

SEC. 3. AGE LIMITATION FOR CHILDREN.

Section 1212(c) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796d-1(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking “No child” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), no child”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) DELAYED APPROVALS.—

“(A) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION.—If a claim for assistance under this subpart is approved more than 1 year after the date on which the application for such assistance is filed with the Attorney General, the age limitation under this subsection shall be extended by the length of the period—

“(i) beginning on the day after the date that is 1 year after the date on which the application is filed; and

“(ii) ending on the date on which the application is approved.

“(B) CLAIM FOR BENEFITS FOR DEATH OR PERMANENT AND TOTAL DISABILITY.—In addition to an extension under subparagraph (A), if any, for an application for assistance under this subpart that relates to a claim for benefits under subpart 1 that was approved more than 1 year after the date on which the claim was filed with the Attorney General, the age limitation under this subsection shall be extended by the length of the period—

“(i) beginning on the day after the date that is 1 year after the date on which the claim for benefits is submitted; and

“(ii) ending on the date on which the claim for benefits is approved.”.

SEC. 4. DUE DILIGENCE IN PAYING BENEFIT CLAIMS.

Subpart 1 of part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 1206. DUE DILIGENCE IN PAYING BENEFIT CLAIMS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau, with all due diligence, shall expeditiously attempt to obtain the information and documentation necessary to adjudicate a benefit claim filed under this part, including a claim for financial assistance under subpart 2.

“(b) SUFFICIENT INFORMATION UNAVAILABLE.—If a benefit claim filed under this part, including a claim for financial assistance under subpart 2, is unable to be adjudicated by the Bureau because of a lack of information or documentation from a third party, such as a public agency, and such information is not readily available to the claimant, the Bureau may not abandon the benefit claim unless the Bureau has utilized the investigative tools available to the Bureau to obtain the necessary information or documentation, including subpoenas.”.

SEC. 5. PRESUMPTION THAT OFFICER ACTED PROPERLY.

Section 1202 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796a) is amended—

(1) by striking “No benefit” and inserting the following:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—No benefit”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) PRESUMPTION.—In determining whether a benefit is payable under this part, the Bureau—

“(1) shall presume that none of the limitations described in subsection (a) apply; and

“(2) shall not determine that a limitation described in subsection (a) applies, absent clear and convincing evidence.”.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.

The amendments made by this Act shall—

(1) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to any benefit claim or application under part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.) that is—

(A) pending before the Bureau of Justice Assistance on the date of enactment; or

(B) received by the Bureau on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 5 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:

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing to consider the following nominations: Ms. Sigal Mandelker, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of Treasury; Ms. Mira Radielovic Ricardel, to be Under Secretary for Export Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; Mr. Marshall Billingslea, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, U.S. Department of Treasury; and Mr. Heath P. Tarbert to be Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Treasury.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 16, 2017, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 from 2:15 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 16, 2017, at 3:15 p.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, “Leveraging Federal Funding; Innovative Solutions for Infrastructure.”

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, in consultation with the chairperson of the Committee on Indian Affairs, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 114-244, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Com-

mission on Native Children: Carlyle Begay of Arizona and Melody Staebner of North Dakota.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 163, S. Res. 164, S. Res. 165, and S. Res. 166.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 17; 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; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Brand nomination; finally, that the time until 12 noon be equally divided in the usual form.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

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, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as we know here in Washington, politics is a battlefield as much as it is a debating society. On this battlefield, a new form of political weapon has emerged, one for which the American political system was not well prepared. As Democrats, I can say from our side, we were virtually blind to this weapon in the last election. For my 167th “Time to Wake Up” speech, I am here to discuss this new political weapon: systematic fake news.

Fake news does not just fall like rain from heaven. In its most dangerous form, fake news is weaponized for effect—usually, political effect.

Vladimir Putin's regime in Russia made weaponized fake news a core element of its political manipulation throughout the former Soviet Union and the modern European Union, revving up public ire over rapes that never happened, for instance; planting fake material in politicians' laptops and social media that can then be "exposed," and broadcasting false political propaganda. This phenomenon has been documented in Chairman GRAHAM's recent hearing in our Crime and Terrorism Judiciary Subcommittee, featuring, among other sources, the Center for Strategic and International Studies' "Kremlin Playbook," and it has been documented throughout the proceedings of this year's McCain Institute Sedona Forum. Because of this history of political manipulation, the Putin regime's interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election ought to be a wakeup call for America.

Weaponized fake news requires a delivery system, and here is where this connects to climate change. In America, we are particularly vulnerable to such election interference because a robust delivery system for weaponized fake news already exists. Putin doesn't need to build a fake news delivery system in America. The fossil fuel industry already did. Climate denial was the original fake news. They have been at it awhile.

A decade ago, a peer-reviewed academic study of the climate denial apparatus described how this works. The fossil fuel industry sets up an array of "environmental skeptics." But of course they are not just skeptics; they in reality "are predominantly agents of conservative think tanks." These think tanks, in turn, have the "essential role" of providing what the report calls "political insulation for industry," including "for companies such as ExxonMobil". Again quoting this report, the "defining feature" of this apparatus is the "denial of the authenticity of environmental problems." Collectively, this climate denial apparatus creates for the fossil fuel industry "a full scale counter movement" against environmental science. Concluding in the report, "Its major tactic is to manufacture uncertainty."

The Center for Strategic and International Studies' "Kremlin Playbook" report, by comparison, describes Russia's fake news tactic as "to disseminate erroneous information that fosters public confusion." To manufacture uncertainty, "to disseminate erroneous information that fosters public confusion"—do you see the similarity?

If we collapse into fewer words these decade-old findings about the fossil fuel industry climate denial apparatus, here is what you have: front groups who disguise the identity of the real actors and pump out fake news—in their case, the fake news of climate denial.

The tactics and methods of climate science denial are the tactics and methods of weaponized fake news: false front organizations, hidden funding sources, controllable means of communication, mimicry of legitimate groups, personal disparagement of opponents, relentless repetition of lies, and shameless persistence when debunked. You could say that the fake news propagation we face today in America metastasized from climate denial. Climate denial was the original "School for Scoundrels" in these fake news techniques.

To put financial scale to this, Putin's Russia has a \$200 billion annual budget. With that, they funded a significant weaponized fake news effort to influence our Presidential election. But the fossil fuel industry has a \$2 trillion annual budget. The fossil fuel industry fights to protect an annual subsidy in the United States estimated by the International Monetary Fund to be \$700 billion. With stakes like that, the climate denial delivery system the fossil fuel industry could profitably set up in the United States can be very robust and complex, and it is.

Fake news, dark money, and hidden political spending have been the fossil fuel industry's primary political weapons. This creates the problem. Once a fake news delivery system is in place, that system will not necessarily differentiate between different types or sources of fake news. Once that road is open, anyone can travel it with any fake news cargo. The same fake news delivery system that will distribute fake news designed to manipulate American politics for the fossil fuel industry can just as effectively distribute fake news designed to manipulate American elections for Russia or China or Iran. The fake news delivery system is not restricted to any one payload.

The fossil fuel industry also fought hard to create the dark money political spending apparatus that now despoils American politics. They lobbied the Supreme Court for the wretched Citizens United decision. They saw it coming and they were swift at the mark, and they have stopped any effort in Congress at political spending disclosure. They need and depend on dark money to buy influence in Congress.

Here, the problem is the same. Once you tolerate a dark money political spending apparatus in American politics, that dark money apparatus will be just as good at hiding the hand of Vladimir Putin or China or Iran as it is at hiding the hand of the fossil fuel industry. Darkness is darkness, whether it is Charles and David Koch or Vladimir Putin operating in that darkness.

The dangers of fake news, dark money, climate science denial, and foreign interference in our elections are thus all tied together, and they call for an American response. Politics is a battlefield, and dark money and fake news are now assets for our Nation's enemies.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for adjournment occur following the remarks of the Democratic leader.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, 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. 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.

FBI INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in a week full of revelation after revelation, on a day when we thought things couldn't get any worse, they have. I was shaken by the report in the New York Times that alleged that the President tried to shut down an active FBI investigation into a close political associate, and we are only 1 day removed from stunning allegations that the President may have divulged classified information to a known adversary.

Concerns about our national security, the rule of law, the independence of our Nation's highest law enforcement agencies are mounting. The country is being tested in unprecedented ways.

I say to all of my colleagues in the Senate: History is watching.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:15 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

BRIAN D. QUINTENZ, OF OHIO, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 13, 2020, VICE SCOTT O'MALIA, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

KEVIN ALLEN HASSETT, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS, VICE JASON FURMAN.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DEREK KAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION FOR POLICY, VICE BLAIR ANDERSON.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DAN R. BROUILLETTE, OF TEXAS, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF ENERGY, VICE ELIZABETH SHERWOOD-RANDALL.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

SUSAN PARKER BODINE, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE CYNTHIA GILES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

JAMES DONOVAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE SARAH BLOOM RASKIN.