides basic healthcare, like cancer screenings, contraception, and HIV testing to more than 4 million women and men. This politically motivated provision that we have before us today would allow States to discriminate against trusted health providers like Planned Parenthood. In eight counties in Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood is the only health clinic that provides the full range of publicly funded contraceptive services.

I met with Laurie from Bristol, WI, who told me that as a young teacher, she went to Planned Parenthood and they discovered that she had cysts and tumors in her ovaries. The providers immediately helped her get the care she needed. She had quick surgery and was able to recover, which allowed her to eventually have a family.

Republican lawmakers and telling women they can't access basic primary and preventive healthcare services at the health center of their choice. This would cut off access to care for millions of men and women, prohibiting access to high-quality, preventive services just because of the sign on the door. They would prevent women like Laurie from accessing lifesaving services when they need it the most.

We have already seen too many States enact record numbers of laws and regulations that restrict a woman's access to reproductive health services and the freedom to make her own healthcare decisions. In my home State of Wisconsin, our Republican Governor has signed a number of laws that target healthcare providers and simply have left far too many Wisconsin women out in the cold. He signed a law that forces women to undergo unnecessary and invasive medical procedures, and he has imposed unreasonable requirements on the doctors that deliver care to women. He has worked to close health clinics, including several Planned Parenthood centers that he has closed. He hasn't stopped there. He also signed two laws that would effectively defund Wisconsin Planned Parenthood, which could leave thousands of Wisconsin women without access to critical health services.

The threat in Wisconsin and in States across the country—and right here in Congress—is clear: Politicians across the country are playing doctor, and this is a dangerous game for women and their families. The millions of Americans who rely on Title X for primary care and their trusted providers are being held hostage. They are being used as a political punching bag by congressional Republicans. Their agenda is to attack women's health. Women's access to comprehensive healthcare—the healthcare they need and deserve—should never depend upon their ZIP Code. So I urge my colleagues to oppose this dangerous measure and to protect title X programs for all of our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, we are here today because Republicans' discrimination against women knows no boundaries. They think a woman's right to choose is still up for discussion. It is not.

Let me be clear. A woman's right to choose is a discussion for a woman and her doctor. That is it. A healthcare provider receiving Federal funds should be judged on their ability to serve a patient. That is it.

Today, Republicans are voting on a measure that would allow States to discriminate against family planning providers simply because they do not like the populations they treat or the services they provide. It would embolden a State to restrict Federal funding for only health centers that serve low-income and minority populations or patients who identify as LGBTQ, and it would allow a State to strip away Federal investments in family planning
clinics that serve women's reproductive health needs.

These are not hypothetical concerns. Women's reproductive care is under attack by extreme rightwing Republicans across this country. State politicians introduced more than 300 bills restricting access to reproductive healthcare in 2016, enacting more than 60 new abortion restrictions last year.

Let's be clear. The result of today's vote means that there will be less access to care for women and families across this country. Health centers receiving Title X funding provide basic primary and preventive healthcare services, such as HIV testing and contraception, to more than 4 million women and men at nearly 4,000 healthcare centers nationwide. It is because of the work done at these centers that we are now at a 30-year low in unintended pregnancies, a historic low in teen pregnancies, and we have the lowest rate of abortions since the Supreme Court ruled that abortion was legal in 1973. We are a healthier Nation because of family planning clinics that receive Title X funding.

Now, more than ever, we need to stand and raise our voice against the Republican Party's agenda of discrimination. It is about fighting for the freedom to make decisions in our personal lives without the fear of interference from our own government. It is about the access to opportunity that comes from quality, affordable healthcare and making healthcare accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, without discrimination, no matter what gender you are. But with Donald Trump as President and both Chambers of Congress now controlled by the GOP, national Republicans are in the best position in decades to enact a radical agenda that rolls back women's rights. Today is just one step in their massive plan to strip funding for vital primary care, preventive and family planning services for more than 4 million Americans across our country, especially women and those who live in rural communities of my State and other States.

Since 1970, this body has supported Title X funding to expand access to affordable healthcare for low-income men and women. We did that because we understood that it wasn't just the right thing to do, we recognized that it was a good investment. Each dollar invested in publicly funded family planning programs returns over $7 in Medicaid-related costs.

The other side rails against Medicaid spending. In fact, last week, they had a bill that cut it by about $850 billion. But if they succeed on this vote today, Medicaid spending would almost certainly rise as a result of what they are trying to do.

We supported Title X funding with both Republican majorities and Democratic majorities in the Senate. Now a narrow majority is trying to ram this measure through.

This isn't supported by a consensus of Americans, and you know it is not when Vice President PENCE has to drive over here from the White House to cast a tie-breaking vote. Just yesterday, the Vice President was at a White House forum on women's empowerment. It begs the question: Did he learn anything at the forum?

It is easy for Senators, apparently, to vote against women struggling Americans. I wonder sometimes whether the reason for that is that we are not affected by this vote. That is doubly true when 50 Senators—overwhelmingly men—vote to cut healthcare for millions of low-income women.

The vote today has real consequences for Colorado. If this measure passes, it will threaten to cut funding for Title X health centers serving over 52,000 men, women, and teens each year. It will also close over 20 Planned Parenthood clinics throughout Colorado that provide healthcare services to more than 86,000 men, women, and teens. Planned Parenthood is a critical part of Colorado's healthcare system, providing essential services in a quarter of the State's counties. This support is especially vital for our rural areas. Two weeks ago, I visited Alamosa and Durango, CO, where these health centers are some of the only places women can turn to for preventive care and family planning services.

We should not do this. Pediatricians are against it. Family physicians are against it. Nurses are against it. But on the other side, we have a narrow majority voting to strip funding for vital primary and preventive care, including breast cancer screenings and HIV testing.

I would invite anyone voting against this measure, including the Vice President, to come to Alamosa and Durango and see what these health centers are doing in our communities. I invite them to come and meet the people they help, the lives they change.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this measure. It will hurt many of our fellow Americans. It will hurt women in my State and particularly working people, and it should not pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I hear colleagues from the other side of the aisle talk again and again about how they want patient-centered healthcare. That is the refrain—patient-centered healthcare. Make no mistake about what this resolution is all about. It turns that phrase on its head because what they say to certain right women who are patients: You are not free to go get the healthcare you want.

It seems like this never ends—another day, another effort to deny women the opportunity to have the kinds of healthcare choices and the healthcare services that they feel strongly about.

I am not going to take long; I know colleagues are in a hurry. I just want to say that the next time you hear this lofty rhetoric—particularly from the majority—about how everything they are going to do in American healthcare is going to put the patients at the center of healthcare, give people more choices, and protect the freedom that they talk about in healthcare—understand, if you vote for this resolution, you are repudiating all of those speeches. I have heard Senator MURRAY talk about it. She says it very eloquently. She talks about it. I mean, I can't bottom line it. This resolution not only doesn't support that lofty rhetoric about patients being at the center of healthcare, this resolution deprives women of choices and access to healthcare services they want.

I hope my colleagues will join Senator MURRAY and understand the dangerous consequences of what is at stake. Oppose this resolution and save the Vice President the trip to the Hill.

I yield back.
Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[YEA—50]

Alexander
Barrasso
Blunt
Boozman
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Cochran
Corker
Coryn
Cotton
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Enzi
Enzi
Fischer
Franken
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts
Sooo
Sasse
Shelby
Rubio
Sasse
Smith
Sasse
Tillis
Toomey
Wicker
Young

NAYS—50

Baldwin
Benet
Bennumenthal
Booher
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Collins
Cousens
Cortez Masto
Donnelly
Duckworth
Durbin
Feinstein
Franken
Gillibrand
Harris
Heitkamp
Hirono
Johnson
Kaine
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Manchin
McCaskill
Menendez
McSduct
Merkel
Murkowski
Nelson
Paul
Rubio
Sasse
Sasse
Shaheen
Stabenow
Tillis
Udall
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 43, is passed.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNEL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Monday, April 3, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 18, S. 89, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage with no intervening action on the floor. I further ask that for debate, the vote on passage, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 24, the nomination of Elaine Duke to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. I further ask that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, with the concurrence of the Democratic leader, on Tuesday, April 4, the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Cassidy). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Iowa.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

RESOLUTION

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise to thank my colleagues for their support of my legislation to overturn President Obama’s eleventh hour rule that revokes States’ rights to determine the best eligible subgrantees for title X family planning funding. It should be the right of our States to allocate subgrants under the title X program in the way that best fits the needs of the people living there. Unfortunately, like many other rules that were issued during the Obama administration, this rule attempted to empower Federal bureaucrats in Washington and silence our States.

As we all know, States are closer to the people and with more familiar with the healthcare providers and patients within their borders and should be able to make their own decisions about the best eligible title X subgrantees, be they hospitals, federally qualified community health centers, or other types of providers. A number of States have acted in recent years to prioritize title X subgrants to more comprehensive providers, where women can receive greater preventive and primary care than they can with providers like Planned Parenthood.

The Obama administration’s rule attempted to claim that providers like Planned Parenthood can “accomplish Title X program goals more effectively.” This rhetoric does not match the reality. In fact, after Representative Dianne Black and I led more than 100 of our colleagues in pointing that out to the Obama administration, HHS acknowledged the challenge of measuring effectiveness across all types of title X recipients and sub-recipients and therefore removed the word “effectively” from the final rule. So why was this rule implemented in the first place? It is because the Obama administration wanted to do everything it could to secure Federal funding streams for Planned Parenthood before they turned over the keys to the Trump administration. With our vote today, we prevented that from happening.

But let me be clear. Although it is no secret that I do not believe Planned Parenthood—the Nation’s single largest provider of abortion services—is deserving of Federal taxpayer dollars, this legislation does not prevent Planned Parenthood or any other specific entity from receiving title X funds. If States like Washington or Massachusetts want to distribute their title X subgrants to Planned Parenthood, this legislation to overturn the Obama administration’s rule will not prevent them from doing so, nor does it overturn the rule reduce overall funding levels for the Title X Family Planning Program.

In fact, this legislation does not in any way decrease women’s healthcare...
funding. Rather, overturning the rule merely empowers States over a Washington-knows-best mentality and assures that States have the ability to identify the best eligible title X subgrantees. It restores local control and ensures that States aren’t forced by the Federal Government to provide abortion providers like Planned Parenthood with taxpayer dollars.

I appreciate my colleagues’ support of this legislation, and I look forward to President Trump signing it and scrapping the Obama administration’s overreaching eleventh-hour rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, on January 18, 2017, two days before President Obama left office, he finalized a rule and put it in place to require States—regardless of their decisions in their State—to have to use Planned Parenthood and the decision making from each State.

In the past, it had been very straightforward. States were allowed the opportunity to be able to examine who was the best decision maker to be able to help and find which provider was the best provider in their community for title X funding. For that family planning funding, when it occurs and when it goes through the process, the States made the decision, looked at the providers, found out who was the most comprehensive provider, and could provide the best healthcare, and they made that final decision.

President Obama, two days before he left office, finalized a rule to remove that right from States and to compel each State to be able to use Planned Parenthood.

States like mine and many other States said: We want to do family planning in our State. We want to have comprehensive healthcare in our State, but we do not want to provide Federal funds to the single largest provider of abortion in the country. That was a reasonable decision that our State lawmakers could make to be able to protect the lives of women in our State and to protect the lives of children for the future. That reasonable, common-sense method was removed two days before President Obama left office.

I am proud that this Senate just passed this resolution. It is a reasonable, common-sense act for us to be able to do, and I look forward to the President’s signature.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NOMINATION OF NEIL Gorsuch

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, when his nomination comes to the floor next week, I will vote to confirm Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. This is my first time voting on a Supreme Court nominee, and I don’t take the decision lightly. It is a lifetime appointment, after all, and the Court’s rulings have far-reaching impact for good and for ill—and will continue to shape our future. But after reading Judge Gorsuch’s writings, meeting with him in person, and listening to his testimony, I can say with confidence that it is not a hard call. I believe Judge Gorsuch will be a fine addition to the Supreme Court.

There is no denying Judge Gorsuch’s distinctive qualifications. We all know his credentials: Columbia, Harvard law, and an Oxford doctorate to boot. He clerked for an appellate judge and two Supreme Court Justices. He had many years of experience in both private practice and in public service and, of course, over 10 years as an appellate judge. He possesses fine judicial temperament, is highly regarded, and highly regarded by those who know him best. It is no surprise, then, that the American Bar Association, in an unanimous vote, declared him “well qualified” for the job.

While I wouldn’t outside our responsibilities to any advocacy organization, I would note that the minority leader himself once said the ABA rating is “the gold standard by which judicial candidates are judged.” But, of course, Judge Gorsuch is not just filling any seat, but the seat once held by the late Justice Antonin Scalia. Justice Scalia was a giant of American jurisprudence. Most Justices earn their place in history by writing their opinions, giving voice to their colleagues, and speaking for the Court as a whole. Justice Scalia did that many times throughout his career, of course, but he did something more. He changed the way judges—both conservative and liberal—think about the law and defend their decisions. He reminded us all that a judge’s job is to apply the law—including the Constitution, our most fundamental law—as written, to the case before him, not to rewrite it all together.

Adhering to the law, even when the judge doesn’t like the result, is the greatest public service that a judge can render, because to respect the rule of law is ultimately to respect the rule of the people.

This is what Justice Scalia taught and what he inspired a whole generation of judges and lawyers to understand. As we prepare to fill his seat on the Supreme Court, let us also acknowledge that no man can fill his shoes. We honor the memory of Justice Scalia and we thank his wife, Maureen, and his whole family for sharing this great man with our country for so long. Judge Gorsuch is a child of the Scalia generation. He has long advocated for and followed the originalist judicial craft—one rooted in the text, structure, and history of our Constitution, which is to say that he respects the rule of law and he respects the people.

Whether defending the religious liberty of the Little Sisters of the Poor or the Fourth Amendment rights of a regular household, he has shown a profound respect for the Constitution. I also think he has demonstrated throughout his career a firm independence of thought. He has had his influences and his mentors, his promoters and his critics, but I believe he will be his own man—as he should be.

I am pleased to announce my support for the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch. I look forward to his confirmation next week.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to initially speak about the bipartisan Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act, but first 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. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, distance is no always the reason that veterans don’t get the healthcare they need, but that is exactly what is happening to veterans across the country. That is why the Veterans Choice
Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I know several Members are ready to come here and talk on a veterans issue, and they will let me know when they are ready to start. I thought there might be a good chance to get this done.

Our democracy is at risk. Our intelligence agencies have concluded that the Russian Government interfered in the U.S. Presidential election and intervened to help Candidate Trump. At the same time, Candidate Trump began making flattering statements about Russian President Putin and proposing pro-Russia policy changes while criticizing longstanding U.S. allies, including in Europe.

President Trump continues to defend Putin and offend Western allies. Now we have come to learn that there are unexplained ties between the President, his campaign staff, his associates, and Russia; that many close to the President had meetings and telephone calls with Russian officials during the campaign and the transition; most critically, that the FBI and the Department of Justice are investigating whether the President and his associates conspired with the Russian Government to interfere with the Presidential election—an investigation that began last July and is likely to continue for months.

The President and his associates keep giving incoherent and contradictory reasons for worry—inaccurate denials, evasive answers, explosive attacks they can’t back up, scheming with the chair of the House Intelligence Committee on the committee’s investigation of the White House. New, very disturbing information comes to light every day.

a recent CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll showed that two thirds of Americans believe a special prosecutor should be appointed. The American people want that. What was the scope of the interference? Who knew what, and when? How can we protect ourselves and our allies, who are facing similar cyber attacks? What is the appropriate government response to such an attack?

I appreciate the work the Senate Intelligence Committee is doing. I believe that is the first step, but I believe we must go further. That is why I am again calling for an independent, bipartisan presidential commission on the Russian elections, and the 9/11 Commission to fully investigate Russia’s interference with our election and our election processes and to investigate the ties between the President, his family businesses, and his close associates and Russia that may threaten our national security.

I am also again calling on the Department of Justice to appoint a special counsel to investigate potential criminal conduct that may jeopardize our security.

Questions about the President’s ties to Russia will divide the country, undermine his Presidency, and distract Congress, unless we take these steps.

The American people are right to be concerned. The President’s stance on Russia is perplexing, starting when he first denounced the role of NATO last spring, calling it “obsolete,” suggesting that it would be OK if NATO broke up. Then, he publicly aligned Russia to block Hillary Clinton’s emails.

Then, Mr. Trump’s campaign manager, Paul Manafort, was forced to resign because of his close political and financial ties to Ukraine’s former pro-Russian President. He became the subject of a multi-agency investigation. We don’t have the full story, but we do know that he failed to register as a foreign agent while he lobbied for pro-Russian Ukrainian interests in the United States. It appears that Manafort has a $10 million contract with a Russian oligarch who is very close to Putin that would “greatly benefit the Putin Government” and that he had at least 15 offshore bank accounts in Cyprus that even Cypriot officials thought were fictitious. Once those bank officials began asking about money laundering activities, Manafort closed the accounts rather than answer questions.

During his campaign, Mr. Trump stated that he would “be looking at” whether to recognize Crimea as Russian and to lift sanctions. President Trump and his team apparently took little or no interest in the debate over the party platform in the Republican National Convention. One thing—Ukraine. They intervened with delegates to get more Russia-friendly language in the Republican Party platform. Candidate Trump’s national security policy staffer J.D. Gordon told CNN: “This was the language Donald Trump himself wanted . . . and advocated for . . . back in March.” Now Gordon is reportedly under investigation for his ties to Russia.

We have all heard the President complain that President Putin, calling him a strong leader. Why is the President so enamored, when Putin’s actions are authoritarian, violent, and anti-democratic? Putin seeks to weaken NATO and the European Council. He annexed Crimea in violation of international law and treaties. He interfered with our national election. Putin has crushed free press in the Russian Federation, placing restriction upon restriction on the press, quashing independent news media, and harassing and jailing journalists. The President’s outspoken admiration is inexplicable.

So we are still left with a President who has expressed policy views toward Russia that run counter to U.S. ideals and treaty obligations, as well as global norms of international law. While we don’t know the full extent of the President’s financial, personal, and political ties to Russia and Putin, we do know that the President is acting in an impartial investigation. The President’s still has not released his tax returns, unlike any previous modern President. His son Donald Junior volunteered, as far as
back as 2008, that “Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets. . . . We see a lot of money pouring in from Russia.”

In 2013, Mr. Trump said on a talk show: “Well, I’ve done a lot of business with the Russian Ambassador.”

Due to his history of bankruptcies, no major U.S. bank would loan to Donald Trump in recent years. So he has needed new sources of capital for his real estate. There is growing reason to believe that Russia—or at least wealthy Russians—have financial interests in the Trump organization. Recent reports link the President and his companies to ten wealthy former Soviet businessmen with alleged ties to criminal organizations or money laundering. The extent of corruption and criminal ties among the oligarchs of Russia are well known, and to stay wealthy oligarchs, they must stay close to power.

Is the Trump organization reliant on Russian capital or loans from Russian banks? What relationships are there between Russian oligarchs that are tied to the Russian Government and the Organization’s financial transactions and between those former Soviet businessmen and Trump’s properties? We need to get to the bottom of this, with a credible, deliberate, nonpartisan investigation.

Mr. Trump has surrounded himself with associates with close Russian ties—not just Mr. Manafort. Michael Flynn headed to Russia within 18 months after his retirement as the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Russian Government’s media outfit RT. Secretary John Kerry called RT a “propaganda bullhorn” for Putin. Mr. Flynn was paid for that trip by RT, a potential violation of the emoluments clause of the Constitution, and appeared regularly on RT. Flynn, of course, had to resign as National Security Advisor after 24 days in office. But the President knew of Flynn’s misrepresentations weeks before he was fired, and continuing until it became public. We now know that Russia’s payments to Flynn were generous. In 2015, Russian entities paid him $65,000. We know he worked for pay as a foreign agent for Turkey during the campaign and during the transition, but he failed to register as an agent at the time, as required by law.

Other Trump associates and campaign staff—Roger Stone, Carter Page, and Mr. Gordon—all are reportedly under investigation for involvement in communications and financial transactions with Russia. Stone admitted at least 16 contacts with Gufficer 2.0, the Twitter handle covering for Russian intelligence that released the Democratic National Committee hacked emails.

Page, who has strong financial ties with Russia, admitted to meeting with the Russian Ambassador during the Republican Convention and traveling to Russia during the campaign.

The President’s Attorney General was forced to recuse himself from any Department of Justice investigation into Trump and Russia because he did not disclose to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he met with the Russian Ambassador during the campaign.

Now, the President’s son-in-law and senior adviser is set to testify before the Senate’s Intelligence Committee. He will talk about his contacts with the Russian ambassador, a close Putin ally who is head of a Russian-owned bank.

Where does it stop, folks? Where does it stop?

These contacts give us enough reason for pause. Come Mr. Trump’s positions on NATO, sanctions relief, and Russia’s human rights violations, they raise serious security questions for the United States and NATO. As I said, we need an independent prosecutor at the helm to ensure that the whole of the investigation is not compromised—one who is not subject to White House pressure and not in a position of investigating his or her boss—and a bipartisan commission along the lines of the 9/11 Commission that is independent of politics.

The chair of the House Intelligence Committee is compromised and damaged beyond repair. He has coordinated with the subjects of his committee’s investigation, and he has completely lost credibility. I compliment my Senate colleagues who are working together on an investigation. But the Senate committee does not have the resources to fully investigate this, and the ranking Democrat on the committee agrees we need an independent investigation that could go further, that could be public, and could be transparent.

A former Acting Director of the CIA called the Russian interference in our election one of the most successful covert operations in history. Former Vice President Cheney has said that they did “couple acts of war.” By covert interference in a U.S. election, Russia pursued a policy to install its favorite candidate as President of the United States. Yet the President has dismissed the National Security Agency findings, telling our National security agencies of acting like Nazi Germany, and leveled fake charges at the former President.

The American people are not fooled, and they want Congress to get to the bottom of this. We in Congress have a solemn duty to the American people to do just that.

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. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum be dispensed with.

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

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the bipartisan Veteran's Choice Program Improvement Act. I will start my remarks by saying that Chairman ISAKSON was here earlier, and he had a meeting he had to get to. Johnny has been through a tough surgery, and it is good to have Johnny back, but the rest of the matter is he supports this bill. He is an original cosponsor of this bill. The same could be said of Senator BLUMENTHAL, who also had a meeting and wanted to be here, once again. We heard from Senator SCHatz earlier. They are truly the right support, not only in the VA Committee but also in this body.

The reason people support this piece of legislation is because it brings much needed reforms to the Choice Program while ensuring that veterans can access care in their communities. It is a good bill.

A few years back, the Choice Program was established with the very best of intentions. In my home State of Montana, it is common knowledge that veterans were waiting far too long for an appointment at the VA and oftentimes had to drive over 100 miles for the appointment. The Choice Program was supposed to allow these veterans to access care closer to home. Unfortunately, it has not been working out the way it should, and veterans have been inundated with redtape and a government contractor that struggles to schedule appointments and pay providers on time. They are working together—Democrats and Republicans and even Independents—on this bill to put forth these much needed reforms.

The Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act cuts redtape so veterans can access care more quickly. In fact, I made it clear from the get-go that I would not vote to extend the Choice Program until Congress and the VA have addressed some of the biggest concerns I have been hearing from Montana veterans and community providers.

Once we get the bill passed, this program reimburses community providers more quickly for the care they provide to our veterans. It reduces out-of-pocket costs for veterans receiving care through the Choice Program. It improves the sharing of medical records between the VA and the community providers to better ensure seamless care for veterans, whether they are seeing a VA doctor or their community. It allows the VA to access all the funding initially appropriated for this program to ensure that veterans’ access to care is not disrupted.

This bill is not going to fix everything but it is certainly a step in the right direction. With this legislation, combined with assurances that I have received from VA Montana, VA folks within the State will be allowed to schedule appointments for Montana’s veterans directly instead of going through an inept government contract.

It is my hope that we can make the Choice Program work the way it was
intended when we first set it up, with the goal of serving those who have served our country.

I again express my appreciation for taking this bill up on the floor, this Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act, and I think it is a prime example of the kind of body needed to work together to solve problems—in this case, for our veterans community. We should push this bill out as soon as possible.

I yield the floor to Senator MORA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORA. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks, as well as the working together with the Senator from Montana as we tried to make certain that a program that is so valuable to veterans across the country—in my case particularly, veterans who live in rural America, in Kansas—to make certain that veterans can attain the care they have earned and the care they deserve.

We had a scandal at the VA in which many tragic things happened, and Congress came together at that time and passed the Choice Act. What that law basically has given our veterans is, if they live 40 miles from a VA facility—in other words, if they live a long distance from access to care—they can, at their choice, have that care at home: hometown hospital, hometown physician, pharmacy, physical therapy. They can see a provider in their hometown.

In so many instances in Kansas—in fact, I have mentioned this before on the Senate floor. The House district I represent as a Congressman is larger than the State of Illinois, and there is no VA hospital in that congressional district. So veterans not having to travel 2, 3, 4, 5 hours to Denver or to Wichita or to Amarillo is of such value to our veterans, particularly those who have a disability or are aging. What we did in the passage of Choice was so useful to so many veterans.

The other part of that was that if you couldn’t get the care you needed within 30 days at the VA, you could then attain your care at home. Again, with the backlog that was occurring at the VA, the lack of providers, this became important to another set of veterans who, because of their health condition, couldn’t afford to wait that long to see a physician, to have surgery.

The other part of my legislation. If you are somebody who cares about veterans, you need to be in favor of this Choice Act. If you are someone who cares about particularly rural or veterans who need timely care, you especially ought to be supportive of Choice.

The challenge we have is that the Choice Act is expiring. It expires August 7, and it needs to be extended. There are dollars available in the program. Mandatory spending is available to pay for the services to a later date.

As the Senator from Montana indicated, there are a number of provisions that haven’t worked very well in Choice because of the bureaucratic nature of the program, the way the program has been established. One of those that are most important is that you have veterans on one side who need the care and choose Choice, but you also need a willing provider. The local hospital or doctor needs to be willing to provide that care. I have never known a provider who was not honored to provide care to a veteran, but the challenge in many instances becomes whether that provider, that doctor or hospital gets reimbursed, gets paid.

This legislation has a number of reforms, but in my view, one of the most critical and most important is to make the VA the payer, to make the VA be the entity that writes out the check to pay the hospital bill, to pay the physician for the services provided.

So this is another reform that improves really on both sides. It eliminates some of the bureaucracy that a veteran could have to go through often a number of times a veteran may receive a notice that he or she owes money that should be paid by the Choice Program, and it also encourages—by paying them—the physician or the hospital to provide the care. The reforms, important changes in the Choice Act that are worthy of our support.

What is transpiring here are a couple of reforms to the Choice Program and its extension to a later date, until the money expires, so the Choice Program can continue, and Congress can now take that time to determine what we want to do with the Choice Program into the future after that point in time. I appreciate the way in which this legislation has worked.

Often I get asked whether there is any hope that Congress can work together, that Republicans and Democrats can solve problems. This is an example of where that is taking place today. And it is a fine example of what we all have for our veterans and the good will that exists by those who serve in Congress to make sure that good things happen for our military men and women who are now veterans.

I regret that the chairman of the Veterans’ Committee, the Senator from Georgia, Mr. ISAKSON, is unable to be with us, but, as the Senator from Montana indicated, he is fully supportive of this legislation. In fact, he is an original sponsor of the legislation.

I am at the OPRA with my colleagues to agree to the unanimous consent resolution, that this legislation be passed. It will be another step in solving problems and caring for those who served our nation.

Yesterday, I was at the Arlington National Cemetery—a reminder of the debt we owe to so many people. Those are veterans who are now deceased. Those are military men and women who have now died. Those who are living, the care and treatment, but the care and treatment that our VA can provide and the opportunities that our providers in our hometowns can assist in providing.

We want to make sure that good things continue to happen. We want to improve the quality of service, get the problems out of the Choice Program, and make sure those who are so deserving of quality care actually receive it. I just want to yield back to the Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I would like to thank the good Senator from Kansas for his comments and his leadership not only on the VA Committee on which we both serve but also as chairman of the Appropriations MILCON-VA Subcommittee, the subcommittee that really sees how the money is going to be utilized within the VA. I think Senator MORA has covered just about all of it. I just want to go back and say one thing.

We are going to have a unanimous consent. I am told there will be an objection to it. That is truly unfortunate because this has been a bipartisan effort. It has cleared everyone in the Senate floor. The House district I represent as a Congressman is larger than the State of Illinois, and there is only one person, to my knowledge, and I think that is unfortunate.

One of the complaints I hear is that the primary payer provision of this bill is the problem. The primary payer provision of this bill requires the VA to be exactly that—the primary payer of the bills. My question would be, Why is this a bad thing? Right now veterans are being hamstrung and delayed, and the folks who provide the benefits, the providers, are not getting the dollars in a timely manner. I would just ask, if the VA is not going to be the primary payer, who is?

These folks have put it on the line for this country, and they come back in different shape than when they left, after they bore the battles of war. Some of the injuries are seen; some of the injuries are unseen. And we are not going to say “You know what. Don’t worry about it. We are going to make sure you get the care, and we are going to make sure it is paid for”? It is part of the cost of war. So when we send our young men and women off to war, we ought to be thinking about this stuff. And we have a solution. We have a solution to part of the problems with the Choice Program.

If we get this bill passed, it will give us the opportunity to work together to get a long-term bill passed before the first of the year to really address the needs of our veterans so that there are wraparound services at the VA that veterans can count on.

I would just say that this is supposed to be a very deliberative body, and for the most part, it is pretty deliberative. But when you have a situation of a program that we put into effect—that Congress passed and the Senate had a big part of writing—and it is not working, we ought to fix it, and this bill fixes it in good part. We have some more work to do, as I said, but this bill is a step in the right direction. Getting that our VA can provide and the opportunities that our providers in our hometowns can assist in providing.
I am just going to close by saying I want to thank everybody from both sides of the aisle who worked together to get this bill crafted and get this bill to this point. I hope that at some point in time, people will take a look at this bill for what it does and realize that there is a reason, even in this bill, that our veterans deserve us to work together to find solutions to move the ball forward so they can get the healthcare they were promised when they signed on the dotted line to protect this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that one of my colleagues is en route to speak and perhaps object to this motion that is to be made. Would ask my colleague from Montana if he would mind holding for a few moments until that Senator arrives.

Mr. 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.

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

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

MERRICK GARLAND AND FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to lend my voice in support of perhaps one of the most qualified individuals ever nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court. I am referring, of course, to Chief Judge Merrick Garland.

Over 1 year ago, on March 16, 2016, a President who was twice elected by significant margins in both the popular vote and the electoral college nominated Judge Garland to fill the vacancy left by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. President Obama upheld his constitutional duty by submitting a name to the Senate to fill this vacancy.

By submitting the name of Merrick Garland, he gave the Senate a man who has spent his career working to build consensus and to find principled compromises. His impeccable credentials speak for themselves: Harvard undergrad, top of his class; Harvard Law, top of his class; law clerk to Judge Friendly on the Second Circuit and Justice Brennan on the Supreme Court. He served in the Justice Department after a time in private practice.

When tragedy befell Oklahoma City in April of 1995, Merrick Garland led the investigation that brought justice to the perpetrators of that unthinkable act of terrorism. Judge Gorsuch called this work “The most important thing I have ever done in my life.”

His career has come full circle at that point. In 1997, Republicans and Democrats joined together to confirm Judge Garland to the DC Circuit, stated these words: ‘‘Any judge with a bright mind and a fair heart is welcome here but on the Supreme Court and appeals court, Judge Garland a hearing and a vote. We can get it across the finish line. But we can’t get it across the finish line and we wonder why our popularity is in the single digits in this country.

I am just going to close by saying I want to thank everybody from both sides of the aisle who worked together to get this bill crafted and get this bill to this point. I hope that at some point in time, people will take a look at this bill for what it does and realize that there is a reason, even in this bill, that our veterans deserve us to work together to find solutions to move the ball forward so they can get the healthcare they were promised when they signed on the dotted line to protect this country.

The historical record does not reveal any instances since at least 1900 of the president failing to nominate and/or the Senate failing to confirm a nominee in a presidential election year because of the impending election. That is right off the blog.
Judge Garland was denied a hearing and a vote. In fact, during the 1968 Presidential election year, Justice Anthony Kennedy was confirmed by the Senate 97 to 0—not 51 to 49, not 60 to 40, but 97 to 0. But Judge Garland was denied a vote.

Our Constitution, the one that every Member of this great deliberative body has sworn an oath to uphold, standing right over there, requires the Senate to provide its advice and consent to Supreme Court nominees. Over the years, there have been a lot of questions as to what advice and consent entails. Judge Garland was denied a hearing and a vote. A good man—I think an extraordinary man—was treated badly, as was our Constitution.

I believe the unprecedented obstruction our Republican colleagues mounted last year against Judge Garland was a shameful chapter for the U.S. Senate. Mr. Garland, a consensus builder, one of the most qualified judges in our country, waited 48 days for a hearing and a vote that ultimately never came. I am still deeply troubled by those 293 wasted days, and I am still deeply troubled by the way Judge Garland was treated. I believe Judge Garland still deserves a hearing and still deserves a vote.

While I do not believe that two wrongs make a right, I believe this may be our only opportunity to right a wrong and erase the enormous black mark on the Senate by considering Judge Garland leaves on this chapter of American history. I think it is unacceptable to put partisan politics over fidelity to our U.S. Constitution. Confirming anyone for this vacancy treated badly, as was our Constitution. I believe Judge Garland still deserves a hearing and still deserves a vote.

From where I sit, upholding our oath to protect the Constitution means finding agreement on moving Judge Garland forward at the same time as that of Judge Neil Gorsuch, President Trump’s nominee. When President Trump lost the popular vote by nearly 3 million votes last year and narrowly won the electoral college, he promised to be a President for all Americans. I think a fair question is, Has he upheld that promise?

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Well, let’s decide—an unconstitutional Muslim ban, an unnecessary and overpriced wall on the southern border, a failed bill that would have provided less coverage for more money, a rollback of environmental protections for all of us who don’t want to drink dirty water and don’t want to breathe dirty air. If you ask me, the President has broken the promise to be a President for all Americans. Now I realize that others may differ and disagree, but his nomination of Judge Gorsuch represents what I believe is another broken promise.

I have heard from middle-class folks, from working folks, and down our State, from special education teachers, from immigrant communities, from women who depend on access to healthcare, and my guess is my colleagues have as well. Many of them fear that Judge Gorsuch is not on their side. Despite his impressive resume, I share those same concerns.

At this time, I believe it is appropriate until an agreement can be reached that provides justice for Judge Garland while restoring credibility to the U.S. Senate. I believe that is only bolstered by the cloud that lingers over President Trump’s campaign.

As FBI Director Comey testified last week, there is an ongoing investigation to determine the links between Russia and the Trump campaign and whether there was any coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia to interfere in the 2016 election. It has also been widely reported in the media that officials from the upper echelon of Trump’s campaign have close ties to Vladimir Putin’s interests in weakening democratic governments throughout the world. There are many Americans who believe that Judge Gorsuch has been nominated for a stolen Supreme Court seat. There are also a number of Americans who believe that he has been nominated by a man whose campaign may have coordinated with foreign adversaries on stealing a Presidential election.

Let me be clear. At the moment, no evidence has been made public to indicate that this is the case, but there are several nominations that any President will make that will have more of an impact on our Constitution and on the lives of everyday Americans than the U.S. Supreme Court. To hastily move forward with Judge Gorsuch, who is 49 years old and can serve on the Supreme Court well into the middle of this century, without first getting to the bottom of the suspicious and irregular actions of the Trump campaign officials, I believe, would be a mistake.

The American people need to know that the President’s campaign was above reproach before we decide whether Judge Gorsuch merits approval for a lifetime appointment.

I will close my remarks by offering a word of caution to my colleagues. We have maintained and preserved a 60-vote threshold for Supreme Court nominees to prevent Democrats and Republicans from choosing political expediency over bipartisan consensus. If Judge Gorsuch has 60 votes on the cloture vote next week, I think it could signal one of three things. First, that Judge Gorsuch’s views are outside the judicial mainstream; second, that we still have an opportunity to rectify the injustice done to Judge Garland and to our Constitution; or third, that we still do not know the nature of the relationship between the Trump campaign and Russia—a country whose leadership has ordered an attack on our election and our democracy, as well as a wide range of other countries around the world.

If Judge Gorsuch fails to achieve 60 votes on the first try or the next try, it does not mean that his nomination will not move forward at some point in the future. It means we have hit the pause button. It may very well be that while we pause, another vacancy on the Court could emerge. Who knows what Judge Gorsuch could do? But if you ask me, another vacancy might present the Senate with an opportunity to right what I believe is a historic wrong, and we should see if the other objections that have been raised about Judge Gorsuch could be addressed before we change the rules of the Senate in favor of the party in power.

In closing, I will say again that Judge Garland waited 293 days for a hearing and a vote that never came. Judge Gorsuch waited 48 days for a hearing, and we will be voting on his nomination next week. Talk about a rush to judgment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Young). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CARPER. I would ask the Presiding Officer for 15 seconds, please.

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

Mr. CARPER. Talk about a rush to judgment. We have time. The American people are watching us, and history will judge us. Let’s make sure we get this right. Let’s make sure we get this right.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, as we approach the end of another week in the Senate with a 2-week recess on the horizon, I think it is a good time to reflect on where we are on various high-profile efforts and to talk about the pathways forward.

As is generally the case when any new administration comes into office, the agenda in both the House and Senate began 2017 with an ambitious agenda in order to make good on the promises we have made to the American people over the last several years. Many of the key items on the agenda fall squarely in the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee, which I chair. That being the case, my colleagues on the committee and I have been hard at work, trying to find the right solutions on things like healthcare, tax reform, and trade policy.

I don’t think I am going to surprise anyone when I say that hasn’t been easy. Honestly, I think that might be the biggest understatement of the year.

There are a number of reasons. One reason is that we are coming off of a bitter election year, one that shocked a number of our colleagues. After a hotly contested campaign, it can sometimes take a while for things to return to normal. However, I don’t think that the good news is that we have seen from our friends on the other side of the aisle.
In any of these big-ticket policy efforts, whether we are talking about repealing and replacing ObamaCare, fixing the Tax Code, or updating America’s trade policy, cooperation between the legislative and the executive branches is key. My Democratic colleagues know this, which, I suppose, is probably the reason they appeared to be bound and determined to prevent any meaningful cooperation from happening.

Now don’t get me wrong; I don’t expect my friends to change their views and back policies that they find disagreeable. However, you would think, at the very least, that they would allow the new President to get his team in place, a courtesy that has typically been extended to past Presidents, regardless of party. Yet over the last few months, we have seen a systematic effort from our Democratic colleagues to stifle new initiatives, and undermine the vast majority of executive branch nominees. In many cases, after the baseless attacks have failed to gain traction, they have used every procedural tool at their disposal, including surprise boycotts of committee mark-ups, in order to slow down the confirmation process.

This level of obstruction with regard to nominees is unprecedented. And I think it is safe to say that it has slowed our efforts down somewhat, which, I suppose, is the exact reason our colleagues have taken this path. Still, despite these childish tactics, the teams are coming together, and we are moving forward in a number of key areas. As I said, it still hasn’t been easy, but to paraphrase a number of important figures, nothing worth doing is ever easy.

For example, on healthcare, I think it is fair to say that the ongoing effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare took a hit last week, but I don’t think that is ever easy. The American people are demanding that we repeal and replace ObamaCare took a hit last week, but I don’t think that is ever easy, but to paraphrase a number of important figures, nothing worth doing is ever easy, but to paraphrase a number of important figures, nothing worth doing is ever easy.

For example, on healthcare, I think it is fair to say that the ongoing effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare took a hit last week, but I don’t think that is ever easy, but to paraphrase a number of important figures, nothing worth doing is ever easy.

As with healthcare reform, there are some differences of opinion with regard to tax reform. Still, I think there is a remarkable amount of agreement, at least among Republicans, on the major issues we need to deal with to fix our broken Tax Code.

Overall, I would say that the Republicans in the Senate, the House, and the White House agree on about 80 percent of the major tax reform issues, and a number of key and fundamental questions are answered in that 80 percent. We all generally agree on the need to bring down tax rates for businesses and job creators. We agree that we need a simplified rate structure on the individual side. We agree on the need to fix the international tax rules to level the playing field for American companies and encourage more investment in the United States, and we generally agree on key process issues, including the appropriate revenue baselines and the use of macroeconomic analysis in budget scoring.

Still, that 20 percent of issues where we don’t necessarily agree is not insignificant. We will need to find a consensus on those issues as well. One area where we have yet to reach a consensus—and the one getting the most attention—is on the proposed border adjustment tax. People have a number of opinions about this, and I have had numerous people in my office. And on both sides of the issue, there are a number of opinions on this proposal, and they have been more than willing to express them publicly. As for myself, I am anxious to see what it looks like once our friends in the House put it all together.

It is too early for me to express a definitive position now. So at this point, all I will say is that I have some basic questions about the proposal.

For example, who will ultimately bear the tax? To what extent will it be borne by consumers, workers, shareholders, and, of course, foreigners? Another question: Is the proposal consistent with our international trade obligations?

Finally, since border adjustability will likely be a significant shift in business tax policy, would it require us to make adjustments to ensure that we don’t unduly increase the tax burden on specific industries? If so, what adjustments would be necessary, and how would they be structured?

I look forward to receiving more details on this proposal. However, here in the Senate, we also have some work to do, and I have been actively working with the members of the Finance Committee to find various solutions to our Nation’s tax problems.

At the end of the day, I don’t think it will surprise anyone to hear me say that I believe we are going to have a legislative tax reform process in the Senate. In my view, it is not realistic to think that the Senate will simply take up and pass a House bill without our Members having a significant input on the substance of the bill. That is how the Congress is supposed to operate, and I think that is what will produce the best result in the end.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the House on tax reform. While we have procedural tools at our disposal to get tax reform legislation through Congress with strictly Republican votes, I personally believe that it would be better to find a bipartisan path forward. A bipartisan bill would allow us to put in place more lasting reforms and give the overall effort additional credibility.

Finally, since there are those who think it is impossible for Republicans and Democrats to work together on something of this magnitude, but I have been in the Senate for a long time, and I think my record for bipartisanship speaks for itself. I have always thought that both sides should work together, and I am willing to talk and work with anyone who is willing to set politics aside and engage in good faith on these matters.

I have been banging a drum on tax reform for years now. From that time, I have invited my Democratic colleagues to join in this effort. I will do so again today. Hopefully, some of our colleagues on the other side will take me up on this offer.

Finally, I want to say a few words about U.S. trade policy. Trade is another area in which President Trump has some ambitious plans and in which, up to now, progress has been hindered. Before I delve into that, let me reiterate a key point.

In 2015, Congress outlined its trade priorities with our legislation to renew the trade promotion authority, which was signed into law by President Obama. The TPA statute gives clear guidance as to what a trade agreement should look like if it is going to win Congress’s approval.

President Trump was fortunate to come into office with TPA already in effect, and I am committed to working with him to enact trade agreements that meet those standards established by the TPA law. When it comes to new trade agreements or revisions to modernize existing trade agreements, that is my top priority as chairman of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over trade policy. Our trade laws are designed to give Congress a voice in both the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements.

In addition to priorities and objectives outlined under TPA, there is the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, which is intended to be the chief intermediary between Congress and, of course, the administration on trade
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ACT

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a path forward on healthcare.

Last week, Republicans in the House failed to pass the American Health Care Act—a deeply flawed policy that amounted to little more than a massive tax break for the wealthy at the expense of working people. The failure of that bill means that, as Speaker Ryan put it, the ACA is the law of the land for the foreseeable future. So today I would like to invite my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to leave repeal efforts behind and instead roll up their sleeves and work with me and other Democrats to improve the system we already have, which is the law of the land for the foreseeable future. It is time to pass commonsense reforms that build on the successes of the ACA and lower healthcare costs.

In a recent HELP Committee hearing, Senator Patty Murray said that we should want to work on a bipartisan basis to stabilize the individual market. Great. Let’s do that. We should reinstate and strengthen programs that help insurance companies stay in the marketplace and continue to serve even the sickest patients. We should pass a public option to make sure there is competition in every market. We should provide more tax credits to more people.

While we work on those things, there is something else we should do, something that, together with a group of my colleagues, I introduced a bill about yesterday. It is time to bring down healthcare costs for everyone by reducing the price of prescription drugs. It is time to pass the Improving Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs Act.

I think all of us would agree that no one should have to choose between affording a lifesaving drug and putting food on the table for one’s family, but right now that is happening. Companies are setting prices that are beyond the reach of consumers and that are driving up costs for insurers and taxpayers.

One in five Americans says he has not filled a prescription simply because he could not afford it. Others are rationing care due to high prices. A study published just last month found that about 10 percent of cancer patients skipped their medication and about 13 percent delayed filling their prescriptions. We have all been shocked by the stories of EpiPen’s prices shooting up nearly 500 percent. The price of insulin has more than doubled in the last 5 years.

Drug companies can essentially set whatever prices they want. As a result, in recent years, drug companies have secured some of the highest profit margins of any industry.

Drug prices are too high. That is why my colleagues and I are introducing comprehensive legislation to tackle prescription drug prices. We want to make sure companies cannot exploit the sick and dying to make a profit. The bill includes 17 policy changes that will improve transparency, promote affordability, spur innovation, and enhance competition. Today, I would like to highlight just three of those provisions.

First, transparency. This legislation requires drug companies to disclose how much they spend on research, manufacturing, and marketing, as well as research grants from the Federal Government, to help all of us understand why prices for lifesaving drugs are so high. It is especially galling that so many drugs that are developed with taxpayer dollars are unaffordable for so many Americans. Getting this information would help all of us hold drug companies accountable, and that can be an important step toward bringing prices down.

Second—something that President Trump called for on the campaign trail—the bill will allow Medicare to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs. It is just common sense that the biggest buyer of pharmaceutical products in America should be able to use its negotiating clout to bring prices down.

Third, the bill would end the practice of so-called pay-for-delay. Right now, the expensive brand-name drugs will pay other companies that make generic alternatives to keep their products off the market. This is called pay-for-delay. It is outrageous, and it is increasingly common. This bill will stop these agreements once and for all.

There is a lot more that this bill does. It penalizes companies that price-gouge for lifesaving medicine, and I think we can all agree on that. It puts a cap on out-of-pocket drug costs in insurance plans. It speeds up generic competition. It funds new innovation and includes a number of other provisions.

Tackling the high cost of prescription drugs is an issue many of my colleagues care deeply about. This bill reflects many of their ideas and proposals, and I am grateful for their work with me. Moreover, it is obvious that the public is ready for action on this issue. Overwhelming majorities of Americans in both parties support government action to curb out-of-control drug prices.

I am eager to hear from colleagues on both sides of the aisle and from the administration about how we can work together to pass the reforms into law. This is an area of health policy that Democrats are eager to work on, and we hope the President will stand by his promise to work with Democrats and reduce costs for American families. It is morally wrong that some people are denied access to lifesaving drugs because they cannot afford them, and it is something we can fix.

I am in the Senate so that I can fight for policies that improve people’s lives. That is why I am here. With this bill, I am trying to do exactly that. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in helping to bring down the cost of prescription drugs.

I suggest the absence of quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for 7 years, Republicans in Congress have promised to “repeal and replace ObamaCare,” but not once during those 7 years did they actually put together a piece of legislation to make good on that promise.

Not once during those 7 years did Republican leaders actually convene serious hearings and meetings with patients, hospitals, insurers, and medical groups to discuss how best to reform our healthcare system, instead preferring to just rail against the law.

Not once during those 7 years did congressional Republicans actually try to sit down with Democrats and work on a bipartisan basis to improve upon the law.

But here is what they did do: They did everything possible to gum up the works, with many Republican Governors even refusing to expand Medicaid, denying millions of their constituents access to healthcare.

They went on TV, did interviews, and held campaign rallies about how all of
I support the creation of a “public plan,” which would both increase competition in areas that are lacking and drive down premiums since, as Medicare has demonstrated time and again, the Federal Government can be more efficient than private for-profit companies.

I support legislation to bring down the high cost of prescription drugs, which are driving up premiums for families nationwide. BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois now pays more for prescription drugs than they do on inpatient hospital costs, and they readily admit that drug costs are contributing to premium hikes.

We need to allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices. We need to end “pay for delay” agreements and get cheaper drugs on the market quicker. We need to prohibit direct-to-consumer advertising. We need more transparency into how drug prices are set, and we need penalties on drug companies that gouge the American public.

I also support enforcing portions of the law that Republicans have sabotaged and undermined since its inception. We need to allow the “risk corridor” program to operate unimpeded. We need to expand Medicaid in all States, especially since we know that premiums are highest and competition lowest in nonexpansion States, and we need to enforce the law—which is why the very first order of business going forward must be for President Trump to rescind the Executive order he issued on January 20.

The President’s order directed the heads of all Federal agencies responsible for implementing and enforcing the Affordable Care Act to stand down, to not implement the law, to not enforce the law.

Now that the page has hopefully been turned on the ugly “repeal” chapter of this saga, it is time for the President and his administration to faithfully implement, enforce, and help improve this law.

I am calling on the President and congressional Republicans: Now is the time to stop undermining the law that is enjoying record support from Americans.

Now is not time to throw sand in the law’s eyes, put a spoke in its wheel, and then turn around, groat, and blame Democrats when it does not function properly.

The Affordable Care Act while championed by Democrats and President Obama, included over 100 Republican amendments and, for better or worse, borrowed heavily from Republican ideas for the marketplace.

Let’s end these partisan games. This law—the good and the shortcomings—is on all of us to improve.

Democrats have ideas, but we cannot do it alone. Remember, the Republican Party controls the House, the Senate, and the White House.

They are in charge. If improvements are going to be made, Republicans are going to have to get serious.

Now that the half-baked repeal effort has collapsed, my hope is that Republicans will finally be willing to sit down and work with Democrats. I know I am ready to pull up a chair.

RUSSIA AND TRUMP CAMPAIGN INVESTIGATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week in testimony to the House Intelligence Committee, FBI Director Comey confirmed what many of us have been urging for months: the need for an independent commission to look into the Russian act of cyber war on our election and any possible collusion with members of the Trump campaign.

Comey confirmed that the FBI was “investigating the nature of any links between individuals associated with the Trump campaign and the Russian government, and whether there was any coordination between the campaign and Russian efforts.”

He continued that FBI agents would pursue the investigation “no matter how long that takes.”

This is incredible. I am not surprised, but it is incredible. Our Nation’s top law enforcement agency is investigating possible links between those involved in President Trump’s campaign and a foreign adversary known to have conducted an aggressive intelligence operation to help him get elected, and all the while, this President continues to deny any such attack, praise the dictator who launched the attack, and pursue policies that mirror those of the attacker, including the weakening of the Western security alliance.

Yet what has been the priority of the majority party amid this mounting and serious breach, one we already knew about 5 months ago?

Has it been to set up an independent commission to look into this unprecedented threat to our Nation and democracy? No.

Has it been to work with the White House to disclose all information in an open and transparent manner to clear up any concerns or suspicions? No, in fact the opposite—we still haven’t even seen the President’s tax returns to get answers on Russian money in his businesses.

Has it been to pass sanctions on Russia for its attack on our Nation? No.

Has it been to pass meaningful cyber security legislation, legislation blocked by the majority party? The last Congress to make sure our next elections in less than 2 years are secure from attack? No.

So what has been the priority instead? Well, last week, the majority voted to make it easier to kill baby bears and their mothers in their dens. The majority also reversed internet privacy protections for consumers. A few weeks ago, the majority voted to reverse a law to help mitigate corruption in some of the world’s most impoverished nations.

Of course, the majority failed to advance TrumpCare, which would have
I welcome President Morales’s public statement of support for CICIG and for Mr. Velasquez, particularly at a time when the U.S. Congress is again being asked to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to support the Alliance for Prosperity Plan. That plan, which is in its early days, has the potential to make progress in combating the poverty, lack of opportunity, inequality, violence, and impunity that are among the key contributors to migration from Central America to the United States. These are problems that both the Central American countries and the United States have a strong interest in working together to address.

For the Alliance for Prosperity Plan to succeed, each of the Central American governments needs to take steps that their predecessors were unwilling or unable to take. Those steps include ensuring that senior government officials and their advisers are people of integrity; redefining the antagonistic relationship between government and civil society; to one of mutual respect for each other’s legitimate role; fully supporting efforts to combat corruption by CICIG and by the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Guatemala; the extension of CICIG’s mandate with the recognition of the important role these entities are playing and support the establishment of a similar commission to combat corruption and impunity in that country—increasing the budget of the Office of the Attorney General, so they have the necessary personnel, training, equipment, and protection to carry out their responsibilities throughout the country, especially in areas where they have never had the resources to operate; supporting the independence of the judiciary, including the selection of judges based on their qualifications and the principle of equal access to justice; and building transparent and accountable institutions of democracy that support the rights of the people, including de-militarizing law enforcement and building professional, civilian police forces.

It is the responsibility of the Central American governments to take these steps and, by doing so, create the conditions for building more prosperous, equitable, and just societies. If they do that and they meet the other conditions in U.S. law, the United States should support them.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my disappointment in today’s vote on H.J. Res. 67 and my strong opposition to H.J. Res. 66. These resolutions overturn rules issued by the Department of Labor that are essential to providing insurance to qualified workers in workplace retirement savings programs at the city and State levels. Among all working families in America ages 32 to 61, the median family in America had only $5,000 saved in 2013. This indicates to me that we are clearly facing a retirement savings crisis.

In California, 7.5 million workers don’t have access to a retirement savings plan through their jobs, including 3.4 million women. Of those without a workplace retirement savings program, almost 5 million are individuals of Color, and over 3.5 million are Latino. The good news is that, when a person has access to a retirement savings program through their workplace, they are 15 times more likely to save for retirement.

In California, legislators have been working for more than 4 years to create the Secure Choice program as a way of addressing the retirement crisis we face. This program allows workers to easily save for retirement through a deduction made directly from their paycheck.

Those who need access to a workplace retirement program the most, individuals with lower incomes, are less likely to have that access. These are the people who stand to gain the most from the Secure Choice program and lose the most by Congress halting its progress.

Let me share some examples of the people who would be impacted. Most eligible employees work for small businesses that might not be able to offer retirement savings plans on their own, and nearly half of eligible workers in the workplace retirement, healthcare, and manufacturing industries.

This program supports lower- and middle-class workers by providing access to the tools they need to control their financial future. The average wage of workers eligible for this program is $35,000, and 80 percent of eligible workers earn less than $50,000.

We are facing a time of deep income inequality and must stand up for programs that support working class, like Secure Choice. Nationwide, the bottom 90 percent of households have seen their income drop compared to what it was in 1970. Meanwhile, the top 1 percent has seen their household income triple. As workers struggle to make ends meet, it is appalling to me that Congress would actively take away a key resource for financial planning.

Californians want to ensure that all employees have access to a retirement savings program. The Department of Labor’s State rule clears the way for California to set up programs like Secure Choice by clarifying employers’ obligations to the accounts.

This rule would also allow small businesses to compete for qualified workers who expect and deserve access to a workplace retirement savings program. Small Business California supports the Department of Labor’s rule paving the way for these programs and opposes this resolution.

Finally, in California, our State chapter of the Chamber of Commerce specifically asked for an opinion from...
the Department of Labor on employer obligations. Once the Department of Labor’s rule was issued, CalChamber no longer opposed the California bill.

In fact, the legislation that passed in California requires the State board to report a finalized rule from the Department of Labor. Overturning the Department of Labor’s rule completely ignores the effort and care taken in California to create a program that works for both employees and employers.

Nationally, almost half of working-age households do not have retirement savings accounts, and 55 million people don’t have access to a workplace retirement plan. This is shocking.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the median retirement account savings for families ages 56 to 61 was only $17,000 in 2013. This is only slightly higher than the 2016 poverty threshold for a household of two people aged 65 and older. It is inconceivable that a family could afford to finance their retirement with only $17,000 in savings.

Supporting retirement savings is not a partisan issue. In fact a bipartisan group of State treasurers oppose this resolution, as does the National Conference of State Legislatures.

We are facing a retirement savings crisis in our country, and the Department of Labor’s rule is a simple, commonsense guideline that make it easier for individuals to save for retirement.

While today’s vote is a disappointing development for city programs, I will keep fighting to support California’s Secure Choice program. I strongly urge my colleagues to stand up for American workers and support their access to retirement savings programs by opposing H.J. Res. 66, should it come up for a vote on the Senate floor.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GARY PETERSEN

• Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dear friend, the Manhattan Project and National Historical Park, Gary Petersen, a dedicated public servant. On March 3, Gary Petersen retired from over a half-century career of private and public service supporting scientific achievement and advocacy for the people of my home State of Washington. Gary has worked tirelessly to support the Hanford cleanup and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, PNNL, and has undoubtedly bolstered our Nation’s security during the 32 years that he has lived and worked in the Tri-Cities.

Gary and I have collaborated closely many times over the years on many projects. Most recently, he played a key role in organizing the energy workforce roundtable held at PNNL with Department of Energy Secretary Moniz in August of last year. Gary has been a steadfast advocate for cleaning up the Hanford site, funding for the world-class research and development at PNNL, and for the continued growth of the Volpentest HAMMER Training Center.

I am confident that Washington State, and especially the Tri-Cities, would not be as well positioned to tackle our Nation’s future energy challenges if not for over 50 years of Gary Petersen’s tireless work.

Originally from Omak, a small city located in Okanogan County, Gary joined the Army and was stationed in the Tri-Cities in January 1969. After a duty station transfer to Korea, Gary returned and graduated with a communications degree from Washington State University. Shortly after graduation, Gary started with Battelle, a company that had a contract for a research and development lab located at Hanford. The lab provided crucial services during the Cold War and is now known as PNNL. Gary went on to work for Westinghouse on the Fast Flux Test Facility, the Washington Public Power Supply System, and spent time with the International Nuclear Safety Program, a cooperative nuclear energy safety effort between the U.S. and Soviet Union. After retiring from Battelle in 2002, Gary served on the Tri-City Development Council, TIDC, an organization dedicated to improving the economic health of the Tri-Cities area.

During his 14 years at TRIDEC, Gary has been a relentless supporter for DOE’s missions at Hanford and PNNL and a champion for the larger Tri-City community and our State by ensuring important projects received needed Federal resources. Gary is the type of constituent every member hopes to have in their communities back home—a very involved citizen. He has stood up for issues that matter to the people of Washington while also understanding the importance of communicating with his political representatives. My relationship with Gary has been invaluable, and he has been instrumental in many of my proudest career accomplishments.

Gary shares my vision for why establishing the Manhattan Project National Historical Park was so important. We worked together for many years to champion and ultimately see the creation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. The legislation I authored preserved the central landscape of the Hanford site and the park, the B Reactor, the first full-scale plutonium production nuclear reactor ever built and a tremendous technological achievement for its time. The park also includes the Bruggemann Agricultural Warehouse, the White Bluffs Bank, the historic Hanford High School, and the Hanford Irrigation District’s Allard Pump House. Visitors from 70 countries have already visited the B Reactor, demonstrating the universal appeal of the park and the curiosity people have about this chapter of American and world history.

We owe Gary a debt of gratitude for the establishment of this park.

Today the Tri-Cities is home to a vibrant agricultural industry, some of the best healthcare available, two colleges that are training workers to meet the varied needs of the region’s businesses, increasing wine tourism, and a newly expanded airport.

I am incredibly proud to have worked with Gary and to call him a friend. Gary, thank you for all of your years of advocacy for the Tri-Cities. I join Washingtonians in thanking him for his longstanding service and wish him and his wife, Margaret, all the best in the future.

TRIBUTE TO JENNY GENGHER

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing Jenny Genger of Jefferson County for her selfless commitment to others in her local community. Jenny is a wonderful example of a local leader who is always willing to take on additional responsibility and devote her time and talent to others.

Jenny graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in sociology. At her graduation and her local community, Jenny is a wonderful example of a local leader who always willing to take on additional responsibility and devote her time and talent to others.

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A few years ago, Jenny passed on her MOPS leadership baton and began serving as the chairperson for the education program in her church. As chairperson, Jenny spurred a program to have educational activities available during her church’s conferences in order to help parents attend the conferences. Jenny also volunteers each week at the local pregnancy resource center and coordinates the center’s annual banquet. Not only does Jenny excel at serving her community, she has done so even while her husband, Noah, a Montana Army National Guard pilot, was gone for nearly a year conducting missions in southwest Asia.

Montana is a State with many unsung heroes, and people like Jenny are the community glue that make Montana a great place to raise a family. For her efforts to serve, educate, and inspire those around her, Montana is sincerely thankful. Thank you, Jenny.

REMEMBERING COLONEL EDWIN DON STRICKFADEN

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, my colleague Senator MIKE CRAPO joins me today in honoring the life of Colonel Edwin Don Strickfaden, who dedicated 35 years to protecting the citizens of Idaho through his service in Idaho law enforcement.

Colonel Strickfaden led the Idaho State Police, ISP, with distinction, serving as director when two Idaho law enforcement agencies were combined to form one ISP and leading the force to achieve law enforcement successes furthering the security of our communities. Current Idaho State Police director Colonel Ralp Powell recognized Colonel Strickfaden as a “champion for all law enforcement throughout the state,” and a “charismatic leader” who “worked tirelessly to keep us safe.” Colonel Strickfaden—Ed to most of us—joined Idaho law enforcement in 1967 after serving 4 years in the U.S. Air Force. A native Idahoan, born on August 3, 1945, to Don and Ruth Strickfaden in Nez Perce, ID, and served many communities throughout Idaho before retiring in 2002 making a home with his wife, Barbara, in Salmon, ID. Barbara has worked for my Gubernatorial and U.S. Senate offices, which has given us more opportunities to interact with this remarkable Idahoan.

Colonel Strickfaden was known for his tireless dedication and inspiring leadership. Although this example of his bravery and devotion to helping others was already highlighted in a 2003 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD statement, it is worthy of repeating as it is an example for all of us to emulate. Colonel Strickfaden was honored by then-Governor Cecil Andrus for diving into the icy December waters of the Clearwater River to rescue a woman from a submerged vehicle. His sense of duty and clear empathy for the people he served was an outstanding example to many.

Colonel Strickfaden made an extraordinary difference in the lives of Idahoans he served and the many who knew him. We thank him for his outstanding service as we join his family, including Barbara and their beloved children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and many friends in mourning his passing and honoring his loving legacy.

Tribute to Hot Shots Inc.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, known for its diverse natural resources and awe-inspiring landscapes, Idaho is a place of countless possibilities, where citizens with determination and ambition can lay the foundaiton for their own success. I am particularly proud of my home State’s entrepreneurs who continue to pioneer new enterprises that bring our communities together and inspire a creative spirit in Idahoans across the State. These traits are well represented in this month’s Small Business of the Month, Hot Shots Inc.

Founded by Lance and Mary Curtis, Hot Shots Inc. is a family-owned and operated small business headquartered in Boise, ID. The innovative vision of the company is driven by a management team with over 50 years of combined experience in courier services. Hot Shots Inc. has provided delivery services in the Boise area since 1996. Their offerings are distinct in that they are capable of delivering anything from small parcels to large freight throughout the Treasure Valley, Sun Valley, Magic Valley, and Twin Falls, all with a same-day guarantee. Over the years, this company has earned and maintained a high level of trust in the Boise area, as is evident through their special delivery service which allows them to deliver to areas of secure locations such as corporate, banking, medical, government, and military sites. Part of what makes Hot Shots Inc. a successful enterprise is its use of modern technology, specifically its utilization of an online ordering system, a GPS package tracking system, and an email notification system. The company has adapted with technological advances, making all of these changes to support mobile transactions. All of these advancements are made possible by the confidence in every customer that his or her package, parcel, or shipment will arrive on time. This commitment to customer service has helped the company excel in its field and allowed Hot Shots Inc. to enter new markets such as warehousing.

Hot Shots Inc. has been a pillar of the community since they first opened their doors. This family-run business has displayed its commitment to the Boise community in a variety of ways, including support for the Idaho Diaper Bank or through their support of the Idaho Foodbank BackPack Program, among other community service activities. I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to Lance and Mary Curtis and the employees of Hot Shots Inc. for being chosen as the March 2017 Small Business of the Month. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PURCHASE OF ALASKA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today, March 30, marks that 150th anniversary of the date when President Andrew Johnson signed the treaty with Russia for the purchase of Alaska. It is a big day for my State, and for the past few months, I have been diving into the archives and doing some research about the treaty and about the first few years of challenges following the signing. As you can imagine, building a State out of a frontier, particularly one so far away from the rest of the country and in such a different climate, was challenging, to say the least. It demanded, and still does, a certain kind of person with a certain kind of toughness, vision, and a determination to work for the good of all. Let me give you an example of what I found.

Some members of the first territorial legislature in 1913—46 years after the purchase—who lived in far flung places faced a challenge. Specifically how to get to Juneau to begin to hash out creating the rules of a new territory.

Of course, there were no commercial airlines in those days—no snow machines, so four members from Nome—lawyers, miners, and businessmen—hitched up their dog teams, headed to Valdez, and took a steamship to Juneau. It took them nearly 2 months to get there. When they did arrive, the first order of business was this: granting women the right to vote. 7 years before Congress ratified the 19th Amendment.

That is the heritage of every one in Alaska, and that is the same spirit, of traveling far against the odds, to do what is right, that still animates my great State. It animates people who haven’t even been to Alaska. My State is more than a place with set geographic boundaries. My State is also an idea, a dream; it goes beyond borders and represents so much about America that we hold dear: beauty, freedom, self-sufficiency. It has been this way even before Alaska became a territory—when a group of people, led by former Secretary of State William Seward, pushed the country to buy Alaska from Russia for $7.2 million. As has been proven, that was a good deal.

Every week, I have been coming down to recognize an Alaskan of the Week, a special person who gives their time, energy, and talents to making our State the best in the country.

Today I want to speak about someone who I still call an honorary Alaskan. Today I would like to name Senator Charles Sumner our posthumous Alaskan of the Week. Senator Sumner
never set foot in my State, but he knew Alaska well. We are a State because of him, and others, including Secretary of State William Seward, who had vision and tenacity.

Senator Sumner was born on January 6, 1811, in Boston, Massachusetts, a professor, and then a politician. He was a man of purpose, principle, and many, many words and opinions. In fact, he was nearly canonized to death while working in the Senate Chambers, by one of his colleagues, a congressman from the South—for expressing his opinions on the horrors of slavery. It was a deplorable act, and it cast a pall of shame over this body for years. Senator Sumner never really recovered, but after a long convalescence, he set his sights on the Alaska Purchase.

He was skeptical, at first, until Secretary of State Seward got his ear, and he immersed himself into the accounts of the promise of this new territory, which turned him into an ardent supporter of the South—for expressing his opinions on the horrors of slavery. It was a deplorable act, and it cast a pall of shame over this body for years. Senator Sumner never really recovered, but after a long convalescence, he set his sights on the Alaska Purchase.

He spoke of Alaska's abundant resources—and said the Peirce Grant on the ocean of the future and argued that Alaska is the key to that future. He spoke of the treasures—the gold in our land, the veins of coal, our huge mineral deposits, and the treasures below the Arctic Ocean. He talked about the “multitudes of fish,” the thousands of acres of timber, and the opening of new trade routes.

He and others saw in Alaska the “Eden of the North”—a future which would entail up to 1 million self-sufficient Americans supported by the resources of the land. Owning Alaska would give us greater control of the next “great theater of action” in the Arctic and Asia-Pacific, for both national security and economic reason.

In a title report, Senator Alaska, “Commerce will find new arms; the country new defenders, the national flag new hands to bear it aloft.” Senator Sumner argued. A “boundless and glorious future,” awaits, he and other supporters argued.

Senator Sumner ended his epic 1867 speech by arguing that the whole territory, not just the peninsula, should be given the name by the people who lived here. It should be indigenous, original, coming from the soil,” he said. “Alaska,” he concluded, “the great land.”

The day after Sumner's Senate speech, the once-skeptical U.S. Senate approved the purchase by a vote of 37 to 2. One hundred and fifty years later, Alaska has made good on that early promise. We have contributed enormous resources to our country. We are vital to our country’s national defense, our national pride, and our economic growth. We still have the vision of Secretary of State William Seward and Senator Sumner driving us toward a brighter future. Thanks to Senator Sumner and to the people of Massachusetts who gave us such a brave leader—our honorary Alaskan of the Week.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE
At 9:35 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1430. An act to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible.

The message further announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled joint resolution:

S.J. Res. 34. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to “Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services”.

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 1:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1431. An act to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications, public participation, and for other purposes.

The following joint resolution was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH):

S.J. Res. 34. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to “Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services”.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. 110. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program to provide a digital information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision-support tools, training, and best practices and to support collection of priority coastal geospatial data to inform and improve local, state, regional, and federal capacities to manage the coastal region, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-14).

S. 129. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-15).

S. 188. A bill to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation (Rept. No. 115-16).

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs:

Special Report entitled “Legislative and Oversight Activities During the 114th Congress by the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs” (Rept. No. 115-17).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:


By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary:

Special Report entitled “Report on the Activities of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary During the 114th Congress” (Rept. No. 115-19).

By Mr. SHELBY, from the Committee on Rules and Administration:

Special Report entitled “Review of Legislative Activity During the 114th Congress” (Rept. No. 115-20).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 141. A bill to improve understanding and forecasting of space weather events, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-21).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Special Report entitled “Legislative Activities Report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress” (Rept. No. 115-22).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. ROBERTS for the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

* Sonny Perdue, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Agriculture.
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HATCH:
S. 775. A bill to streamline the R–1 religious worker visa petition process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 776. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the taxation and regulation of marijuana products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

S. 777. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with the operation of child care facilities conducted in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KING):
S. 778. A bill to require the use of prescription drug price reporting programs and to facilitate information sharing among States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HERTKAMP, and Mr. LEARY):
S. 779. A bill to enhance civil penalties under the Federal securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN:
S. 780. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to remove the gap between Federal and State marijuana policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. MANCHIN):
S. 781. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to limit the liability of health care professionals who volunteer to provide health care services in response to a disaster; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HELLER, and Ms. KLOBUCAR):
S. 782. A bill to reauthorize the National Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to encourage innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MCCAIN:
S. 783. A bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2017, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):
S. 785. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HATCH:
S. 788. A bill to establish a grant program relating to the prevention of student and student athlete opioid misuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. PETERS):
S. 787. A bill to require the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to test the effect of including telehealth services in Medicare health care delivery reform models; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN:
S. 788. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an independent review of the deaths of certain disabled veterans by suicide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HAWLEY, and Mr. BROWN):
S. 789. A bill to exempt from the Lacey Act and the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain water transfers between any of the States of Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. BENNET):
S. 790. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to encourage innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. RISCH):
S. 791. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to expand intellectual property education and training for small businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. THUNE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):
S. 792. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish an H–2B temporary non-agricultural work visa program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mrs. CAPTTO, Mr. CANTWELL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. INHOPE, Mr. WHITESTONE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. SCHUTZ):
S. 793. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a program for the importation of shark fins, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Ms. SARKOW):
S. 794. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act in order to improve the process whereby Medicare administrative contractors issue local coverage determinations under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HATCH):
S. 795. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 regarding dual or concurrent enrollment and early college high schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. KING):
S. 796. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion for employer-sponsored education assistance to employer payments of student loans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. HELLETT):
S. 797. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance matching grant program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. TILLIS):
S. 798. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program to apply to individuals pursuing programs of education while on active duty, to recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry scholarship, and to programs of education pursued on half-time basis or less, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. RUHSO):
S. 799. A bill to simplify and improve the Federal student aid program through income-contingent repayment to provide stronger protections for borrowers, encourage responsible borrowing, and save money for taxpayers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. DURBIN):
S. 800. A bill to protect taxpayers from liability associated with the reclamation of surface coal mining operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Ms. HERTKAMP, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. MANCHIN):
S. J. Res. 39. A joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, referred (or acted upon) by unanimous consent:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CORTEZ, Mr. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HENEFER, Mr. LEARY, Mr. MARKES, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL, and Ms. WARREN):
S. Res. 104. A resolution honoring the accomplishments and legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. SCHUMER):
S. Res. 105. A resolution recognizing 2017 as the 100th anniversary of the creation of the 41st Division; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):
S. Res. 106. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. CAPTTO (for herself and Mr. MANCHIN):
S. Res. 107. A resolution congratulating the rifle team of West Virginia University on its win in the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship; considered and agreed to.
At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 96, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

S. 129

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 129, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

S. 130

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 130, a bill to require enforcement against misbranded milk alternatives.

S. 200

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 200, a bill to prohibit the conduct of a first-use nuclear strike absent a declaration of war by Congress.

S. 253

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 253, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 431

At the request of Mr. TRUNKE, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 431, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 464, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a permanent Independence at Home medical practice program under the Medicare program.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 693, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export-Import Bank Act of 1976 to include in the prohibitions on boycotts against allies of the United States boycotts fostered by international governmental organizations against Israel and to direct the Export-Import Bank of the United States to oppose boycotts against Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 722

At the request of Mr. CORSKR, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran’s ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 731

At the request of Mr. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) were added as cosponsors of S. 731, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S. J. RES. 2

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. J. Res. 2, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

S. RES. 92

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 92, a resolution expressing concern over the disappearance of David Sneddon, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 100

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 100, a resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine on the three year anniversary of the annexation of Crimea.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. LEAHY):

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act, which I reintroduce today with Senator GRASSLEY, Senator HEITKAMP, and Senator LEAHY, will enhance the ability of securities regulators to protect investors and demand accountability from market players. Even after the financial crisis that crippled the economy, we continue to see calculated wrongdoing by some on Wall Street, and without the consequence of meaningful penalties to serve as an effective deterrent, I fear this dangerous culture of misconduct will persist.

Today, the amount of penalties the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC can fine an institution or individual is limited by statute. During hearings I held in 2011 in the Securities, Insurance, and Investment Banking Subcommittee, I learned how this limitation significantly interferes with the SEC’s ability to perform its enforcement duties. At that time, the agency had been criticized by a Federal judge for not obtaining a larger settlement against Citigroup, a major player in the financial crisis that settled with the SEC in an amount that was a fraction of the cost the bank had inflicted on investors. The SEC explained that the reason for the low settlement amount was a statutory prohibition against levying a larger penalty. Indeed, then SEC Chairman Mary L. Schapiro in 2011 also explained that “the Commission’s statutory authority to obtain civil monetary penalties with appropriate deterrent effect is limited in many circumstances.”

The bipartisan bill Senator GRASSLEY and I are reintroducing finally updates these civil penalties. This bill strives to make potential and current offenders think twice before engaging in misconduct by increasing the maximum civil monetary penalties permitted by statute, directly linking the size of the maximum penalties to the amount of losses suffered by victims of a violation and substantially raising the financial stakes for repeat offenders of our Nation’s securities laws.

Specifically, our bill would give the SEC more options to tailor penalties to the specific circumstances of a given violation. In addition to raising the per violation caps for severe, or “tier
three,” violations to $1 million per offense for individuals and $10 million per offense for entities, the legislation would also give the SEC additional options to obtain greater penalties based on the ill-gotten gains of the violator or on the financial harm to investors.

Our bill also addresses the disturbing trend of repeat offenders on Wall Street through two provisions. The first would allow the SEC to triple the penalty cap applicable to recidivists who have been held either criminally or civilly liable for securities fraud within the previous 5 years. The second would allow the SEC to seek a civil penalty against those that violate existing Federal court or SEC orders, an approach that would be more efficient, effective, and flexible than the current civil contempt remedy. Both of these changes would substantially improve the ability of the SEC’s enforcement program to ratchet up penalties for recidivists.

Slightly more than half of all U.S. households are invested in the stock market. They deserve a strong cop on the beat that has the tools it needs to go after fraudsters and pursue the difficult cases arising from our increasingly complex financial markets. The Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act will give the SEC more tools to demand meaningful accountability from Wall Street, which in turn will increase transparency and confidence in our financial system. I urge our colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation to enhance the SEC’s ability to protect investors and to deter and crack down on fraud.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HELLER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 782.A bill to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 782.

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Providing Resources, Officers, and Technology To Eradicate Cyber Threats to Our Children Act of 2017” or the “PROTECT Our Children Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TASK FORCE PROGRAM.
Title I of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 1761 et seq.) is amended—
(1) in section 105(h) (42 U.S.C. 1761(h)), by striking “2016” and inserting “2022”; and
(2) in section 107(a)(10) (42 U.S.C. 17617(a)(10)), bystriking “fiscal year 2018” and inserting “each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 104—HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LEGACY OF CESAR ESTRADA CHAVEZ.
Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HEIN RICH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKET, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. NELSON, Mr. SANCHEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL, and Ms. WARR EN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:
S. RES. 104
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez was born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez spent his early years on a family farm;
Whereas, at the age of 18, Cesar Estrada Chavez joined the thousands of migrant farm workers laboring in fields and vineyards throughout the Southwest after a bank foreclosure resulted in the loss of the family farm;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez, after attending more than 30 elementary and middle schools and achieving an eighth grade education, left school to work full-time as a farm worker to help support his family;
Whereas, at the age of 17, Cesar Estrada Chavez entered the United States Navy and served the United States with distinction for 2 years;
Whereas, in 1948, Cesar Estrada Chavez returned from military service to marry Helen Fabela, whom he had met while working in the vineyards of central California;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez and Helen Fabela had 8 children;
Whereas, as early as 1949, Cesar Estrada Chavez was committed to organizing farm workers to campaign for safe and fair working conditions, reasonable wages, livable housing, and the outlawing of child labor;
Whereas, in 1952, Cesar Estrada Chavez joined the Community Service Organization, a prominent civil rights, labor rights, and anti-poverty organization, and worked with the organization to coordinate voter registration drives and conduct campaigns against discrimination in east Los Angeles;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez served as the national director of the Community Service Organization;
Whereas, in 1962, Cesar Estrada Chavez left the Community Service Organization to found the National Farm Workers Association, which eventually became the United Farm Workers of America;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez was a strong believer in the principles of non-violence practiced by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez effectively used peaceful tactics, including fasting for 25 days in 1968, 25 days in 1972, and 38 days in 1988, to call attention to the terrible working and living conditions of farm workers in the United States;
Whereas, under the leadership of Cesar Estrada Chavez, the National Farm Workers of America organized thousands of migrant farm workers to fight for fair wages, health care coverage, pension benefits, livable housing, and respect;
Whereas, through his commitment to non-violence, Cesar Estrada Chavez brought dignity and respect to the organized farm workers and their fight for justice to and a resource for individuals engaged in human rights struggles throughout the world;
Whereas the influence of Cesar Estrada Chavez extends far beyond agriculture and provides inspiration for individuals working to better human rights, empower workers, and advance the American Dream, which includes all inhabitants of the United States;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez died on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66 in San Luis, Arizona, only miles from where he was born;
Whereas more than 50,000 individuals attended the funeral services of Cesar Estrada Chavez in Delano, California;
Whereas Cesar Estrada Chavez was laid to rest at the headquarters of the United Farm Workers of America, known as “Nuestra Senora de La Paz”, located in the Tehachapi Mountains in Kern County, California;
Whereas, since the death of Cesar Estrada Chavez, schools, parks, streets, libraries, and other public facilities, as well as awards and scholarships, have been named in his honor;
Whereas 10 States and dozens of communities across the United States honor the life and legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez each year on March 31;
Whereas, during his lifetime, Cesar Estrada Chavez was a recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize;
Whereas, on August 8, 1994, Cesar Estrada Chavez was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom;
Whereas President Barack Obama honored the life of service of Cesar Estrada Chavez by proclaiming March 31, 2012, to be “Cesar Chavez Day”;
Whereas, on October 8, 2012, President Barack Obama authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Cesar Estrada Chavez National Monument in Keene, California; and
Whereas the United States should continue the efforts of Cesar Estrada Chavez to ensure equality, justice, and dignity for all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—
(1) recognizes the accomplishments and example of a great hero of the United States, Cesar Estrada Chavez;
(2) pledges to promote the legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez; and
(3) encourages the people of the United States to commemorate the legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez and to always remember his great rallying cry, “Si, se puede!” which is Spanish for “Yes, we can!”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 105—RECOGNIZING 2017 AS THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE 41ST DIVISION
Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:
S. Res. 105
Whereas the War Department issued General Order No. 95 on July 18, 1917, which formally established the 41st Division within the Army;
Whereas the 41st Division was organized on September 18, 1917, at Camp Greene in North Carolina;
Whereas the 41st Division was originally composed of National Guard citizen-soldiers from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming and also had members from Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia;
Whereas, during World War I, the 41st Division deployed to the Western Front, providing valuable support both as a training and combat division;
Whereas the 41st Division demobilized at Camp Dix in New Jersey on February 22,
1919, following the armistice of November 1918;

Whereas the 41st Division was reorganized and Federaly recognized on January 3, 1930, with the headquarters of the new 41st Division located at Portland, Oregon;

Whereas the 41st Division participated in a set of training exercises in 1937 where Oregon soldiers crossed the Columbia River in western Washington in a daring night crossing;

Whereas, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the 41st Division set up defensive positions along the coastline of the United States from the Canadian border to Camp Clatsop in Oregon;

Whereas the 41st Division was reorganized as the 41st Infantry Division on February 17, 1942, and, by the following May, was one of the first divisions of the Armed Forces to deploy overseas to Australia for jungle and amphibious warfare training;

Whereas the 41st Infantry Division participated in the campaigns in New Guinea and the Philippines, enduring some of the most vicious jungle warfare of any allied force during the war;

Whereas the bloodiest engagement of the 41st Infantry Division occurred on the island of Biak, where the division killed more than 10,000 determined Japanese troops;

Whereas members of the 41st Infantry Division had been known as “Sunsetters” after their unit’s setting sun insignia but earned a second nickname, “the Jungleurs”, in recognition of their experience and expertise in jungle warfare following the service of the unit in Biak and across the Pacific Theater;

Whereas the 41st Division was inactivated on December 31, 1945, on the island of Honshu in Japan;

Whereas, in 1968, the Oregonian element of the 41st Infantry Division was reorganized and redesignated as the 41st Infantry Brigade within the Oregon National Guard, transferring the colors and honors of its division predecessor;

Whereas elements of the 41st Infantry Brigade—

(A) deployed to—

(A) Saudi Arabia in 1999 as part of Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia;

(B) the Sinai Peninsula in 2001 in support of Operation Safe Journey and Operation Enduring Freedom;

(C) Iraq in 2003 and 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(D) Afghanistan in 2006 in support of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix; and

(2) were activated in 2005 to help provide disaster relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in Louisiana and Texas, respectively;

Whereas the 41st Infantry Brigade was reorganized and redesignated as the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team on September 1, 2006;

Whereas the entire 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq in 2006, marking the first full deployment of the unit since World War II, to provide base and convoy security in support of Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas, from 1993, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia have been reaffirmed by the international community in the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Georgia;

Whereas the Charter of the United Nations states, “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state”;

Whereas, according to the Government of Georgia, the Russian Federation continues to enhance its military presence in Georgia in the occupied region of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories” and the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement, agreed to by the Governments of the Russian Federation and Georgia resulted in the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) being unable to exercise its mandate in these regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, despite the fact that its mandate covers the whole territory of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

Whereas the recognition by the Government of Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories”, the Government of Georgia has committed itself to a policy of peaceful engagement, the protection of economic and human rights, freedom of movement, and the preservation of cultural heritage, language, and identity for the people of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes—

(A) 2017 as the 100th anniversary of the formation of the 41st Division; and

(B) the centenary service to the United States by the 41st Division;

(2) expresses gratitude to the many Oregonians and others who served in the 41st Division, the 41st Infantry Division, the 41st Infantry Brigade, and the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team;

(3) honors the memory of the members of the 41st Division, the 41st Infantry Division, the 41st Infantry Brigade, and the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team who have fallen in the line of duty; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) General Michael E. StENCIL, the Adjutant General of Oregon; and

(B) Lieutenant General Eric RILEY, Commander of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Whereas the Government of Georgia has committed itself to a policy of peaceful engagement, the protection of economic and human rights, freedom of movement, and the preservation of cultural heritage, language, and identity for the people of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories” and the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement, agreed to by the Governments of the Russian Federation and Georgia resulted in the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) being unable to exercise its mandate in these regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, despite the fact that its mandate covers the whole territory of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

Whereas the annual United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the “Status of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia” recognizes that the right of return of all internally displaced persons and refugees and their descendants, regardless of ethnicity, as well as their property rights, remains unfulfilled; and

Whereas the Government of Georgia has committed itself to a policy of peaceful engagement, the protection of economic and human rights, freedom of movement, and the preservation of cultural heritage, language, and identity for the people of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories” and the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement, agreed to by the Governments of the Russian Federation and Georgia resulted in the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) being unable to exercise its mandate in these regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, despite the fact that its mandate covers the whole territory of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

Whereas the Government of Georgia has committed itself to a policy of peaceful engagement, the protection of economic and human rights, freedom of movement, and the preservation of cultural heritage, language, and identity for the people of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia’s “State Strategy on Occupied Territories” and the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement, agreed to by the Governments of the Russian Federation and Georgia resulted in the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) being unable to exercise its mandate in these regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, despite the fact that its mandate covers the whole territory of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;
bases illegally stationed in occupied regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia without the consent of the Government of Georgia or a mandate from the United Nations or other multilateral organizations;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues the process of aggression against Georgia after the early 1990s and occupation of Georgia’s territories following the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War;

Whereas the March 5, 2017, closure of two crossing points on the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) with Abkhazia in the villages of Nabakevi and Otoabaia violated Georgia’s advancement towards enhanced security and improved living conditions for the conflict-affected population;

Whereas President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin has ordered his government to conclude an agreement to effectively incorporate the military of Georgia’s South Ossetia region into the Russian armed forces’ command structure, thereby impeding the peace process;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation is particularly aggressive and the alarming developments in the region illustrate that the Government of the Russian Federation does not accept the independent sovereign states’ right to make decisions and strive for the restoration of zones of influence in the region, including the use of force, occupation, illegal annexation, and other aggressive acts; and

Whereas the United States applied the doctrine of non-recognition in 1940 to the countries of Abkhazia, Georgia, and Lithuania, and every Presidential administration of the United States honored this doctrine until independence was restored to those countries in 1991: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the policy, popularly known as the “Stimson Doctrine”, of the United States to not recognize territorial changes effected by force, and affirms that this policy should continue to guide the foreign policy of the United States;

(2) condemns the military intervention and occupation of Georgia by the Russian Federation and its continuous illegal activities along the ABL in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;

(3) calls upon the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw its recognition of Georgia’s territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia as independent countries, to refrain from acts and policies that undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and to take steps to fulfill all the terms and conditions of the August 12, 2008, Ceasefire Agreement between Georgia and the Russian Federation;

(4) stresses the necessity of progress on core issues within the Geneva International Discussions, including a legally binding pledge from the Government of the Russian Federation on the non-use of force, the establishment of international security arrangements in the occupied regions of Georgia, and the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to the places of their origin;

(5) urges the United States Government to declare that the United States will not under any circumstances recognize the de jure or de facto sovereignty of the Russian Federation over any part of Georgia, its air, land, or water borders, including Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia;

(6) urges the President to deepen cooperation with the Government of Georgia in all areas of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, including Georgia’s advancement towards Euro-Atlantic integration;

(7) urges the President to place emphasis on enhancing Georgia’s security through joint efforts toward self-defense capabilities in order to enhance Georgia’s independent statehood and national sovereignty; and

(8) affirms that a free, united, democratic, and sovereign Georgia is in the long-term interest of the United States as it promotes peace and stability in the region.

SENATE RESOLUTION 107—CONGRATULATING THE RIFLE TEAM OF WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY ON WINNING THE 2017 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 107

Resolved, That the Senate—

Whereas, in 2017, the West Virginia University Mountaineers (referred to in this preamble as the “Mountaineers”) completed an undefeated regular season with a record of 12 wins and no losses and won the Great America Rifle Conference championship for the eighth consecutive year;

Whereas, on March 11, 2017, the Mountaineers won the National Collegiate Athletic Association (referred to in this preamble as the “NCAA”) Rifle Championship;

Whereas the 2017 NCAA Rifle Championship is the fifth consecutive title for the Mountaineers;


Whereas the Mountaineers have won more national championships than any other rifle program in the United States;

Whereas the Mountaineers have more NCAA titles than any other rifle program in the United States;

Whereas the Mountaineers shot a championship-record 4723 aggregate score at the 2017 NCAA Rifle Championships;

Whereas, in 2017, the Mountaineers won the 2017 NCAA air rifle championship;

Whereas freshman Morgan Phillips won the NCAA smallbore title and earned the Top Performer Award of the NCAA Rifle Championship;

Whereas the Mountaineers swept the NCAA individual titles in 2017, the fifth time in the past seven years that the Mountaineers have swept the individual championships; and

Whereas Head Coach Jon Hammond and all members of the Mountaineers, including Jack Anderson, Will Allen, Ryan Babic, Noah Barker, Elizabeth Gratzi, Jean-Pierre Lucas, Morgan Phillips, and Ginny Thraher, completed a record-tying year to claim the 2017 national title: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the West Virginia University rifle team on winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship.

AUTHORITIES FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 30, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. in open session to consider the nomination of Honorable Heather A. Wilson to be Secretary of the Air Force.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 30, 2017, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 30, 2017, at 10 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled The Road Ahead: U.S. Interests, Values, and the American People.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 30, in between votes in S–216, to consider the following: Nomination of Alexander Acosta to serve as Secretary of Labor.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the United States Senate on Thursday, March 30, 2017 from 10 a.m. for Panel I, and from 2 p.m. for Panel II, in room SD–106 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building to hold open hearings entitled Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Melissa Rubenstein, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.
CONGRATULATING THE RIFLE TEAM OF WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY ON WINNING THE 2017 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 107, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 107) congratulating the rifle team of West Virginia University on winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 107) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m. on Monday, April 3; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2017, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:17 p.m., adjourned until Monday, April 3, 2017, at 3 p.m.
Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in recognition of the 38th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), signed by President Carter on April 10, 1979. The TRA had strong support from Congress and that support remains strong to this day.

One of the most important aspects of our friendship with Taiwan is trade. In 2016, trade between the United States and Taiwan accounted for an estimated $86.9 billion. In addition, Taiwan remains our 10th largest trading partner in the world. Because of this important relationship, an updated U.S.-Taiwan bilateral trade agreement would be an asset to our trade balance, our economic strength, and our strategic partnership with our ally Taiwan. We have had a great relationship with Taiwan over the years and it is my hope, and my expectation, that we will build on our partnership to create even more prosperity for America and Taiwan. I will work with both my colleagues in Congress and the President to move such an agreement to fruition.

There has been—and remains—a unique balance for the United States in dealing with Taiwan, the Republic of China, and the People’s Republic of China. We value our relationship with each as major trading partners and key allies in the war on terrorism and violent religious extremism. When Chinese President Xi visits the United States, our nation will welcome him and further our friendship, but we will not waiver in our friendship and strategic support of Taiwan.

The Taiwan Relations Act is a cornerstone of our foreign relations in Asia and we will continue our long-term strategy of defending our allies, making new allies in the region, and promoting peace and prosperity through trade and defense policies.

Mr. Speaker, it’s an honor to recognize the anniversary of the TRA and the entrepreneurial spirit of the people of Taiwan.

IN RECOGNITION OF KATHY REDMAN

HON. RON DeSANTIS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. DeSANTIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Ms. Kathy Redman’s almost 39 years of distinguished federal service.

On April 1, 2017, Ms. Redman will retire as the Southeast Regional Director for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In her current role, she leads USCIS operations in nine states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and manages nearly 1,000 employees.

Ms. Redman’s expertise and knowledge of our nation’s immigration laws have been an invaluable resource to my office. Ms. Redman and her staff have assisted countless constituents by expediting appointments in time of crisis and resolving complicated applications.

One memorable occasion, Ms. Redman helped our office expedite a Naturalization ceremony for the spouse of a deploying Air Force officer. It is always a treasured moment when a new American takes the oath of allegiance to support and defend our Constitution.

I wish Ms. Redman all the best as she begins her retirement in our beautiful state of Florida.

CONGRATULATING LETTERKENNY ARMY DEPOT ON ITS 10TH SHINGO MEDALLION AND ITS COMMITMENT TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

HON. BILL SHUSTER
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Letterkenny Army Depot in my district on receiving its 10th Shingo Medallion for Operational Excellence.

Shingo Prizes are awarded to organizations that not only provide great results, but also go above and beyond to cultivate a culture of enablers and streamliners in the workplace. The high bar set to achieve the award led Businessweek to dub Shingo Awards the “Nobel Prize of Manufacturing.” Letterkenny made history in 2005 when it became the first Army Depot to win a Shingo Institute prize, when the depot was awarded the Silver Medalion.

Eleven years later, Letterkenny Army Depot was just awarded this year’s Bronze Medalion for its Patriot launcher new-build program—it’s 10th medalion in 13 years. This is the first time an Army depot built a new Patriot air and missile defense system major end item, and to have it result in a Shingo Medalion exemplifies Letterkenny Army Depot’s deep commitment to manufacturing excellence. With more than 20 years of experience in working with the Patriot missile system, and now 10 Shingo Medalions in the last 13 years, it is clear that Letterkenny is delivering outstanding results and support to our national defense.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to congratulate Letterkenny Army Depot on its 10th Shingo Medalion. This is an outstanding achievement, and I encourage all of my colleagues to celebrate Letterkenny’s success as a crucial installation to central Pennsylvania and to the security of our nation.

GUN VIOLENCE RESEARCH LEGISLATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to reintroduce legislation to authorize the use of federal funds for long overdue research on firearm safety and gun violence.

For too long, Congress has failed to address the public health crisis caused by gun violence. On average, there are 32,000 deaths and 76,000 injuries from gun violence each year in the United States. Gun deaths now outpace traffic fatalities in our country. It is time to address the epidemic of gun violence and prevent future incidents. Public health research will help identify effective solutions we can implement in order to save lives.

The bill I introduce today, with companion legislation introduced by Sen. Ed Markey, would authorize $10 million in annual funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through Fiscal Year 2023. This funding will allow the CDC to implement the research agenda outlined in a 2013 report issued by the Institutes of Medicine that identified areas in need of study to better understand the underlying causes of gun violence and develop strategies for prevention.

We have more gun-related deaths than any other developed country, yet we have put prohibitions in place that prevent us from obtaining comprehensive, scientific information about the causes and characteristics of gun violence. This public health crisis cannot be ignored any longer. This legislation addresses the epidemic of gun violence and identifies the best strategies to prevent future incidents.

I’m proud this bill has gained the support of leading groups on gun violence prevention, like Everytown for Gun Safety, and the public health community—including the American Medical Association (AMA). The AMA said “gun violence in the United States is a public health crisis requiring a comprehensive public health response and solution.” I could not agree more.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important legislation that can save lives.

CONGRATULATIONS MINNETONKA BOYS ALPINE TEAM

HON. ERIK PAULSEN
OF MINNESOTA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to congratulate the Minnetonka High School Boys Alpine Skiing Team on recently winning the Minnesota High School State Championship.
Led by seniors Sergi Piguillem and Marshall Quist, who finished with combined times of 1:17:98 and 1:21:39, respectively, the Skippers were able to defeat rival Edina 161–151.

This is Minnetonka High School's fifth alpine skiing title in their program's history, which illustrates these athletes' dedication to the pursuit of excellence on and in the classroom. Their state championship title is a testament to their passion and love for the sport, and commitment in putting their best effort forward in all that they do.

Congratulations to head coach Dave Gartner, the entire Minnetonka Alpine Skiing Team on your impressive victory. Our community is proud of you for being tremendous student athletes. Go Skippers.

**RECOGNITION OF GOLDEN APPLE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**HON. FRANCIS ROONEY**

**OF FLORIDA**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our outstanding teachers of Collier County, Florida, and to recognize their hard work and dedication to our community.

Teaching may be the most challenging, yet most important, profession in our country. Teachers inspire, mentor, and motivate our children to succeed. Every one of us undoubtedly has had a teacher in our life that shaped us into who we are today. We are deeply thankful for our dedicated teachers who so greatly impact our young people and the future of our communities.

I want to congratulate the following teachers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, and who will be recognized at the annual Golden Apple Celebration of Teachers Dinner tomorrow night. Myra Jance Daniels will be awarded the Heart of the Apple for her devotion to education. Joanna Campanile, Anne Fredette, Ashley Lynn Heirs, Maria LaRocco, Janell Matos, Amanda McCoy and Stacy Smith are recipients of the Golden Apple. Tara Barr, Staci Haralson Barretta, Steven Becker, Brandon Carter, Kristin Downs, Susan Ellard, Staci Fisher, Sabrina Kolvacs, John Krupp, Veronica Mamone, Kyle Sanders, Kristin Merrill, Joseph Merrill, Dawn Peck, Lindsey Sebella, Christina Svec, Aaron Thayer, Marissa Vessella and Amy Wyss were named Teachers of Distinction.

These teachers truly make a difference in their students' lives and I am thankful for the positive impact they have on our community.

**HONORING THE LIFE OF BELOVED SHELBY ANN CARTER**

**HON. DARIN LAHOOD**

**OF ILLINOIS**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. LAHOOD Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Shelby Ann Carter, a loving mother, daughter, fiancée, and friend. In Wyoming, Illinois, our community sadly experienced a tragic loss of a young woman's life on January 30, 2017. Shelby Ann Carter passed away from smoke inhalation during a fire which consumed her home. Shelby's final moments were spent in a successful effort to save the life of her baby girl.

In the midst of the fire, Shelby had the strength to save the life of her newborn daughter, Keana. Shelby acted heroically by strapping Keana into a car seat and dropping her out of the second story window, an act which ultimately saved her child's life. Strapped in the car seat, Keana safely landed in a pile of debris, where the emergency response team arrived. Keana was then rushed to the hospital and released with only a small burn, but otherwise unharmed.

Shelby graduated from Stark County High School in 2014. She was a bright student, who spent her time after school playing basketball. Shelby's classmates characterized her as a smart and friendly young woman who loved spending time with children. Her proudest moment was when she became a mother to Keana.

Shelby will always be in the hearts and minds of her community and friends throughout Central Illinois. I would like to commend her courageous actions and send my condolences to her friends and family. May God bless her in heaven.

**RECOGNITION OF GRANDVIEW HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL**

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

**OF COLORADO**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Grandview High School Girls-Basketball team, from Grandview High School in Aurora, Colorado. The Wolves triumphed in their 61–52 victory over Lakewood High School in the Colorado 5A state championship game.

Grandview finished the season with an impressive 27–1 record, and celebrated the culmination of their season with the first girls-basketball state championship win for their school. Senior Michaela Onyenwere walked off the court with the game-high 25 points and eight rebounds.

During their performances in the state championship game, the Grandview Wolves proved that with hard work, dedication, and perseverance anything is possible. The team was led to the championship title through the committed leadership of their coach, Josh Ullitzky, and his commendable staff.

Again, congratulations to the Grandview High School Girls-Basketball Team on their continued success, and for their victory in the Colorado's 5A State Championship.

**OKAWVILLE HIGH SCHOOL 2016–17 BOYS’ BASKETBALL TEAM**

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

**OF ILLINOIS**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Okawville High School boys' basketball team upon finishing second in the 2016–2017 Illinois State Class 1A Basketball Tournament. This is a remarkable achievement for the Okawville coaches, teammates, and community as a whole.

The Okawville Rockets had an impressive year and an exciting tournament performance. The Rockets finished with a regular season with a school record of 32–2. By the end of the year, senior Noah Frederking led Okawville with the most rebounds in school history. Mr. Frederking also scored over 2800 points over the course of his high school career, making him the leading all-time scorer for Okawville and the entire Metro East. The Rockets went on to win their regional games against Lebanon High School and Marissa High School. The Rockets followed that win by hosting two victories over New Berlin High School and Carrollton High School in their sectional games.

In their state super-sectional game, the Rockets faced off against Menden Unity High School. After falling behind by 8 points before halftime, the Rockets looked to their defense to carry their comeback. The Rockets did not allow Menden Unity to score a single basket from the floor throughout the entire second half of the game, and rallied for an incredible win to take them to the championship game.

Led by Head Coach Jon Kraus and Assistant Coaches Ryan Heck, Mike Frederking, and Jackie Smith, team members were Payten Harre, Josh Madrid, Caleb Frederking, Will Aubel, Logan Riechmann, Wyatt Krohne, Luke Hensler, Shane Ganz, Drew Frederking, Noah Frederking, Tyler Roesener, Payton Riechmann, Lane Schilling, and Kirklen Meier. Managers Max Aubel and Jarad Barnes also assisted the team throughout its season and playoff run.

I look forward to watching their future successes in both their academic and athletic pursuits and wish them all the best in these endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Okawville Rockets on an impressive season, and I commend them for making the 15th district of Illinois proud.

**IN RECOGNITION OF THE DOWNRIVER COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ON THE DATE OF ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

**HON. DEBBIE DINGELL**

**OF MICHIGAN**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Downriver Community Conference on the date of its 40th Anniversary. The DCC has provided workforce training and job resources to Downriver for decades and has been instrumental in improving the quality of life for the area's residents.

Founded in 1977, the Downriver Community Conference is an organization dedicated to promoting enhanced economic growth and well-being through its workforce training, economic development and additional community services available to southern Wayne County and its residents. The DCC has the key to helping increase the quality of life while working to preserve jobs and attract a skilled workforce through its efforts. In 2003, the DCC successfully supported a proposed takeover of the Downriver Community Conference.
Great Lakes Steel operations in Escorne and River Rouge, a move that saved hundreds of jobs in the community. The DCC also coordinates emergency services across member communities, and has supported cleanup efforts at the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge. The multi-funded operations undertaken by the DCC have been viewed as a successful model to attract a talented workforce to the area while making southern Wayne County a desirable place to live.

The DCC has proven to be an effective advocate on behalf of Downriver, and its work has produced tangible results that make a real difference in the lives of individuals in participating communities. Through its affiliation with Michigan Works!, the organization has been critical to helping provide individuals with the skills they need to succeed in trades and other in-demand fields. Additionally, the organization’s coordinated approach makes it eligible for federal and state grants that would normally be unavailable to individual communities. The DCC’s ability to leverage the unique strengths of the Downriver community has made it a model in effective and sustainable workforce and community development efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Downriver Community Conference and date of its 40th Anniversary Dinner. The organization has played an integral role in the growth and development of southern Wayne County and the surrounding areas.

FIRST RESPONDER APPRECIATION DAY

HON. JEFF DENHAM
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the inaugural First Responder Appreciation Day on April 1, 2017, in Ripon, California. Policemen, firefighters, and emergency medical service personnel play a crucial role in our local communities. In Ripon, they work diligently to serve the city and surrounding areas, improving the lives of those they have vowed to protect. Their job is not always easy and often not safe, but it is one they selflessly perform nonetheless. For this reason, First Responders deserve our unwavering recognition.

The Ripon City Council acknowledged this on November 8, 2016, when they passed a resolution to establish the first Saturday in April of each year as First Responders Appreciation Day. Dedicated to honoring all First Responders, past and present, this annual celebration serves as a reminder that we must not forget those who keep us safe.

I applaud the City of Ripon for honoring our local heroes and their incredible service. This Saturday is the first of many celebrations that will focus on the daily sacrifices performed by these brave men and women.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring all First Responders and commending the city of Ripon for implementing First Responders Appreciation Day.

SMITHSONIAN WOMEN’S HISTORY MUSEUM ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as we conclude Women’s History Month, I am pleased to introduce the Smithsonian Women’s History Museum Act along with Rep. Ed Royce and 128 bipartisan co-sponsors.

In November 2016, a bipartisan commission that was created through a bill I authored submitted its recommendations to Congress about establishing a women’s history museum in our nation’s capital. The Commission unanimously said in its report that the U.S. needs and deserves such a museum to properly tell our whole history. In fact, in the entire country, there is no comprehensive museum solely dedicated to women’s history. Women make up half the population, but are only depicted in about 10 percent of history book material, about 5 percent of national monuments and a fraction of the hundreds of statues on Capitol grounds. By not telling or preserving the stories of women who shaped our country, we are in danger of losing them completely. And that would be a great loss to us all.

This bill has been decades in the making and it is based on the excellent American Museum of Women’s History Congressional Commission final report, which was the result of 18 months of thorough study. The bill would establish a Smithsonian museum dedicated to women’s history and men and women of all ages—deserve to learn and be inspired by the stories of women who contributed to our country’s history.

I am honored that so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have joined me in this historic effort because honoring women’s history should not be a partisan issue. All Americans—men and women of all ages—deserve to learn and be inspired by the stories of women who contributed to our country’s history.

I am always struck by the story of Sybil Ludington. Everyone has heard of Paul Revere’s ride, but few know that Ludington, the daughter of a colonel in the Continental Army, was just a 16 year old girl when she rode through the night an even greater distance than Revere to warn her father’s troops about the approaching British forces located on the National Mall. It calls for the Smithsonian Board of Regents to designate a site for the museum within six months of enactment, and the cost of construction would be raised privately. The museum will be governed by a 25-member Advisory Council appointed by the Board of Regents.

I am honored that so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have joined me in this historic effort because honoring women’s history should not be a partisan issue. All Americans—men and women of all ages—deserve to learn and be inspired by the stories of women who contributed to our country’s history.

I am honored that so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have joined me in this historic effort because honoring women’s history should not be a partisan issue. All Americans—men and women of all ages—deserve to learn and be inspired by the stories of women who contributed to our country’s history.

CONGRATULATING ANDERS BJORK ON BEING NAMED A FINALIST FOR THE HOCKEY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI
OF INDIANA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Anders Bjork, a junior at the University of Notre Dame, on being named one of five finalists for the 2017 Hockey Humanitarian Award.

Each year, the Hockey Humanitarian Award recognizes college hockey’s “finest citizen.” Recipients of this award have made significant, long-lasting contributions to their communities in a true, humanitarian spirit.

Anders has been a member of the Fighting Irish Men’s Hockey team since his freshman year at Notre Dame. But for Anders, his life here in South Bend is about more than being a student athlete. He is part of this community and plays an integral role in making it better. His dedication is especially clear in his experience working with children in need at a local elementary school.

Shortly before last season started, Anders began volunteering in a third grade class at Perley Fine Arts Academy after his coach encouraged the team to meet new community
service goals. Anders’ weekly trips to the elementary school quickly became much more than a way to fulfill a coach’s request. He built deep relationships with the students and became a regular fixture in the classroom. He even has his own desk.

The bond forged between the young kids and Anders was not hard to see. Anders found a way to fit in not only with the classroom dynamic but also with the individual students. For the Perley students Anders is a mentor, a role model, and a friend. Through Anders’ uplifting spirit and kind heart, these third graders are able to open up to and really learn from him.

His incredible commitment of time and talent and his positive impact on these kids is an inspiration to us all. I am so proud of Anders for this much deserved recognition as a finalist for the Hockey Humanitarian Award.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Indiana’s 2nd District, I want to thank Anders Bjork for providing the wonderful support and encouragement I’m sure will stay with these children for years to come. He has truly left a mark on the South Bend community, and I look forward to the great things that lie ahead in his future.

TRIBUTE TO PAT HENSLEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG
OF IOWA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Pat Hensley of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on his retirement from Hy-Vee food store after 38 dedicated years of service.

Pat has worked for Hy-Vee since 1979, when he began a part-time job at a local store. Early on, Hy-Vee recognized his leadership skills, and over the years trusted him in a number of positions, from managing stores, overseeing the company’s western district, helping to lead the government relations department, and finishing his career serving as senior vice president, non-foods. Over his 38-year career Pat’s goal was to ensure, as the commercials said, that there was a helpful smile in every aisle, and that Hy-Vee was an enjoyable environment for customers and employees alike. Pat is leaving behind a legacy of dedication and hard work after decades of service to one of Iowa’s premier companies.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Pat today for his outstanding career at Hy-Vee. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Pat on this momentous occasion and in wishing him and his family nothing but the best in his retirement.

CONGRATS MINNETONKA BOYS SWIMMING TEAM

HON. ERIK PAULSEN
OF MINNESOTA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Minnetonka Boys High School Swimming Team on winning the Minnesota Swim and Dive High School State Championship.

After finishing second in the state the past two years, the Skippers were determined to claim the top spot this year. Led by senior Sam Schilling, Minnetonka dominated the competition by winning many of the events and breaking multiple state records along the way too. They even set the National Public High School 200-yard medley relay record, coming in at 1:29.20, a few tenths faster than the previous record set in Indiana earlier this season.

The championship victory earned by the boys on the Minnetonka High School swim team is a testament to their unwavering commitment to hard work and excellence.

Mr. Speaker, Your families, friends, and our entire community are very proud of each and every one of these outstanding student athletes. Congratulations.

INTRODUCTION OF THE “INVESTING IN AMERICA’S SMALL BUSINESSES ACT OF 2017”

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Small Business Week, a time each year for our nation to recognize and celebrate the critical contributions of America’s entrepreneurs and small business owners.

I am pleased to support our nation’s small businesses by introducing the Investing in America’s Small Businesses Act of 2017. This important legislation allows Community Development Financial Institutions, known as CDFIs, to extend affordable credit to more small businesses in underserved communities through microloans. These small loans, under $50,000, give businesses working capital, help them invest in new equipment or supplies, and have no pre-payment penalties.

I’m proud that the Investing in America’s Small Businesses Act has gained the endorsements of the CDFI Coalition, the Opportunity Finance Network and the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, the national voices for these community-based institutions.

The bill provides grants for CDFIs to establish loan-loss reserve funds for microloans, which will help CDFIs leverage private investment to expand small business lending in underserved communities.

Small businesses are critical engines of economic development and job creation. In underserved communities, however, small businesses with low-income and minority owners often have limited access to affordable credit they need to meet everyday demands or expand their operations. According to a study commissioned by the U.S. Small Business Administration in 2013, “the major constraint limiting the growth, expansion, and wealth creation of small firms—especially women- and minority-owned businesses—is inadequate capital.”

Community Development Financial Institutions serve exactly these communities—with great success and economic benefit. In fact, a 2014 report by the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia found that despite serving predominately low-income markets, CDFI banks and credit unions had virtually the same level of performance as mainstream financial institutions. Despite this demonstrated success, CDFIs often lack the capital to meet the needs of many promising small businesses.

In FY 2016 the total funding from applications to the CDFI Fund was four times greater than the resources available. Private sector investments are not enough to address the significant need for small business credit in underserved communities. CDFIs need access to capital now more than ever. Research shows that minority and low income-owned businesses typically encounter higher borrowing costs, receive smaller loans and see their loan applications rejected more often. The CDFI Fund is well-placed to provide struggling small businesses and entrepreneurs in underserved communities access to affordable credit through microloans.

Let’s give small businesses in underserved areas the tools they need to create jobs and develop their communities. I am pleased to introduce this bill, and urge my colleagues to join in support.
Chamber Action
Routine Proceedings, pages S2119–S2157

Measures Introduced: Twenty-six bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 775–800, S.J. Res. 39, and S. Res. 104–107. Page S2152

Measures Reported:
Special Report entitled “Legislative and Oversight Activities During the 114th Congress by the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs”. (S. Rept. No. 115–17)
Special Report entitled “Report on the Legislative Activities of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation During the 114th Congress”. (S. Rept. No. 115–18)
Special Report entitled “Report on the Activities of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary During the 114th Congress”. (S. Rept. No. 115–19)
Special Report entitled “Review of Legislative Activity During the 114th Congress”. (S. Rept. No. 115–20)
Special Report entitled “Legislative Activities Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress”. (S. Rept. No. 115–22)
S. 110, to require the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program to provide a digital information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision-support tools, training, and best practices and to support collection of priority coastal geospatial data to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage the coastal region. (S. Rept. No. 115–14)
S. 129, to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act. (S. Rept. No. 115–15)
S. 168, to amend and enhance certain maritime programs of the Department of Transportation. (S. Rept. No. 115–16)
S. 141, to improve understanding and forecasting of space weather events, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–21) Page S2151

Measures Passed:

Savings Arrangements Established by Qualified State Political Subdivisions for Non-Governmental Employees Rule: By 50 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 99), Senate passed H.J. Res. 67, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees. Pages S2121–22

Health and Human Services Relating to Compliance with Title X Requirements Rule: By 51 yeas to 50 nays, Vice President voting yea (Vote No. 101), Senate passed H.J. Res. 43, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by Secretary of Health and Human Services relating to compliance with title X requirements by project recipients in selecting subrecipients. Pages S2122–38

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:
By 51 yeas to 50 nays, Vice President voting yea (Vote No. 100), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution. Page S2122

National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship: Senate agreed to S. Res. 107, congratulating the rifle team of West Virginia University on winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship. Page S2157

Delta Queen—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following Leader remarks on Monday, April 3, 2017, Senate begin consideration of S. 89, to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on passage, with no intervening action or debate. Page S2138
Duke Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following the vote on passage of S. 89, to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security; and that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, with concurrence of the Democratic Leader, on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 35, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 55/H.R. 46, bills to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Fort Ontario in the State of New York, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 97, to enable civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies by private and public institutions, to expand theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, and materials science;

S. 99, to require the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the President James K. Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System;

S. 117, to designate a mountain peak in the State of Montana as “Alex Diekmann Peak”, with an amendment;

S. 131, to provide for the exchange of certain National Forest System land and non-Federal land in the State of Alaska, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 167, to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas, with an amendment;

S. 189, to modify the boundary of the Fort Scott National Historic Site in the State of Kansas, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 190, to provide for consideration of the extension under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of nonapplication of No-Load Mode energy efficiency standards to certain security or life safety alarms or surveillance systems;

S. 199, to authorize the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir;

S. 213, to designate the wilderness within the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in the State of Alaska as the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness Area;

S. 214, to authorize the expansion of an existing hydroelectric project;

S. 215, to authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to issue an order continuing a stay of a hydroelectric license for the Mahoney Lake hydroelectric project in the State of Alaska;

S. 216, to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation to manage its infrastructure assets;

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Sonny Perdue, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Agriculture.

NOMINATION

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Heather Wilson, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of the Air Force, Department of Defense, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Thune and Rounds, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.
S. 217, to amend the Denali National Park Improvement Act to clarify certain provisions relating to the natural gas pipeline authorized in the Denali National Park and Preserve;
S. 225/H.R. 699, bills to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to modify provisions relating to certain land exchanges in the Mt. Hood Wilderness in the State of Oregon;
S. 226, to exclude power supply circuits, drivers, and devices to be connected to, and power, light-emitting diodes or organic light-emitting diodes providing illumination or ceiling fans using direct current motors from energy conservation standards for external power supplies;
S. 239, to amend the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to encourage the increased use of performance contracting in Federal facilities;
S. 267, to provide for the correction of a survey of certain land in the State of Alaska;
S. 280/H.R. 618, bills to authorize, direct, expedite, and facilitate a land exchange in El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado;
S. 285/H.R. 689, bills to ensure adequate use and access to the existing Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment within the Holy Cross Wilderness in Eagle County, Colorado;
S. 286/H.R. 698, bills to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado;
S. 287, to update the map of, and modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument;
S. 289/H.R. 688, bills to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado;
S. 331, to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia;
S. 346, to provide for the establishment of the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, with an amendment;
S. 363, to revise the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in northeastern Minnesota and to extend the trail into Vermont to connect with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail;
S. 385, to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry;
S. 392, to establish the 400 years of African-American History Commission;
S. 432, to designate the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas in the State of New Mexico;
S. 466, to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest;
S. 490, to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;
S. 491, to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving Clark Canyon Dam, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;
S. 501, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System;
S. 502, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota;
S. 508, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon;
S. 513, to designate the Frank and Jeanne Moore Wild Steelhead Special Management Area in the State of Oregon;
S. 566, to withdraw certain land in Okanogan County, Washington, to protect the land;
S. 590, to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain or replace certain facilities and structures for commercial recreation services at Smith Gulch in Idaho;
S. 617, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in the State of Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System;
S. 644, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Medgar Evers House, located in Jackson, Mississippi, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;
S. 703, to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to carry out the Equus Beds Division of the Wichita Project;
S. 710, to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving Jennings Randolph Dam, with an amendment;
S. 713, to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the State of Washington, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;
S. 714, to amend Public Law 103–434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin;
S. 723, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project, with an amendment;
S. 724, to amend the Federal Power Act to modernize authorizations for necessary hydropower approvals;
S. 729, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire approximately 44 acres of land in Martinez, California, for inclusion in the John Muir National Historic Site;  
S. 730, to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects;  
S. 733, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting;  
S. 734, to extend a project of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission involving the Cannonsville Dam, with an amendment;  
H.R. 88, to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in Tennessee and Mississippi, to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;  
H.R. 267, to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia;  
H.R. 381, to designate a mountain in the John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest as "Sky Point";  
H.R. 494, to expand the boundary of Fort Frederick National Monument in the State of Georgia, with an amendment;  
H.R. 538, to redesignate Ocmulgee National Monument in the State of Georgia and revise its boundary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;  
H.R. 558, to adjust the boundary of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to include the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;  
H.R. 560, to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to provide access to certain vehicles serving residents of municipalities adjacent to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area; and H.R. 863, to facilitate the addition of park administration at the Coltsville National Historical Park.

Also, committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:


Subcommittee on National Parks: Senators Daines (Chair), Barrasso, Lee, Gardner, Alexander, Hoeven, Portman, Hirono, Sanders, Stabenow, Heinrich, King, and Duckworth.

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining: Senators Lee (Chair), Barrasso, Risch, Flake, Daines, Gardner, Alexander, Hoeven, Cassidy, Strange, Wyden, Stabenow, Franken, Manchin, Heinrich, Hirono, and Duckworth.

Subcommittee on Water and Power: Senators Flake (Chair), Barrasso, Risch, Lee, Cassidy, Portman, Strange, King, Wyden, Sanders, Franken, Manchin, and Duckworth.

Senators Murkowski and Cantwell are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

ALASKAN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND JOB CREATION

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the potential for infrastructure improvements to create jobs and reduce the cost of living through all-of-the-above energy and mineral production in Alaska, after receiving testimony from Steven Masterman, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys State Geologist and Director, Fairbanks; Deputy Mayor Robert Potrzuski, Sitka, Alaska; Joy Baker, Port of Nome, Nome, Alaska; Kara Moriarty, Alaska Oil and Gas Association, and Chris Rose, Renewable Energy Alaska Project, both of Anchorage; and Della Trumble, King Cove Village Corporation, King Cove, Alaska.

U.S. INTERESTS, VALUES, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine United States interests, values, and the American people, after receiving testimony from Madeleine K. Albright, former Secretary of State, and Stephen J. Hadley, former U.S. National Security Advisor, both of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES AND INFLUENCE CAMPAIGNS

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee concluded a hearing to examine disinformation, focusing on a primer in Russian active measures and influence campaigns, after receiving testimony from Roy Godson, Georgetown University; Eugene Rumer, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Russia and Eurasia Program; Clint Watts, Foreign Policy Research Institute Program on National Security; Kevin Mandia, FireEye, Inc.; General Keith Alexander (Ret.), former Director, National Security Agency, and Chief, Central Security Service, IronNet Cybersecurity; and Thomas Rid, King’s College London Department of War Studies.
House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 49 public bills, H.R. 19, 1800–1847; and 5 resolutions, H. Res. 234–238, were introduced. Pages H2596–99

Additional Cosponsors: Page H2601

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 732, to limit donations made pursuant to settlement agreements to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–72); and

H. Res. 186, resolution of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Treasury to provide to the House of Representatives the tax returns and other specified financial information of President Donald J. Trump; adversely (H. Rept. 115–73).

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Foxx to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. Page H2563

EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 1431, to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications and public participation, by a recorded vote of 229 ayes to 193 noes, Roll No. 208. Pages H2564–76

Rejected the Foster motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with amendments, by a yea-and-nay vote of 189 yeas to 233 nays, Roll No. 207. Pages H2573–75

H. Res. 233, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1431) was agreed to yesterday, March 29th.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, April 3rd for Morning Hour debate. Page H2577

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H2585.

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2574–75, H2575–76. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Committee Meetings

THE CURRENT STATE OF U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness; and Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a joint hearing entitled “The Current State of U.S. Transportation Command”. Testimony was heard from General Darren W. McDew, Commander, Transportation Command, U.S. Air Force.

CONSEQUENCES AND CONTEXT FOR RUSSIA’S VIOLATIONS OF THE INF TREATY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces; and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation, and Trade of the Committee on Foreign Affairs held a joint hearing entitled “Consequences and Context for Russia’s Violations of the INF Treaty”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice held a hearing on H.R. 1689, the “Private Property Rights Protection Act”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SBA’S ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: RESOURCES TO ASSIST SMALL BUSINESSES

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce held a hearing entitled “SBA’s Entrepreneurial Development Programs: Resources to Assist Small Businesses”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D355)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY,
APRIL 3, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider the nominations of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Rod J. Rosenstein, of Maryland, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SH–216.

House

No hearings are scheduled.
Next Meeting of the SENATE
3 p.m., Monday, April 3

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will begin consideration of S. 89, Delta Queen, and vote on passage of the bill at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Following disposition of S. 89, Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
12 p.m., Monday, April 3

House Chamber

Program for Monday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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