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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

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

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

The Members of this people's House will be leaving for the Memorial Day recess. As they meet with their respective constituents, give them the gifts of wisdom and discernment, that in their words and actions they will do justice, love with mercy, and walk humbly with You. May they also have the attentiveness that is called for to hear the concerns of those whom they represent.

On this weekend especially, we remember those men and women who have given their lives in service to our country. Bless them with everlasting peace and give consolation and peace to those who mourn them.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. OLSON 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

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

FIGHT ON, KATIE VACEK

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, for 8½ years I have worked for the best people in America, the people of Texas 22. The people of Texas 22 love their neighbors. They love their community, they love life, and they love God.

Texas 22 is Katie Vacek. Katie is a senior at Needville High School. Three months before using her Blue Jay wings to fly into her future, God gave her a different flight. She fell out of a tree with her boyfriend, Kernie, watching. She is now paralyzed from the waist down.

Kernie, her classmates, and the whole town rallied around Katie and her dreams. Twelve days ago, at her prom with Kernie, she danced.

Katie, I don't want to come between you and Kernie, but I want you to be my date the next time President Trump speaks in this Chamber in February of next year. We will lock this down at the Knights of Columbus on June 6 back home. Keep fighting, knowing that God is with you always.

BUDGET CUTS TO EDUCATION

(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, I rise today in strong opposition to the budget released by President Trump. It is cruel and shortsighted in the extreme: cutting essential investments driving job creation, protecting our environment, funding breakthrough cures, and providing a safety net for the neediest among us.

Among the most objectionable are the President's cuts to education. Funds used for college work-study programs, loan forgiveness for those who enter public service, and dollars used by schools for mental health will not just be cut but be eliminated. For example, 21st century community learning centers, which offer learning opportunities during nonschool hours for those from our neediest communities, would be completely eliminated.

We know these programs work. An evaluation showed program participation improved math and English grades by 30 to 40 percent. In my district, Waukegan Community School District Number 60 uses these funds to offer an extended day program at seven schools to increase academic achievement and build life skills.

Mr. Speaker, this budget irresponsibly mortgages our future by shortchanging our children. I urge my colleagues to reject this budget. Let's work together to chart a path that ensures our Nation's prosperity.

NATIONAL EMS WEEK

(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, this week we observe National EMS Week to celebrate, unify, and inspire the men and women of our Nation's emergency medical services. The theme this year is Always in Service, which recognizes our EMS professionals and their constant service to communities throughout this nation.

From a young age, children are taught that, in a moment of crisis, they call 911. From illness to injury, whenever the world seems to be ending, society counts on EMS personnel to be

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there. They are expected to work hard and be strong, especially in times of trouble.

Mr. Speaker, as a volunteer firefighter, EMT, and a rescue technician with more than three decades of experience being on the front lines with these EMS professionals, I can personally attest to their dedication to saving lives.

The job of an EMS professional is not easy. It requires just as much compassion as it does courage. These men and women are committed to making the world better, so I say thank you. Thank you to the EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, and supervisors across the country. Thank you for serving. Happy National EMS Week.

CBO SCORE OF TRUMPCARE PAINTS A DIRE PICTURE

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, the new American Health Care Act CBO score released yesterday reinforces that this bill is devastating to the American people: 14 million more will be uninsured within just one year, and 23 million more will be uninsured over a decade.

This analysis paints a dire picture. It confirms that TrumpCare will shift the burden of costs onto our seniors, millions of hardworking families, and patients with preexisting conditions. Those hit hardest are exactly the people who need care the most, all while giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires.

What is more, this analysis debunks the gimmicks Republican leaders tried to sell us, saying the bill would do no harm to those with preexisting illnesses. In fact, patients with preexisting conditions will have less coverage, be forced to pay more, and even be priced out of the market, just as we expected.

This is far too great a toll on the American people, and we must do better.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SYRACUSE POLICE CAPTAIN RICHARD WALSH

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a dear friend and former colleague, longtime Syracuse Police Captain Richard Walsh. For nearly 20 years, I served as a Federal prosecutor in central New York. During much of this time, I had the distinct privilege of working alongside Captain Walsh and witnessed firsthand his commitment to serving the city of Syracuse.

Captain Walsh joined the Syracuse Police Department in 1970, rising to the rank of captain of detectives. He led a very successful and distinguished career, retiring in 2011 after 41 years on the job. On the day of his retirement, Captain Walsh was named the grand marshal of the Syracuse St. Patrick's Day parade, a mark of high distinction for any central New Yorker.

In addition to his diligent efforts to keep our community safe, Captain Walsh volunteered countless hours to many community organizations, including Hunger Project, Huntington Family Center, and the Rape Crisis Center. Eternally proud of his Irish heritage and roots in Tipperary Hill, he devoted many hours to the Syracuse Irish Festival, was a founding member of the St. Patrick's Day parade committee, and served as president of the Onondaga County Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Captain Richard Walsh was the true definition of a public servant. He loved his work, he had the utmost respect of his colleagues and community, and he was relentless in his efforts to make central New York a safer and a better place. His kindness and generosity will forever be remembered. May Captain Richard Walsh's name and legacy forever be remembered in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Rest peacefully, my friend.

GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION ON HUNGER AND FAMINE

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a call of action to make sure that the country recognizes that we have got to focus on and talk about the more than 20 million people at risk of famine in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and northeast Nigeria.

This is a humanitarian crisis. Starving children and families are crying out for our help. Right now, 1.4 million children are acutely malnourished and at risk of death. Worldwide, an additional 50 million people are severely hungry, surviving day to day on only what they can find.

The United Nations is calling this the largest humanitarian crisis that has faced the world since the organization was founded in 1945. Mr. Speaker, we can end this crisis if we just find the political will. That is why I am joining my colleagues in Congress and humanitarian and faith leaders around the country to mark a Global Week of Action on Hunger and Famine.

Earlier this month, we were successful in securing an additional $990 million for famine relief in the fiscal year 2017 spending bill, thanks to a bipartisan coalition of Members and our passionate grassroots organizations. But this is not enough. The United Nations needs $4.4 billion by July to avert catastrophe. We need other countries to step up to the plate, and we must absolutely preserve our commitment to addressing famine.

We cannot allow the Trump administration's proposed budget, which would decimate food aid, to be enacted.

MEANINGFUL REFORMS FOR THE VA

(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, I rise today to note the veterans' bills passed by the House of Representatives this week. Amongst the legislation are bills to provide veterans with a cost-of-living adjustment for disability compensation, create a pilot program to explore magnetic resonant therapy as treatment for veterans with mental health conditions, and streamline the disability claims process at the VA, amongst other legislation.

I would like to specifically highlight the VA Scheduling Accountability Act. A 2014 investigation found that no less than 40 veterans died while on unauthorized waiting lists, waiting to receive care that they never got. This is completely unacceptable. This legislation puts into place measures to ensure every facility is in compliance with VA scheduling policies and will withhold any awards or bonuses from any centers who fail to certify their compliance.

Together with our new VA Secretary David Shulkin, whom we met with this week, I am confident that we will continue to create meaningful reforms for the VA. As we head into the Memorial Day weekend, this is just one way we can honor veterans and those who have fallen for us.

HONORING HENRI TERMEER

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

Mr. MOULTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to honor a constituent, a friend, and a beloved member of our community, Henri Termeer. Henri was a resident of my hometown in Massachusetts and the retired CEO of Genzyme, the biotech firm credited with launching the Boston biotech revolution that now leads the globe.

Henri has been described as the epitome of a renaissance man, and he embodied the nexus of business, culture, and civic responsibility. He also left a lasting imprint on those he loved. His 16-year-old daughter, Adriana, referred to him as the giving tree because of the seemingly endless energy he devoted to the causes he believed in and the lives he touched.

At dinner the night he passed away, Henri said to his guests: We are getting older and running out of runway here. We need new leaders now.

Mr. Speaker, we would all do well to aspire to be the kind of thoughtful, passionate, and impactful leader Henri was. He saved countless lives, yet he was known for his modesty. Henri was one of the kindest men I have ever known, and we will miss him.

WELCOME TO ROLLING THUNDER

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the veterans from Rolling Thunder to Washington for their Memorial Day events. Veterans like Gus Dante of Branchburg, New Jersey, serve on Rolling Thunder's national board, and every year he and others help organize events here in Washington to commemorate those brave Americans lost in war.

For 30 years, Rolling Thunder's voices and motorcycles have been roaring in Washington, and lawmakers and the new administration are listening. Veterans' issues are front and center in the Halls of Congress, and Secretary Shulkin is reforming the Veterans Administration to restore the trust Rolling Thunder and all veterans demand.

We must keep up the fight for the rights and benefits veterans have earned in the service to the Nation. I am proud to join with Rolling Thunder in introducing two important measures: legislation to end the 40-mile rule for private care through the VA and legislation to display the POW/MIA flag on Federal properties.

Mr. Speaker, on this commemorative Memorial Day weekend, let us all recall those who answered the call of service, especially those who did not return home.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, the Trump budget is a disaster for the very people who the President claims he wants to assist. It is reckless, reprehensible, and regressive.

The Trump budget balances itself on the backs of working families, middle class folks, senior citizens, the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and rural America. The Trump budget fails to invest in education and job training, it fails to invest in transportation and infrastructure, and it fails to invest in research and development. Instead, the Trump budget would cut Head Start, cut Medicaid, cut assistance to nursing homes, and it even cuts Meals on Wheels.

This is all being done simply to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and the well-off—lifestyles of the rich and shameless. The Trump budget is a disaster, and we are going to do everything possible to vote it down.

PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 1973.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 352 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1973.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0918

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes, with Mr. POLIQUIN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read for the first time.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, we are able to continue our efforts in protecting children by passing legislation to protect young athletes from abuse. The country was shocked at the revelations in recent years concerning the ongoing abuse endured by young athletes at the hands of their coaches and trainers in USA Gymnastics and USA Swimming. These children were betrayed by people they trusted, by people they looked up to, and by people who had a duty to protect them.

That is why I am pleased to be on the floor here today in support of the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. This bill imposes a requirement to report child abuse for those authorized by U.S. sport national governing bodies, such as USA Gymnastics and USA Swimming, to work with minor athletes or members of these governing bodies.

As is the case with existing Federal mandatory reporting requirements, these individuals will be required to make a prompt report to law enforcement when they learn of facts that give reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of child abuse. This provision will ensure that the malfeasance on the part of national governing bodies, like USA Gymnastics, in failing to report allegations of abuse to law enforcement, never occurs again.

The bill further strengthens existing civil remedies for victims of sexual abuse who wish to seek civil damages from their abusers. The bill clarifies that once a victim has established a harm occurred, the court will presume damages of $150,000. It relaxes the statute of limitations for victims. The 10-year period will now begin when the victim reasonably discovers the violation or harm, not when it accrues. It also extends the statute of limitations to 10 years after a legal disability is lifted. In other words, minors who are victims will have 10 years from the time they reach adulthood to file.

Finally, the bill expands the authority of the national governing bodies to develop practices, policies, and procedures to prevent sexual abuse, and clarifies the duties of the bodies in developing these practices.

Sports have always been a central aspect of American life. Sports teach our children about focus, teamwork, and leadership, and we should encourage our children to participate, to be a part of healthy competition; but, in doing so, we need to assure we keep these competitive atmospheres safe.

I am pleased to see that the U.S. Olympic Committee has helped to establish a new organization called the Center for Safe Sport, to prevent and respond to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of young athletes.

I want to commend the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) for introducing this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 1973, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act, for several reasons.

Most importantly, this is a reasonable bill and is intended to help protect young athletes from abuse and preserve the sanctity of sports associated with the U.S. Olympic Committee, the organization responsible for preparing and training young athletes who might one day represent their country competitively all over the world.

Children deserve to fully enjoy the innocence of their youth—by exploring the curiosities of the world, taking pleasure in the arts, and participating in sports—free from hurt, harm, or danger.

Involvement in sports, and instruction and guidance from adult coaches, can positively influence a young person's growth and development, as well as his or her potential for future success into adulthood.

The sexual abuse of children and youth is intolerable in any text, and we must take appropriate measures to eliminate it from youth sports. Such exploitation betrays and harms young people, sometimes severely and irreparably.

Young people look to adults to protect them and keep them safe. We all have a responsibility to do so.

With H.R. 1973, we have an opportunity to ensure that individuals abide by this duty. Existing Federal law requires certain professionals, such as

doctors, dentists, social workers, psychologists, teachers, and daycare workers, who regularly interact with children, to report suspected abuse to law enforcement.

While our discussion of this legislation today may focus primarily on sexual abuse, H.R. 1973 will require adults who interact with young athletes, in connection to national governing bodies of various sports, to report suspected abuse of any kind.

The need for this legislation is best illustrated by an ongoing scandal of widespread abuse and exploitation of young gymnasts over the course of 20 years within USA Gymnastics, a prominent governing body of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Many complaints of sexual and emotional abuse went unreported, allowing coaches, instructors, and doctors to repeatedly victimize gymnasts as young as 6 years old. The shocking failure of anyone to report accusations through law enforcement, or even keep track of complaints internally, made it possible for some of these predators to commit horrific acts at several gyms in several states.

For example, a cloud of allegations of abuse surrounded one particular physician in Michigan going back as far as 1997. Regrettably, allegations against him were not reported to law enforcement until recently. Following the first public complaint against him in 2015, more than 100 women have filed complaints accusing him of sexual abuse, and he now faces more than 20 criminal charges in both Federal and State courts.

While the USA Gymnastics scandal is unfortunate, let it be an example and incentive to prevent such pervasive abuse elsewhere.

Accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to join me and my chairman in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1973, Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act.

Since my time as U.S. attorney in the Southern District of Indiana, I have been committed to battling child exploitation and abuse.

Last year, I was shocked, along with much of the country, when The Indianapolis Star published an investigative piece that exposed troubling allegations of sexual abuse at USA Gymnastics programs across the country.

According to their report, over the last 20 years, at least 368 young people, most Olympic hopefuls, were the victims of sexual abuse at the hands they trusted—coaches, trainers, doctors, and other adults associated with USA Gymnastics. They reported the abuse to USA Gymnastics, but, unfortunately, USA Gymnastics failed, in many cases, to report those allegations of abuse to law enforcement authorities.

The article shed light on their stories and inspired the legislation that is before us today. According to more than 5,600 pages of USA Gymnastics records, released by The Indy Star, some of the 54 coaches, who had been accused of sexual abuse by young athletes in their care, weren't banned from gymnastics until years after their history of abuse had been reported to and kept in complaint files by USA Gymnastics.

One USA Gymnastics doctor already referenced, Dr. Nassar, stands accused of having abused young women and girls for more than 20 years. More than 100 women have come forward today to share their stories of abuse at his hands.

I understand how challenging it is to share painful stories of sexual abuse, and I am proud of these brave gymnasts who shared their stories: stories that never should have happened, and stories that went inexcusably unanswered.

Their stories demand our action and our attention, not only to provide victims with the justice denied to them for so long but also to protect future generations of Olympic hopefuls.

I want to acknowledge the work of Senator FEINSTEIN of California, who is leading this bill in the Senate, and my colleagues in the bipartisan Women's Caucus, specifically Representative FRANKEL of Florida. I want to commend the chair and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, and other members of the committee, for taking the lead in protecting young victims from sexual abuse. Our legislation is an important step forward toward protecting these young athletes.

It addresses that dangerous silence that, as The Indy Star investigative piece showed, plagued USA Gymnastics and other governing bodies of our Olympic sports—a silence that led to more girls being abused, hurt, and harmful coaches, and others, who faced little or no repercussions for their heinous actions.

The abuse should have been, first and foremost, prevented. The system utterly failed when the abuse was not detected and not promptly reported. The U.S. Olympic Committee failed and must do better, and I commend them for their work now in working to do better.

□ 0930

Our bill makes sure that national governing bodies entrusted with the health and well-being of athletes and future Olympians promptly report allegations of sexual abuse and other abuse to law enforcement authorities and implement much stronger policies and procedures to prevent this from happening again.

Most importantly, I want to applaud the victims who shared their story to protect others. I really thank them for their courage and for changing the lives of not only young athletes today, but those in the future.

I urge passage of the bill, and at this time, I thank the chairman and, again, the ranking member for their leadership.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL).

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Today, I rise as the proud cosponsor of this important legislation with my friend and colleague from Indiana, SUSAN BROOKS. I want to thank her for her work on this, the Judiciary leadership, and, of course, Senator DIANE FEINSTEIN.

Mr. Chair, imagine you are a 10-year-old girl and you have a dream. Your dream is to stand on the podium at a summer Olympics with a medal around your neck, and you are saluting the American flag. You are willing to do a lot for that. You are willing to give up all the kinds of things that little girls like to do in their youth. You are willing to spend hours practicing your skills, to get bumps and bruises, but it doesn't stop you. Your parents trust your dream to a coach you call ''Grandpa.''

Here is the thing: Your dream becomes a nightmare. The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act comes after devastating reports that at least 368 gymnasts have been sexually abused by their coaches and trainers over the course of 20 years. It is almost unimaginable.

Although USA Gymnastics received allegations of abuse, they turned a blind eye. Why? Because it was more important to them to win medals and protect their star coaches.

We have read and heard lots of stories. I am going to give you an example of one, while trying to protect the confidentiality.

By the time she was in seventh grade, our gymnast has developed an eating disorder, coping with the fact that the coach she called Grandpa made her hate her body. By the time she got to college, she had difficulty maintaining relationships, believing that she would never like being touched or physically embraced by others.

Here is a postscript. Over more than a decade, the coach we call Grandpa was able to move from gym to gym abusing girls and recording videos of them. He installed secret cameras in changing rooms and recorded 469 videos of gymnasts, many of whom were naked.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 2 minutes.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Chair, to continue this, we have to ask this question: Could these young girls have been spared this trauma had proper procedures been in place? And, of course, today our answer is, hopefully, yes.

This legislation is a step in a long journey to change the culture around

sexual abuse. Too often institutions, whether they are our colleges, our military, or, here, in this case, an athletic organization, prioritize preserving their reputations and their brands over the people they protect.

This legislation will require national sports bodies like USA Gymnastics to file reports of abuse as soon as possible. It will establish mandatory training and require the enforcement of policies preventing, reporting, and addressing these kinds of allegations because protecting our athletes must be a priority. Let their dreams come true.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN).

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to express my admiration and deep appreciation for the gentlewoman from Indiana for her leadership on this most important bill.

This gives us a chance to do something, which is to give a voice to those victims who have suffered in silence and yet had the courage to come forward and allow others to appreciate the depth of the impact that they have suffered, as well as an opportunity for us to assure that this kind of pattern doesn't repeat itself again.

We know it is a pattern because we have, as has been aptly demonstrated by the speakers before me, stories of young women who have been victimized because they enter a trusting relationship—one between a coach and a person in which that power dynamic is so unique, the young person putting their future in the hands—which is exploited by that person superior in the relationship.

So we now have chance to assure that that trust is not further impacted. But it is not just that relationship; it is the long-term implications of it which are so damaging.

Working with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, we have come to appreciate victims and how the psychological impacts, including things like substance abuse and other kinds of psychological disorders, last for years, and by the courage of coming forward, it does not necessarily end that impact on them.

In fact, it is not just situations like coach and athlete. All kinds of trusting relationships can create a dynamic—one including something that I am currently working on, massage parlors—in which individuals who put themselves in a compromising position find themselves assaulted.

Most recently, I introduced the Duty to Report Act, addressing that kind of a violation of that trusting relationship.

These are examples of opportunities for us to address, once and for all, the implications of people who are allowed to move from one situation to another when reports come forward and stop. We call that pass the trash.

Today, it is time for our body to put forward the kind of legislation that will assure that there is a duty to report so, along with due process, there can be an internal investigation to assure and reporting requirements so that these individuals are not able to victimize future young athletes, future people who put themselves in the position of trust.

Mr. Chair, I applaud my colleagues who support this legislation, and I ask that we do so with a strong voice from this House.

The CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PAULSEN) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1238. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017

The Committee resumed its sitting.

The CHAIR. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER).

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1973, which aims to strengthen protections against child victims of sexual abuse.

I am a parent. In fact, today, with me, I have my son, Hudson, and one of my daughters, Ava.

Sadly, over the course of the past couple of years, countless stories of young athletes being abused, including in Indiana, have revealed glaring inadequacies in our law. These stories, many about coaches and doctors and trainers and other adults who have abused their positions of authority and trust to exploit young athletes, are appalling and, as a parent, gut wrenching. Every one of these kids deserved better.

This bill aims to ensure that acts of suspected child abuse are promptly reported to an organization's national governing body to make sure that these cases are immediately disclosed to local or Federal law enforcement authorities. Short of this requirement being codified into law, predatory individuals can continue perpetrating horrific crimes against young athletes with relative impunity.

In addition, this bill requires national governing bodies to develop specific policies and procedures for reporting sexual abuse cases to law enforcement and to keep track of individuals who leave one facility due to complaints and then go to another facility to repeat that abuse elsewhere.

I want to thank my colleague from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) for her important work on this legislation—she is my kids' second favorite Member of Congress—and for her hard work on this important bill to protect kids all across America from abuse.

I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), the ranking member on the prime subcommittee on the House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I thank the distinguished ranking member for yielding.

I thank the chairman of this committee and the manager of this bill, and, particularly, I want to express my appreciation to the bipartisan co-sponsors of this legislation—the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL)—for coming together around a concept of continuing to work to protect our children; and where we can find bipartisanship, that is really very special as relates to the message to the American people.

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act requires that personnel and employees of national governing bodies recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee report suspected incidents of child abuse, including sexual abuse, to law enforcement. The importance of this is to cease, end, stop, never have it again for those victims—never report or hold it for years and years—who are impacted psychologically and impacted for the rest of their life. Really, that is what has been happening in years past.

This bill is intended to protect young athletes who, with great expectation and excitement and challenge and wonderment and aspirations for the Olympics, in their early years, desire to serve their Nation; because when they put their bodies through this rigorous engagement in sport day after day, week after week, month after month, hour after hour, minute after minute, second after second, and deny themselves other extracurricular activities, they do it for the passion of the sport, for their recognition of excellence, but also to go to the Olympics and make their Nation proud.

□ 0945

And so what we have put them through with respect to not protecting them against sexual assaults severely undermines, again, and irreparably harms them. With H.R. 1973, we have an opportunity to ensure that that never happens again.

The need for this legislation is best illustrated by the ongoing scandal of

widespread abuse and exploitation of young gymnasts over the course of 20 years within USA Gymnastics—a prominent governing body of the U.S. Olympic Committee—in particular, by a physician starting back in 1997 who engaged in such activities.

Allegations against him were not reported to law enforcement until recently; and following the first public complaint against him in 2015, more than 100 women filed complaints accusing him of sexual abuse, and he now faces more than 20 criminal charges in Federal and State courts.

Again, this legislation is to turn the light on those who have quietly abused these young men and women and, as well, done it with impunity because no vehicle was provided for these young people to be able to ensure that they would not be assaulted again.

The integrity that we bring to this process with this legislation, the comfort that we give to families and parents when they entrust their children to those who are coaches, doctors, leaders of teams, sponsors of teams is vitally important. And the protections of this bill, of reporting and ensuring that the light continues to stay on and the darkness never comes for that young athlete who seeks that golden platform or that first place or second place or third place, or even to participate, that they can do it with the affirmation that the Nation believes in their protection and their security and that they should never, never, never face this alone.

I rise to support the legislation, H.R. 1973, and I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN).

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would like to first express my thanks and appreciation as well to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), who is bringing this legislation forward, H.R. 1973, of which I am a proud cosponsor. The bill is the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act.

Every year, Mr. Chair, thousands of amateur athletes begin their journey with the goal of one day being able to represent the United States at the Olympics. This journey is often filled with years of dedication, of sacrifice, of multiple setbacks, all in the hopes of rising to the top of their craft.

Unfortunately, for some, this journey has also been scarred by sexual abuse, and often this abuse comes from those who are closest to our young athletes. These are the individuals that have been entrusted by families all around the country to look after them, to take care of them, to look after these loved ones during their training.

The bill today in the House that we are taking up is a step in the right direction to help ensure that athletes are better protected. It requires mandatory and immediate reporting of incidents of child sexual abuse to both local and Federal law enforcement. No organization should be able to stand idly by when a child is placed in harm's way and becomes a victim.

The bill also directs our amateur athletic governing bodies to develop and implement rigorous training and oversight practices to prevent abuse of athletes in the future. Mr. Chair, our amateur athletes and their families should never ever have to worry about their children being abused by those who are closest to them, often in a very trusted relationship.

We need to pass this critical legislation to give families the peace of mind and prevent abuse. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, let me close by saying that protecting young victims from sexual abuse is a necessary measure that will help ensure that young athletes in this country are able to pursue their athletic dreams in a safe environment and free of exploitation and abuse.

This bill imposes an affirmative duty on coaches, trainers, instructors, doctors, and the like to protect the young athletes who have been entrusted to their tutelage. This bill establishes remedies for those who might be harmed, and this bill mandates training and oversight to encourage compliance, vigilance, and protection.

I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for facilitating the prompt consideration of this bill, and the Judiciary Committee. I also want to recognize the leadership of Senator FEINSTEIN, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who authored the Senate version of this bill and who has been the leading voice in Congress in demanding we address these issues.

Finally, I note that this important bipartisan legislation is supported by many advocacy groups including the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children; the National Children's Alliance; the National Center for Victims of Crime; Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network; and the United States Olympic Committee, as well as several of its national governing bodies.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1973, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. CONYERS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and all of those who have spoken in support of this bill this morning, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act.

It is exactly as it has been described. It is an important moment for us, in a bipartisan consensus that we have reached, to protect our young athletes. It has been articulated well, the purpose behind the bill, and it is a proud moment for all of us as we stand for these young athletes to defend them as they perform and use their God-given talents that make our Nation so proud.

So, without belaboring the point, Mr. Chairman, I just want to commend, again, Mrs. BROOKS for introducing this important legislation, and I also urge all of my colleagues to support it.

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

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1973—Protecting Young Victims From Sexual Abuse Act.

Since my time as a US Attorney and federal prosecutor, I have been committed to battling child exploitation and abuse.

Last year, I was shocked—along with much of the country—when the Indianapolis Star published an investigative piece that exposed troubling allegations of sexual abuse at USA Gymnastics programs across the country.

According to their report, over the last 20 years, at least 368 young people—some Olympic hopefuls—were the victims of sexual abuse at the hands of adults they trusted—coaches, trainers, doctors and other adults associated with USA Gymnastics. They reported the abuse to USA Gymnastics—and unfortunately, USA Gymnastics failed, in many cases, to report their abuse to law enforcement authorities.

The article shed light on their stories and inspired the legislation that is before us today. According to the more than 5,600 pages of USA Gymnastics records released by the Indy Star, some of the 54 coaches who had been accused of sexual abuse by young athletes in their care weren't banned from gymnastics until years after their history of abuse had been reported to and kept in complaint files by USA Gymnastics.

One USA Gymnastics doctor, Dr. Nassar—abused young women and girls for more than 20 years, and more than 100 women have come forward today to share their stories of abuse at his hands.

I understand how challenging it is to share painful stories of sexual abuse, and I am proud of the brave gymnasts who have shared their stories. Stories that should never have happened, and stories that went inexcusably unanswered.

Their stories demand our attention and action.

Not only to provide victims with the justice denied to them for so long, but also to protect future generations of Olympic hopefuls.

I want to acknowledge the work of Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California who is leading this bill in the Senate, and my colleagues in the Bipartisan Women's Caucus who joined me to offer the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. Our legislation is an important step towards protecting our young athletes.

Our legislation addresses this dangerous silence that, as the Indy Star investigative piece showed, plagued the USA Gymnastics. A silence that led to more girls being abused, hurt, and harmful coaches who faced little to no repercussions for their heinous actions.

The abuse should have been first and foremost, prevented. The system utterly failed when the abuse was not detected, and not promptly reported. The Olympic community failed and must do better.

Our bill makes sure that national governing bodies entrusted with the health and well-being of young athletes and future Olympians promptly report any allegations of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities and implement stronger policies and procedures to prevent this from happening again.

I applaud SENATOR FEINSTEIN and my colleagues in the House who joined the effort to move this important legislation forward, and applaud the victims who shared their story to protect others.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired. Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–20. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 1973

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 ''Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REQUIRED REPORTING OF CHILD AND SEXUAL ABUSE AT FACILITIES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF AMATEUR SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE.

(a) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 226 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13031) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''A person who'' and inserting the following:

''(1) COVERED PROFESSIONALS.—A person who''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—A covered individual who learns of facts that give reason to suspect that a child has suffered an incident of child abuse shall as soon as possible make a report of the suspected abuse to the agency designated by the Attorney General under subsection (d).'';

(2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(1)'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (7), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (8), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(9) the term 'covered facility' means a facility over which a national governing body has jurisdiction;

''(10) the term 'covered individual' means an adult who is authorized by a covered facility or by a national governing body to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at the covered facility or at any event sanctioned by the covered facility; and

''(11) the term 'national governing body' has the meaning given the term in section 220501(b) of title 36, United States Code.'';

(4) in subsection (d), in the first sentence, by inserting ''and for all covered facilities'' after ''reside'';

(5) in subsection (f), in the first sentence—

(A) by striking ''and on all'' and inserting ''on all''; and

(B) by inserting ''and for all covered facilities,'' after ''lands,'';

(6) in subsection (h), by inserting ''and all covered individuals,'' after ''facilities,''; and

(7) by adding at the end the following:

''(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a victim of child abuse to self-report the abuse.''.

(b) PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO REPORT.—Section 2258 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after ''facility,'' the following: ''or a covered individual (as described in subsection (a)(2) of such section 226) who''.

SEC. 3. CIVIL REMEDY FOR PERSONAL INJURIES.

Section 2255 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Any person who, while a minor, was a victim of a violation of section 1589, 1590, 1591, 2241(c), 2242, 2243, 2251, 2251A, 2252, 2252A, 2260, 2421, 2422, or 2423 of this title and who suffers personal injury as a result of such violation, regardless of whether the injury occurred while such person was a minor, may sue in any appropriate United States District Court and shall recover the actual damages such person sustains or liquidated damages in the amount of $150,000, and the cost of the action, including reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred. The court may also award punitive damages and such other preliminary and equitable relief as the court determines to be appropriate.'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''filed within'' and all that follows through the end and inserting the following: ''file—

''(1) not later than 10 years after the date on which the plaintiff reasonably discovers the later of—

''(A) the violation that forms the basis for the claim; or

''(B) the injury that forms the basis for the claim; or

''(2) not later than 10 years after the date on which a legal disability ends.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) VENUE; SERVICE OF PROCESS.—

''(1) VENUE.—Any action brought under subsection (a) may be brought in the district court of the United States that meets applicable requirements relating to venue under section 1391 of title 28.

''(2) SERVICE OF PROCESS.—In an action brought under subsection (a), process may be served in any district in which the defendant—

''(A) is an inhabitant; or

''(B) may be found.''.

SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF AUTHORITIES AND DUTIES OF AMATEUR SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED BY THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF MINOR AND AMATEUR ATHLETES.

(a) EXPANSION OF AUTHORITIES.—Section 220523(a) of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(8) develop training, oversight practices, policies, and procedures to prevent the abuse, including physical abuse and sexual abuse, of any minor or amateur athlete by any adult.''.

(b) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.—Section 220524 of such title is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before ''For the sport'';

(2) in paragraph (8), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (9), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(10) develop and enforce policies, mechanisms, and procedures to prevent the abuse, including physical abuse and sexual abuse, of any minor or amateur athlete, including—

''(A) requiring all adults authorized by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body, to report facts that give reason to suspect child abuse, including sexual abuse, as required by relevant Federal or State law, to law enforcement authorities and other appropriate authorities, including an entity designated by the corporation to investigate and resolve such allegations;

''(B) establishing a mechanism, approved by a trained expert on child abuse, that allows an individual to easily report an incident of child abuse as described in subparagraph (A) to the national governing body or another authority, including an entity designated by the corporation;

''(C) procedures to ensure that covered individuals are instructed to avoid one-on-one situations with any amateur athlete who is a minor (other than such an athlete for whom the covered individual is a legal guardian) at an amateur sports organization facility, at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, or any event sanctioned by a member of a national governing body, without being observable or interruptible by another adult; and

''(D) oversight procedures, including regular and random audits, not to exceed once a year, conducted by subject matter experts unaffiliated with the national governing body, of all members and adults described in subparagraph (A) to ensure that policies and procedures developed under this paragraph are followed correctly and that consistent training is offered and given to all members regarding prevention of sexual abuse; and

''(11) in the case of a national governing body with jurisdiction over more than one amateur sports organization facility or event, establish a mechanism by which—

''(A) the national governing body can—

''(i) receive a report of suspected sexual misconduct by an adult authorized by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body; and

''(ii) confidentially share a report received under clause (i) with each of the other amateur sports organizations, facilities, or members under the jurisdiction of the national governing body; and

''(B) an amateur sports organization, facility, or member under the jurisdiction of the national governing body can—

''(i) review the reports received by the national governing body under subparagraph (A)(i) to assess any allegations of sexual misconduct made in such reports; and

''(ii) withhold providing to an adult who is the subject of an allegation of sexual misconduct in a report reviewed under clause (i) authority to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at such organization, facility, or event until the resolution of such allegation.

''(b) LIMITED LIABILITY FOR THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES, AND AN ENTITY DESIGNATED BY THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE AND RESOLVE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2), no civil or criminal action may be brought in any Federal or State court against the United States Olympic Committee, a national governing body, or an amateur sports organization, facility, or event under the jurisdiction of a national governing body, or an entity designated by the United States Olympic Committee to investigate and resolve sexual misconduct allegations described in subsection (a)(11), including any director, officer, employee, or agent of such entity, if the action arises from the execution of the responsibilities or functions described in subsection (a)(11).

''(2) INTENTIONAL, RECKLESS, OR OTHER MISCONDUCT.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a

civil or criminal action if the United States Olympic Committee, a national governing body, an amateur sports organization, facility, or event under the jurisdiction of a national governing body, or an entity designated by the United States Olympic Committee to investigate and resolve sexual misconduct allegations described in subsection (a)(11), or a director, officer, employee, or agent of such entity acted or failed to act—

''(A) with reckless disregard for a risk of causing injury; or

''(B) for a purpose unrelated to the performance of any responsibility or function described in subsection (a)(11).

''(3) LIMITED EFFECT.—Nothing in this section shall apply to any act or omission arising out of any responsibility or function not described in subsection (a)(11).''.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Section 220522 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to limit the ability of a national governing body to develop a policy or procedure to prevent an individual who is the subject of an allegation of sexual misconduct from interacting with a minor or amateur athlete until such time as the national governing body, or an entity with applicable jurisdiction resolves such allegation.''.

(d) REVIEW OF RECOGNITION OF AMATEUR SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS AS NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES.—Section 220521(d) of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking ''may'' each place it appears and inserting ''shall''.

The CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of House Report 115–152. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. JOHNSON OF LOUISIANA

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 115–152.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of Chairman GOODLATTE, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 2, strike line 16, and all that follows through line 3 on page 3, and insert the following:

''(9) the term 'covered individual' means an adult who is authorized by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body to interact with a minor or amateur athlete at an amateur sports organization facility or at any event sanctioned by a national governing body or a member of a national governing body;

''(10) the term 'event' includes travel, practice, competition, and health or medical treatment; and

''(11) the terms 'amateur athlete', 'amateur sports organization', and 'national governing body' have the meanings given such terms in section 220501(b) of title 36, United States Code.''.

Page 4, line 19, strike ''file'' and insert ''filed''.

Page 7, strike line 16 and all that follows through line 25, and insert the following:

''(C) reasonable procedures designed to avoid one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor and an adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at an amateur sports organization facility, at any event sanctioned by a national governing body, or any event sanctioned by a member of a national governing body, without being observable or interruptible by another adult, except where the safety and welfare of the minor requires; and''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 352, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am happy to introduce this manager's amendment to H.R. 1973, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. This amendment is very simple. It defines who is covered by the mandatory reporting requirement in the underlying bill. The definition harmonizes language with the underlying statute, defining this class not by location, but by simply keeping the jurisdictional reference where it belongs: in the national governing body or a member of a national governing body.

The amendment also defines the term ''event'' to include travel, practice, competition, and health or medical treatment. This definition is important as events in USA Gymnastics revealed abuse by USA Gymnastics' team doctor Larry Nassar, who molested dozens of young girls under the guise of medical treatment. Moreover, other allegations of abuse show that it sometimes took place during travel to various competitions.

The amendment also clarifies duties of national governing bodies. Under the amendment, national governing bodies must implement reasonable procedures designed to avoid one-on-one interactions between minors and adults that are not within an observable or interruptible distance.

This amendment assures that the 47 different national governing bodies can implement procedures that make sense, given the sport they cover, the reach of their influence, and the resources available to them.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I do not oppose the bill or the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the amendment offered by the gentleman and point out that this amendment addresses the provisions in the bill concerning one-on-one interactions between young athletes and the adults who work with them.

The existing version of the bill requires the national governing bodies instruct coaches, instructors, doctors, and the like to avoid one-on-one situations with the young athletes that cannot be observed or interrupted by another adult. Under the proposed change, national governing bodies will be required to institute and enforce reasonable procedures designed to avoid one-on-one interactions between young athletes and their coaches, instructors, and doctors that cannot be observed or interrupted by another adult.

Mr. GOODLATTE's amendment also harmonizes language used in the bill with language in the underlying statute and makes technical and conforming changes.

I support this amendment and the changes it makes to enhance H.R. 1973, and I look forward to further discussions of these provisions with the Senate, with the goal of producing a consensus bill for enactment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to join the gentleman from Louisiana and the ranking member from Michigan in support of this amendment. I think it has an underlying premise that we should all celebrate and attempt to ensure that it is in place.

I, too, agree that I look forward to reconciling the House and Senate bill, but the amendment specifically addresses the provisions in the bill concerning one-on-one interactions between young athletes and the adults who they work with; and I believe the clear understanding that we all hope can be implemented is that we don't have one-on-one interactions without overall supervision or other kids or other adult participants so that we do not create an atmosphere where a child can be intimidated or abused.

Under the proposed change, national governing bodies will be required to institute and enforce reasonable procedures designed to avoid one-on-one interactions between young athletes and their coaches, instructors, and doctors that cannot be observed or interrupted by another adult.

First of all, we know that the expanse of sports is expanding. There are so many new sports, so many new opportunities for adults, many committed and dedicated adults, but the real issue is: Let's protect the children.

Mr. Chair, I rise to support the Goodlatte amendment.

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Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, in closing, I echo what has been

said already, and I appreciate the comments of my colleagues and acknowledge, again, that the manager's amendment is very simple. It simply seeks to clear up language and define these terms. It is a necessary alteration to the bill, and I encourage our colleagues to support the amendment.

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

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. COSTA

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part A of House Report 115–152.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, line 21, strike ''reasonably''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 352, the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chair, as a co-chair of the Victims' Rights Caucus, along with Congressman TED POE, we have over 70 members, bipartisan, to focus on protecting victims of crime. We also try to ensure that we protect the VOCA funding that goes for very worthwhile efforts for organizations throughout the country and to recognize and honor every year those who stand out on behalf of victims of crime.

I want to commend the chairman and the ranking member for advancing this legislation, as well as my Senate colleagues, because there is a companion piece of legislation that is attempting to address this horrible issue in which you have so often young athletes—Olympic-caliber athletes—some who actually have participated in the Olympics, who, at a very young age, find themselves victims of these horrific crimes, through no fault of their own.

Sexual assault, in any form, is a horrible crime and it leaves lasting damage to its victims. Sadly, some victims of assault are children who may be incapable of truly understanding what is happening to them at the time. However, years later, when this poor child comes to understand what happened, they are faced with the reality that someone who is supposed to be looking after their well-being actually betrayed them. This leaves real and very lasting damage that can take decades, if not years, for the person to deal with.

In some instances, sexual assault victims may not discover their injuries or the violation until adulthood, years after the abuse happened, years after the processing of their own internal trauma, years after feeling strong enough finally to go public.

A perfect example of this is in child pornography. How is a young child supposed to find, process, and accuse someone of a crime that they simply didn't even know existed?

There are legitimate constitutional debates dealing with the criminal and civil process. We understand that. Current and future legal scholars will debate those. I am not a lawyer; I am a farmer. But as a farmer, I know we should be able to agree on one simple principle, and that principle is that these victims deserve their day in court, they deserve due process, and they deserve their time to face the person who assaulted them and to ask their fellow citizens or a judge for justice.

It is our responsibility to do what we can to protect child victims and to ensure that they have access to the courts. That is what this amendment is all about.

Mr. Chairman, I want to, in the effort of comity, offer this amendment, but I will ask to respectfully withdraw the amendment. This is an issue that is not going to go away. I know there are different perceptions on how we deal with this.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COSTA. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. I appreciate the gentleman's remarks and his support for this important legislation.

Victims should, of course, have reasonable opportunity to seek justice and face their accusers in court. This bill is a good one and fair to all parties, and I look forward to working with the gentleman to get it to the President's desk.

Mr. COSTA. I will accept that and continue to work with the gentleman and Chairman GOODLATTE from Virginia, because, at the end of the day, to have some success and to move this forward, we are going to have to have reconciliation between the Senate bill and the House bill in how this is treated. I would hope that we would gain that agreement, and then we could move the legislation for signature.

Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. O'HALLERAN

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part A of House Report 115–152.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 7, line 25, strike ''and'' at the end.

Page 8, insert after line 10 the following:

''(E) requiring dedicated information and resources, which may include sexual assault hotlines and victims' support resources, to be clearly listed on the national governing body's official website; and''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 352, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chair, as a former law enforcement officer, I know all too well what happens when our institutions fail to protect our most valued and treasured among us: our children.

The recent reports of young athletes experiencing sexual assault and abuse at the hands of trusted adults are not just abhorrent, they are unacceptable.

Last year, tragically, one of our own young gymnasts in Mesa, Arizona, came forward after years of abuse by a coach at his gym.

We must do better. No child anywhere should face the risk of abuse. That is why I am proud to support the bill before us today, which will go a long way in protecting our young athletes.

My bipartisan amendment, which is cosponsored by Congresswoman SINEMA and Congressman BIGGS, simply builds on the underlying bill's spirit by requiring national governing bodies to clearly list information and resources, which may include sexual assault hotlines and victim support resources, on their official websites.

As a former cop who has dealt with vulnerable victims, I know from my experience that resources like sexual assault hotlines are a critical tool between victims, families, local health providers, and law enforcement.

Requiring governing bodies, like USA Gymnastics, to clearly list this type of information on their websites is an important step forward in ensuring support for victims and their families.

As adults and parents, we place our children in the trusted hands of coaches, trainers, and others when we support and encourage their involvement in sports.

We all know sports play such a critical role in so many of our communities. It is where we learn about teamwork, resilience, hard work, and perseverance. These spaces should be safe for children to learn, grow, and develop as healthy athletes and adults.

We have a moral obligation to ensure our kids have protection and access to the information they deserve. My commonsense amendment helps do just that.

I thank Representative SINEMA and Representative BIGGS for their support on this amendment, as well as the sponsors of H.R. 1973 for their good work on this important bill.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to this commonsense amendment, as has just been articulated.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I want to thank Mr. O'HALLERAN and Mr. BIGGS for offering this amendment. It will help to prevent abuse at these national governing bodies and, as stated, it will encourage children to report abuse when they are able to quickly and easily access this information.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Chair, I thank Mr. O'HALLERAN for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue.

Sexual abuse is abhorrent. It is particularly abhorrent when it is conducted by an individual in a position of authority: a coach, a trainer, a teacher.

The community of Mesa, Arizona, which Mr. BIGGS and I represent, was rocked by a tragic event in which a young athlete was abused for at least 3 years before receiving help. Had he or other young athletes experiencing similar nightmares had access to resources and support, perhaps the nightmare could have ended sooner, perhaps it could have been prevented.

Our bipartisan amendment is simple. It builds on a very good bipartisan bill by requiring governing bodies to list dedicated information and resources for victims and families on official websites.

No individual should suffer from sexual abuse. No family should go without support when they are in need.

I thank the two gentlemen, my friends from Arizona, Mr. O'HALLERAN and Mr. BIGGS, for cosponsoring this amendment. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on our amendment and to support the underlying bill.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for his courtesies. I want to enthusiastically congratulate and thank the gentlemen and gentlewoman from Arizona for responding to their constituents and answering a question positively about protecting our young people.

I spoke earlier today about what happens with young people and their aspirations when they engage in sports. They want to win, but they also want to, if you will, to impress adults and to show that they can do the very best that they can do.

So I want to congratulate them for this amendment that advances the purposes and goals of protecting young victims from sexual abuse by requiring the national governing bodies to include resources and information regarding sexual assault and having sexual assault hotlines and other victim support services on their websites.

With this new technology, it will be at their fingertips. They don't have to, in essence, expose themselves. They can get this information and readily access the very people that will help them.

So I want to congratulate the manager, Mr. CONYERS, and, of course, the chairman of the committee and the proponents of the underlying bill. I want to congratulate Mr. O'HALLERAN. His efforts here are to be commended, and I thank him for this insightful amendment to the legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCCARTHY) having assumed the chair, Mr. POLIQUIN, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 352, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIQUIN). Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

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

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.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1015

PROTECTING AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 352, I call up the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). Pursuant to House Resolution 352, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–19 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 1761

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 ''Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN.

Section 2251 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:

''(a) Any person who, in a circumstance described in subsection (f), knowingly—

''(1) employs, uses, persuades, induces, entices, or coerces a minor to engage in any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct, or transmitting a live visual depiction of such conduct;

''(2) produces or causes to be produced a visual depiction of a minor engaged in any sexually explicit conduct where the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct and such visual depiction is of such conduct;

''(3) transmits or causes to be transmitted a live visual depiction of a minor engaged in any sexually explicit conduct;

''(4) has a minor assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct during the commission of an offense set forth in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this subsection; or

''(5) transports any minor in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce with the intent that such minor be used in the production or live transmission of a visual depiction of a minor engaged in any sexually explicit conduct,

shall be punished as provided under subsection (e).

''(b) Any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor who, in a circumstance described in subsection (f), knowingly permits such minor to engage in, or to assist any other person to engage in, sexually explicit conduct knowing that a visual depiction of such conduct will be produced or transmitted shall be punished as provided under subsection (e).'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''employs, uses, persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any minor to engage in, or who has a minor assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct'' and inserting ''engages in any conduct described in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (a)''; and

(ii) by striking '', for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct,'';

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting after ''transported'' the following: ''or transmitted''; and

(C) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting after ''transports'' the following; ''or transmits'';

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) The circumstances referred to in subsections (a) and (b) are—

''(1) that the person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be—

''(A) transported or transmitted using any means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce;

''(B) transported or transmitted in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce; or

''(C) mailed;

''(2) the visual depiction was produced or transmitted using materials that have been mailed, or shipped or transported in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer;

''(3) such visual depiction has actually been—

''(A) transported or transmitted using any means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce;

''(B) transported or transmitted in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce; or

''(C) mailed; or

''(4) any part of the offense occurred in a territory or possession of the United States or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

''(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, no criminal charge under subsection (a)(3) may be brought against an electronic communication service provider or remote computing service provider unless such provider has intentionally transmitted or caused to be transmitted a visual depiction with actual knowledge that such depiction is of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, nor may any such criminal charge be brought if barred by the provisions of section 2258B.''.

SEC. 3. LIMITED LIABILITY FOR CERTAIN PERSONS WHEN RESPONDING TO SEARCH WARRANTS OR OTHER LEGAL PROCESS.

Section 2258B of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''from the response to a search warrant or other legal process or'' before ''from the performance''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(C), by inserting ''the response to a search warrant or other legal process or to'' before ''the performance of any responsibility''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part B of House Report 115–152, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1761.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 1761, the Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017, and urge my colleagues to do the same. I would like to note that May is National Missing Children's Month and today marks National Missing Children's Day. It is an honor to be on the floor here today as we continue our mission to protect these innocent victims.

We have made great strides toward ending child exploitation. However, gaps still exist in our laws that are contrary to Congress' goal of protecting children and criminalizing the production of images of child sexual abuse.

H.R. 1761 takes necessary steps to close an unfortunate loophole created by a Fourth Circuit decision in United States v. Palomino-Coronado—a case in which a defendant was able to walk free from Federal conviction despite photographic evidence he had engaged in the sexual abuse of a 7-year-old child.

On May 3, 2012, Prince George's County police officers responded to a home in Laurel, Maryland, based on a report of a missing 7-year-old child known as ''B.H.'' Officers found the child at the fence that separated her house and her neighbor's house. Upon investigation, it was uncovered that the neighbor, Anthony Palomino-Coronado, a 19-year-old male, had sexually molested the child.

At trial, the jury found the defendant guilty of knowingly employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing a minor in sexually explicit conduct, for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of that conduct—in other words, for the production of child pornography. The defendant appealed his conviction, alleging insufficient evidence.

Incredibly, the Fourth Circuit vacated the defendant's conviction, finding there was insufficient evidence the defendant's sexual abuse of the 7-year-old girl was ''for the purpose of'' creating an image of such conduct. The court found that, though the defendant engaged in sexual conduct with a child, ''the fact that only one image was produced militates against finding that his intent in doing so was to take a picture.''

Essentially, the court decided that the defendant had engaged in sexual conduct with a 7-year-old and taken a picture but had not engaged in sexual conduct with a 7-year-old to take a picture. To me, this is a preposterous, offensive result.

Under the Fourth Circuit's reasoning in Palomino, a defendant could admit to sexually abusing a child, and memorializing the conduct, but could argue that he should, nonetheless, escape Federal conviction because he lacked the requisite purpose or specific intent, prior to initiating the sexual abuse. Indeed, defense attorneys have begun to raise these Palomino defenses in other courts.

In response to Palomino, H.R. 1761 establishes additional bases of liability to the crime of production of child pornography. Specifically, the bill clarifies existing law by prohibiting the knowing production of, or knowingly causing the production of, a visual depiction of a real minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

Additionally, H.R. 1761 amends current law to prohibit the knowing transmission of, or knowingly causing the transmission of, a live visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct while also criminalizing the knowing creation of the visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

This language will serve to fix this judicially created loophole and ensure our court system will not have to spend time evaluating this meritless defense and will make certain predators such as this will not be able to escape Federal consequences.

Mr. Speaker, with this bill, Congress' intent is clear. We must continue to protect our children, the most vulnerable and innocent members of society. I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON), a member of the Judiciary Committee, for introducing this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) may control that time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and rise in opposition to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this bill restructures section 2251 of title 18 of the United States Code as apparently requested by the unit at the Department of Justice that enforces the laws against child pornography.

H.R. 1761 is intended to address limitations in the prosecution of cases pursuant to section 2251, as identified by the Department.

While we all agree that no child pornography offense should go unpunished, we cannot overlook the consequences of mandatory minimum sentencing.

Section 2251(a) prohibits the use of a child to produce child pornography and related conduct, including overseas production and advertising child pornography.

Pursuant to this bill, two new offenses would be added to this section to prohibit the production of child pornography and the transmission of live depictions of a child engaged in sexually explicit conduct, such as live-streaming abuse online.

This measure would also modify the existing offense that prohibits having a minor assist in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing or transmitting child pornography. As amended, this offense would prohibit

having a minor assist in sexually explicit conduct that violates each of the three newly enumerated production offenses, except the transportation of a minor for use in child pornography production.

In addition, it would amend the prohibition against the production of child pornography abroad to forbid the live transmission of child pornography produced abroad.

The jurisdictional requirement for each of the offenses enumerated in section 2251, except the production of child pornography abroad, would be codified in a separate subsection. Other portions of the bill would be modified to follow the restructure of the statute for consistency.

Unfortunately, current law sets forth a series of mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment for production of child pornography offenses. First-time offenses are punishable by mandatory imprisonment of at least 15 years; offenders with a prior conviction face mandatory imprisonment for at least 25 years; and offenders with two or more prior convictions must be sentenced to imprisonment of at least 35 years.

By modifying and expanding section 2251 to include several new ways in which to violate the prohibition against the production of child pornography, the bill would subject new classes of defendants to mandatory minimum sentences. Although the bill does not establish new mandatory minimum sentences, it would—in this way—expand the application of the existing mandatory minimums, which I oppose.

Mandatory minimums have been studied extensively and found to distort rational sentencing systems, discriminate against minorities, waste taxpayers' money, and violate common sense. Under mandatory minimum sentences, regardless of the nature and circumstances surrounding the offense, the role of the offender in the particular crime, and the history and characteristics of the offender, a judge must impose a sentence set by the legislature.

Even if everyone involved in a case—from the arresting officer, prosecutor, and judge to the victim—believes that the mandatory minimum would be an unjust sentence for a particular defendant in a case, it still must be imposed. Mandatory minimum sentences are the wrong way to determine punishment under this or any other statute.

During the Judiciary Committee's consideration of this bill, the committee rejected an amendment that would have eliminated the applicable mandatory minimums in the current statute but would still have allowed judges to sentence these offenders to lengthy sentences up to the existing statutory maximums.

Because those changes were not made, the bill continues to present problems with mandatory minimums.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I must oppose this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1030

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY).

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue to help save those who have been trafficked across not only just America, but around the world.

Mr. Speaker, they didn't list her name in the report, and that makes sense. It all happened before she even reached the age of 16. So to protect her identity, they called her Tonya.

She ran away from home and ended up living with a man they called Eddie. Eddie was the stepdad of one of her classmates. Tonya and Eddie started a relationship. Tonya felt that she really loved him. Eddie took advantage of that, and he pressured Tonya into a life no child should have to live.

Tonya was saved in large part by luck. A tip to the police led to action by the Federal special agent. And now Eddie is behind bars finishing the second year of his 12-year prison sentence. Meanwhile, Tonya is just trying to return to a normal life.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say this story wasn't true, that these fictitious names didn't reflect hard reality. I wish I could say it was isolated. I wish I could say that this type of thing doesn't happen here in America, but it does.

It repeats itself with different details even more disturbing than Tonya's story in towns and cities across our Nation. It is not just sex trafficking. It is forced labor. It is exploitation. It is slavery. And every single instance cries out against the moral truth written on every human heart.

Now, the numbers are staggering. 20.9 million people are trafficked globally. Of that number, over a quarter are children. The majority are pressed to work for little to no wages. And 4.5 million of these people are victims of forced sexual exploitation.

Here in America, there were 7,572 cases of human trafficking reported in 2016. That is an increase of 35 percent over just the year before. My home State of California is particularly dire. Of all the cases in the Nation, 1,323 come from California.

Though we need no explanation for why we are passing anti-trafficking and exploitation legislation today, I think it helps that we understand the magnitude of this evil.

We have, in this body, voted on 11 bills so far. Today we will vote on two more by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON). Altogether, these bills address many aspects of this problem: international trafficking, recording and transmission of child pornography, abuse uncovered on the U.S. Olympic teams, the handling of trauma cases in our justice system.

I don't believe that these bills alone will end human trafficking or exploitation in and of themselves, but they will help. They will help prevent these crimes, they will help the victims recover, and they will bring us closer to a world where every person, especially those who need us most, won't be abused but will be truly loved.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his work in this effort.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1761.

I first want to point out that the case outlined by the chair of the Judiciary Committee that failed in Federal court could have been brought in State court and the defendant would have been subjected to extremely long, lengthy prison time for the heinous conduct that he had participated in.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation expands the use of preexisting mandatory minimum sentences. Although the bill does not technically create new mandatory minimums, it does expose additional defendants to preexisting mandatory minimum sentences of 15, 25, and 35 years.

While I support the underlying goal of punishing sex offenders—and they should be punished harshly—the use of mandatory minimums has time and time again been shown to be inappropriate.

This expansion of mandatory minimum sentences comes on the heels of the Attorney General's memorandum of May 12, 2017, which has been roundly criticized for directing all Federal prosecutors to pursue the most serious charges and maximum sentences, to include mandatory minimum sentences. This directive takes away from Federal prosecutors and judges the ability to individually assess the unique circumstances of each case, including any factors that may mitigate against imposing mandatory minimum sentences.

This law is particularly appalling because it would apply to people who I think we should all agree should not be subject to these long mandatory minimum sentences. I am talking about teenagers. Teenage sexting is widespread. Under this law, teenagers who engage in consensual conduct and send photos of a sexual nature to their friends or even to each other may be prosecuted and the judge must sentence them to at least 15 years in prison.

The law explicitly states that the mandatory minimums will apply equally to an attempt or a conspiracy. That means if a teenager attempts to obtain a photo of sexually explicit conduct by requesting it from his teenage girlfriend, the judge must sentence that teenager to prison for at least 15 years for making such an attempt. If a teenager goads a friend to ask a teenager to take a sexually explicit image of herself, just by asking, he could be guilty of conspiracy or attempt, and the judge must sentence that teenager to at least 15 years in prison.

Under the Federal code, the term ''sexually explicit conduct'' includes actual or simulated conduct. That means if a teenager asks another teenager for a photo simulating sex, even if the minor is fully clothed, that attempt would violate the law and the teenager must get a sentence of at least 15 years mandatory minimum for making that attempt.

This law does not allow the judge to consider whether or not the conduct may have been consensual between minors. This circumstance is irrelevant when the sentence is mandatory.

For decades now, the extensive research and evidence has demonstrated that mandatory minimum sentences fail to reduce crime, discriminate against minorities, waste the taxpayers' money, and often require a judge to impose sentences so bizarre that they violate common sense.

Unfortunately, there are already too many mandatory minimums in the Federal code. If we ever expect to do anything about the problem and actually address this major driver of mass incarceration, the first step we have to take is to stop passing new mandatory minimums or bills that expand existing mandatory minimums.

Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize that mandatory minimums in the code did not get there all at once. They got there one at a time, each part of a larger bill, which, on balance, might seem like a good idea. Therefore, the only way to stop passing new mandatory minimums is to stop passing bills that contain or broaden the application of mandatory minimums.

Giving lip service to the suggestion that you would have preferred that the mandatory minimum had not been in the bill and then voting for the bill anyway not only creates that new mandatory minimum, but it also guarantees that mandatory minimums will be included in the next crime bill.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would not be controversial if it did not contain mandatory minimums, but, unfortunately, it does. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 1761.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am honored today to speak in support of my legislation, the Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act, which aims to close a court-created loophole, and as the title suggests, further protect our children from predators.

When I first arrived to Congress after almost 20 years of litigating constitutional law cases and drafting legislation for municipalities to control the proliferation of sexually oriented businesses, I was deeply concerned to learn that this particular loophole even existed in current Federal law, which essentially allows a child rapist to admit to sexually abusing a child and yet still evade punishment.

The background is important to reiterate. As my chairman stated moments ago, this comes from a 2015 case, United States v. Palomino-Coronado, where the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reversed the conviction of a child sex offender simply because the court determined the perpetrator lacked specific intent to record the disgusting images that were found on the offender's smartphone. This is despite the fact that the defendant admitted to sexually abusing the 7-year-old child from next door and memorializing the conduct.

In its opinion, the court decided the lack of purpose or specific intent was enough to overturn the conviction, even though the defendant himself took the photo of the heinous act and subsequently admitted to sexually abusing this child. This is absolutely in clear contradiction of our responsibility and this Congress' intention to protect America's children.

In Scripture, Romans 13 refers to the governing authorities as ''God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.'' I, for one, believe we have a moral obligation, as any just government should, to defend the defenseless.

My legislation presents a simple fix and updates title 18 of the U.S. Code to ensure future defendants are not able to circumvent the law by simply claiming a lack of intent, especially after knowingly creating a visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually conduct.

More specifically, my legislation amends section 2251 of title 18 to prohibit the production and transmission of a visual depiction of a real minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

Furthermore, it amends current law to include prohibiting the depiction of a minor assisting any person in engaging in a sexually explicit act.

Lastly, to clarify potential circumstances of misinterpretation of the statute and to ensure the statute is not used erroneously to prosecute internet services providers when they have not engaged in wrongdoing, my legislation emphasizes that to be criminally liable under section (a)(3), an internet service provider must have actual knowledge that the child pornography is on its server and that it must intentionally transmit that image or intentionally cause its transmission.

We also take the step of prohibiting any criminal or civil liability for internet service providers who are required to transmit child pornography to law enforcement in response to a legal process, such as a search warrant in child exploitation cases. Of course, we would never anticipate a prosecution of an internet service provider for merely responding to a legal process, but it is my hope that explicitly providing for this immunity in the statute will further enhance the relationship between internet service providers and law enforcement to work together to combat these predators.

In answer to the opposition that we have heard here, it is important to reiterate this legislation does not create new mandatory minimums. However, I would like to address the comments regarding the current law on mandatory minimum penalties under the production of child pornography statute.

There is simply no evidence that Federal prosecutors are abusing this statute. I think we should all recognize that producing child pornography is a horrific crime. It often means luring young children into acts that no one, man, woman, or child, should be forced to do.

It is not a photograph of a nude child. It is something far worse. Each photo is a crime scene. Such a horrific act by the perpetrator requires the maximum amount of legal deterrents.

While mandatory minimums have reached much scrutiny in the drug statutes, in this venue for this statute, there could be no doubt that the penalties that exist under current law are appropriate. Child sexual exploitation is vastly underreported. The number of images of child pornography keeps growing and the images are becoming more and more depraved. The harm is too great to these victims not to have significant penalties available to deter this conduct and punish the producers of child pornography.

Every time an image of child pornography is viewed, the victim gets revictimized. Once an image is on the internet, it is irretrievable and can continue to circulate forever. This permanent record of a child's sexual abuse can alter his or her life forever. Many victims of child pornography suffer from feelings of helplessness, fear, humiliation, and lack of control, given that their images are available for others to view in perpetuity.

□ 1045

These images are becoming more sadistic and violent, and the age of the average victim is becoming younger and younger. It is a horrifying fact that it is not uncommon for even toddlers and infants to now be subjects of these images.

It is also important that there is no confusion about one fact: The very creation of these images is repulsive, regardless of whether or not the abuse was done with a specific intent of creating an image or if the intent to memorialize this conduct was a secondary thought.

Consider the facts of the case that led to this bill. As was mentioned, an adult male had sexual relations with a 7-year-old girl who lived next door and decided to photograph it. That is the production of child pornography. There is no question about it. No one should be permitted to escape responsibility merely by asserting they did not have a specific intent to create the image before they abused the child. The act of taking a photo or making a video is enough to demonstrate intent.

Mr. Speaker, that is what this bill does. It is appropriate that we are doing all this on the day that we recognize as National Missing Children's

Day. I am going to urge all my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the opponents and proponents of this legislation because they have said much the same thing.

H.R. 1761 is a bill that stands against everything we stand against. It is for protecting against child exploitation, and we all agree with that. We agree, as well, that the bill has existing mandatory minimums and the attempt of the proponent of this bill to ensure that the decision that occurred in Palomino would not occur again.

Some clarification has occurred, and that is that the bill, or the law, now, with H.R. 1761 explicitly prohibits the creation of a visual depiction or live transmission of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct. That is, of course, a meritorious and unanimously supported position. The mandatory minimums continue and also are added to, now, a number of other offenses. As have been indicated, those offenses can be upwards of 20 years, and they can be for a variety of offenses added under this bill.

So the bill is well intended, and the initial prohibition could draw support in a bipartisan manner, but the continued adding of offenses to mandatory minimums rather than language that would have left the sentencing to the discretion of the Federal court—which, by the way, many Federal judges have come to this Congress and to the Committee on the Judiciary to ask for and indicate the value of discretion as relates to their sentencing. This is not a death penalty case, so, clearly, the discretion of the court and the wisdom of the court could be utilized for the appropriate new offenses and the appropriate sentencing.

So while the bill is well intended, it is overbroad in scope and will punish the very people it indicates it is designed to protect: our children. H.R. 1761 would expand and modify the meaning of sexual exploitation of children, thereby granting new offenses that may be prosecuted under section 2251 of the Federal criminal code, which generally prohibits the production of child pornography.

As indicated, it works to fix the Fourth Circuit decision in Palomino, which reversed the defendant's conviction because the decision was that there was no proof of intent. The structure of the statute, however, would significantly be modified by H.R. 1761, separating section 2251(a) into five enumerated offenses, codified as 2251(a)(1) through (5). Based on the language in this bill, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction or live transmission of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, a teenager sexting another teenager could be swept up under the statutory power of this new measure.

Research shows that 91 percent of teenagers, tweens, have access to the internet and/or a smartphone. Hence, given the rampant advancement in technology and, consequently, its usage among this demographic, we must exercise prudence when introducing legislation that is seemingly ignorant of the growing trend of communication among teenagers.

H.R. 1761 ignores the life-altering impact it would have on our juveniles who engage in otherwise stupid and immature behaviors and, in most cases, consensually explicit sexual conduct if we begin to criminalize such conduct. While this bill seeks to protect minors—and I congratulate the proponent for that intent—in the same vein, it drastically alters the penalty for minors who may face mandatory minimums in sentencing, and, therefore, it is flawed in its design and intended purpose.

Let me be very clear: Legislators have very good intentions, but we cannot stand on the floor and guarantee how it will be interpreted. We cannot guarantee that one teenager will not be caught up in this new legislation. Court interpretation, prosecutors' interpretation, all that will be subjected to mandatory minimums, which is in the underlying bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIQUIN). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to consider these concerns.

I heard the gentleman speak of his effort to ensure that the internet provider would have to show intent or have intentionally engaged.

Again, the interpretation of these bills are subject to interpretation, and the clearer we can be here on the floor of the House, the more we can be appropriate in its application.

My point is, in concluding, I hope we will ultimately have legislation that comes back to the floor of the House that we all may be able to join in and that the elements that do not impact and protect our teenagers will be eliminated and we can be assured that internet providers are protected as well.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to just say a couple of important points in rebuttal to what we have heard.

For one thing, there has been no evidence that the cases referenced by the gentlewoman involving conduct between minors are being prosecuted at the Federal level. I have not seen even one that has been cited. The point here is that prosecutorial discretion has been a sufficient buffer.

In committee, our colleagues on the other side have invoked stories of juvenile offenders being charged for consensual conduct and placed on sex offender registries unjustly; however, these are all cases that were prosecuted at the local level. Not one that has been mentioned has been a Federal case.

It is important to note that, for offenders under 18, the Federal Department of Justice policy on charging juveniles means that juvenile prosecutions very rarely occur, and only if no State court can assume jurisdiction. In fact, certification from the Attorney General himself is necessary to proceed against a juvenile.

Again, I know of no such case in which a juvenile has been prosecuted federally under any child pornography statute. So while we appreciate and understand the concerns about mandatory minimum sentencing and its abuse, particularly with the drug statutes, again, it is important to reiterate here, that is not the case with child pornography.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I would oppose these arguments and trust that my colleagues will see the wisdom in supporting this very important and timely legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of the House cannot rely on prospective discretion to protect juveniles under this statute. We simply can't rely on it, participate in, given the new policy of the Attorney General. We are under a new regime here at the Federal level, and I can't depend on relying on the prosecutorial discretion to protect juveniles under this statute.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill is well intended, and I share my colleagues' desire to protect children from being victimized by their depiction in pornography. However, I also believe that we must address the serious problem presented by the bill, namely, that it would expand the application of the existing array of mandatory minimum sentences that the code provides for these offenses.

This aspect of H.R. 1761 directly conflicts with the growing bipartisan realization that mandatory minimums are unjust and unwise; this is so even for egregious offenses for which judges should be allowed to impose sentences—often severe and even beyond the minimums—based on the facts and circumstances of each case. I want to leave it up to the judges.

In considering legislation to better protect our children from the types of exploitation addressed by this bill, we must not ignore the sentencing implications of these revisions to the statute. In light of the bill's failure to address these serious concerns, I oppose H.R. 1761 and urge my colleagues to do likewise.

We should consider even stronger legislation that addresses all these concerns. We are not through with the subject matter by this bill coming before us today. There is more work to be done. I thank my colleagues for this very important discussion.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, the concerns stated today are misplaced. The child pornography statutes have never been the subject of abuse by Federal prosecutors, and there is no evidence that that would happen in the future. However, the abuse that is being allowed and that we must address today is that of our children, and that abuse is being allowed because of a loophole that was, sadly, created by a Federal court.

Today we have an opportunity to correct that wrong. We have an opportunity to do what we all acknowledge to be the right thing: to defend the most defenseless among us. It is, indeed, an honor for us to take this action on the week that commemorates National Missing Children's Week and here, even, on this day, National Missing Children's Day.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting the Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act. We hope that everyone will do the right thing here today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part B of House Report 115–152.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, line 3, insert after ''section 2258B.'' the following:

''(h) Notwithstanding subsection (e), a person who violates paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a) and is 19 years of age or younger at the time the violation occurred may, in the alternative, be punished for a violation of this section by imprisonment for not more than 1 year or a fine under this title, or both, if—

''(1) the minor is 15 years of age or older and not more than 4 years younger than the person who committed the violation, at the time the sexually explicit conduct occurred; and

''(2) the sexually explicit conduct that occurred was consensual.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 352, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

□ 1100

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I associate myself with the words of the ranking member, Mr. CONYERS.

I look forward to strengthening these laws and, as well, working on legislation to continue to protect our children, our innocent children, from sexual abuse, sexual assault, and the devastation that it has on their lives.

So I rise to continue that theme and to indicate, as I said earlier, that some of the clarifications in the underlying bill are important, and important to clarify, and important to provide prohibitions that will be clear in possible further court interpretations. But I maintain that we cannot predict the court interpretations, and the better and clearer that we are to protect our children, I believe, is a route that we should take.

The bill would add new classes of offenses. But section 2251 does not provide for Romeo and Juliet exceptions; i.e., the penalties apply even when conduct is consensual and when the victim and offender are close in age. For example, a 19-year-old and a 17-year-old who videotaped themselves engaged in a sexual act, then emailed the video to their own email accounts, the 19-year-old would be subject to mandatory minimums. That is the basis of the amendment, the Jackson Lee amendment.

The Jackson Lee amendment is a Romeo and Juliet exception. The amendment is a reasonable approach to treatment of adolescent behavior that should not be left to prosecutors. The pervasiveness of personal technology, such as cell phones and tablets, have given rise to teenage sexting. Research has shown that teenage sexting is widespread, even among middle school-age youth.

Under section 2251, teenagers prosecuted for talking and sending messages, and then taking and sending messages, would be subject to mandatory prison sentences of at least 15 years and sex offender registration.

In light of the recent troubling statements by Attorney General Sessions, Congress should provide an alternative to existing mandatory penalties in sexting cases, particularly with juveniles. We cannot say that a juvenile will not be prosecuted federally. They could be, under this particular statute.

So this is a carve-out, a Romeo and Juliet carve-out, to ensure that it does not happen, to protect against the possibility of it happening.

A study conducted by Drexel University found that more than half of the undergraduate students who took part in an online survey said they had sexted when they were teenagers, and 30 percent said that they included photos in that message, meaning that they had sent sexual texts.

Therefore, I ask that my colleagues come together and support the Jackson Lee amendment for a Romeo and Juliet carve-out.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, it is not only unnecessary, but it is fashioned in such a manner which may potentially create the type of loophole that we are looking to close.

Under current law, so-called Romeo and Juliet cases, such as those between 19- and 50-year-olds, could be prosecuted under any of the child pornography laws—possession, production, or distribution. That has always been the case.

However, I reiterate that we know of no such instance that has been brought under any of these Federal provisions under the circumstances covered by this amendment, which further supports the fact that Federal prosecutors do not appear to be bringing such cases. There is just simply no evidence that has been produced to suggest otherwise. For that reason, the amendment is completely unnecessary, and it is based upon no evidence at all.

On the contrary, the underlying bill is based upon a real case where a real 7-year-old girl was sexually abused and photographed by a real sexual predator.

Our colleagues on the other side have also continually referred to Attorney General Sessions' recent charging memoranda which suggests that under the policy in his memo prosecutors will suddenly be forced to aggressively prosecute 19-year-olds who are engaging in consensual sexual conduct under this statute. But that notion is preposterous and is also based on no evidence.

As an initial matter, the minority completely ignores the fact that a prosecutor makes an initial determination as to whether to commence or decline prosecution. And this is distinct from the subsequent decision of what charges should be brought, which would only occur if the decision to prosecute is made in the first place.

According to the U.S. attorneys' manual, in making the initial determination to commence a prosecution, a prosecutor must consider whether ''a substantial Federal interest would be served by the prosecution,'' and whether, ''in his or her judgment: One, the person is subject to effective prosecution in another jurisdiction; or, two, there exists an adequate noncriminal alternative to prosecution.''

The Sessions memo doesn't change any of that, and it is absurd to think that the memo will cause the Department of Justice to suddenly shift its prosecutions to aggressively go after Romeo and Juliet cases. This is especially ridiculous, as Attorney General Sessions had made clear from the outset, that the priorities of DOJ and this administration are to prosecute violent crimes and violent offenders.

I think that the minority just fundamentally misunderstands and mischaracterizes not only the Sessions memo but this legislation. For that reason, I urge all of my colleagues to oppose the Jackson Lee amendment.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me quickly say that I respect the

gentleman, but I take great issue in calling a Member's amendment, or the analysis of that amendment, ridiculous, because it is not ridiculous. It is an extremely reasonable amendment. And unless he has some powers that I am not aware of, no one can predict when a prosecutor will determine that they will prosecute. We cannot. We pass criminal justice laws every day and cannot predict.

Whether or not it is based upon the Sessions memo, which as far as anyone who can read knows that we are going back to a stricter enforcement of everything criminal against everyone. That is clear.

The Jackson Lee amendment recognizes that not all sex offenses are the same. And currently, section 2251 is a one-size-fits-all sentencing scheme. It fits all, even a 19-year-old.

The Jackson Lee amendment would provide a better alternative. Punishment will be available involving offenses. When defendants are no more than 19 years old, they would have other alternatives. The judge would have discretion. That is simply what we are asking for.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article entitled, ''Keep Mandatory Minimums Out of the Juvenile Justice System.'' This bill does not do that; and I also include an article entitled, ''Teenage Sexting is Not Child Porn.''

[June 16, 2014]

OP-ED: KEEP MANDATORY MINIMUMS OUT OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

(By Lizzie Buchen)

Across the country, mandatory minimum sentences are falling out of favor. From Sen. Rand Paul to Attorney General Eric Holder, people from both ends of the political spectrum are blaming these harsh and punitive sentences for driving our skyrocketing incarceration rates and exacerbating racial disparities in the criminal justice system. But in this era of smart sentencing reform—particularly toward young people—a disturbing piece of legislation is coasting through the California legislature, threatening to wrench the state in the opposite direction. Senate Bill 838, authored by state Sen. Jim Beall (D–Santa Clara), would break new ground by establishing the first mandatory minimum sentences in the state's juvenile justice system.

The juvenile justice system was founded on the understanding that young people who commit offenses are often struggling in situations outside of their control, are highly amenable to rehabilitation and have the potential to lead productive and law-abiding lives. Mandatory minimum sentences automatic sentences of incarceration or confinement, meted out regardless of the facts of the case are completely at odds with these foundational principles. They are determined not by the youth's past circumstances or potential life ahead, but by what he or she has done. The only result is punishment, a sharp contrast to the rehabilitative ideals of the juvenile justice system.

Mandatory minimum sentences are completely incompatible with how juvenile court works. When a youth has committed an offense, juvenile court judges tailor sanctions to best meet a youth's unique needs for rehabilitation by weighing a comprehensive set of factors, including the severity of the crime, the statement of the victims, and the circumstances of the youth's life—including mental health issues and experience with abuse, homelessness and extreme poverty. The judge then chooses from a wide range of community-based and residential options, allowing him or her to tailor the sanction to best treat the youth and protect the community. In line with this focus on rehabilitation, the sentences are indeterminate, with terms based on the youth's progress.

Proponents of mandatory minimum sentences, including supporters of California's youth mandatory minimum bill, claim that these sentences deter crime. But the evidence tells us this is a dubious notion at best. Although this bill would introduce the first mandatory minimum sentences in California's juvenile justice system, such sentences have been in place in the adult system for decades—and are widely recognized as failures. A large and growing body of research has found that mandatory minimum sentences have come at enormous social, financial and human costs, with little benefit to public safety. There is no evidence that these sentences have a significant deterrent effect. If anything, these harsh punishments are counterproductive, putting the public at risk by disrupting families, impoverishing communities of human capital, making it more difficult for people to return to law-abiding society and diverting precious public resources away from social services and toward costly incarceration.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 4, 2016]

TEENAGE SEXTING IS NOT CHILD PORN

(By Amy Adele Hasinoff)

Teenagers who sext are in a precarious legal position. Though in most states teenagers who are close in age can legally have consensual sex, if they create and share sexually explicit images of themselves, they are technically producing, distributing or possessing child pornography. The laws that cover this situation, passed decades ago, were meant to apply to adults who exploited children and require those convicted under them to register as sex offenders.

Though most prosecutors do not use these laws against consensual teenage sexters, some do. The University of New Hampshire's Crimes Against Children Research Center estimates that 7 percent of people arrested on suspicion of child pornography production in 2009 were teenagers who shared images with peers consensually.

Almost two dozen states, including New York, Illinois and Florida, have tried to solve the legal problems that surround sexting with new legislation, and others, like Colorado, are considering new sexting laws. These reforms typically give prosecutors the discretion to choose between child-pornography felony charges or lesser penalties like misdemeanor charges or a mandatory educational program.

These new laws may seem like a measured solution to the problem of charging teenage sexters with child pornography felonies. However, once they have the option of lesser penalties, prosecutors are more likely to press charges—not only against teenagers who distribute private images without permission, but also against those who sext consensually.

Given the extensive research that shows that young people who are nonwhite, low income, gay or transgender are disproportionately prosecuted for many crimes, there is good reason to suspect that laws that criminalize teenage sexting are being unfairly applied as well. As legislators have tried to cope with the legal fallout, they have also opened up more types of images to scrutiny: While child pornography laws apply only to sexually explicit images, many new sexting laws criminalize all nude images of teenagers, including photos of topless teenage girls.

A better solution would be to bring child pornography laws in line with statutory rape laws by exempting teenagers who are close in age and who consensually create, share or receive sexual images. Vermont tried to enact major reform to its child pornography laws in 2009, but abandoned the effort after a national backlash and settled instead on a new misdemeanor law.

In February, New Mexico passed a limited version of child pornography reform, which shields teenagers who receive a sexual image from a peer from facing child-pornography possession charges. Teenagers who create or share sexual images can still be convicted of child pornography production or distribution.

Both existing child pornography laws and new sexting-specific laws criminalize a common behavior among teenagers. Studies have shown that roughly one-third of 16- and 17-year-olds share suggestive images on their cellphones. Among young adults, rates are above 50 percent. In the past, partners wrote love letters, sent suggestive Polaroids and had phone sex. Today, for better or worse, this kind of interpersonal sexual communication also occurs in a digital format. And it's not just young people: An article in an AARP magazine describes sexting as ''fun, easy and usually harmless.''

Like any sexual act, consensual sexting is somewhat risky and requires trust, but it is not inherently harmful as long as partners respect each other's privacy and are attentive to consent. Studies have found that around 3 percent of Americans report that someone has distributed private sexual images without their permission, and around 10 percent of sexters report negative consequences. The risk of distribution is significantly higher among those who were coerced into sexting.

The victim of a sexual privacy violation can be traumatized and humiliated, and is often blamed for his or her victimization. Unfortunately, the criminalization of sexting worsens this problem because teenagers know that if they report the incident they may be punished at school and possibly charged with the same offense as the perpetrator. In most jurisdictions, distributing a sexual image of a teenager is illegal, regardless of whether one is consensually sending a nude selfie to a partner or maliciously distributing a private photo of another person without permission.

Though some people believe that prohibiting sexting discourages the practice and protects teenagers from harm, research on abstinence-only sex education demonstrates that those policies actually increase unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Abstinence-only messages about sexting are likely to be counterproductive as well.

What parents and educators need to do instead is help young people learn how to navigate sexual risk and trust. Whether or not it is criminalized, we cannot prevent sexting, just as we cannot prevent teenagers from having sex. What we need to focus on is preventing acts of sexual violation, like the distribution of a private image without permission, pressuring a partner to sext or sending a sexual image to an unwilling recipient. Though not all teenagers are sexting, those who are (and those who will when they are older) need to learn how to practice safer sexting, which means that it always has to be consensual.

As State Senator George Muñoz, a prominent supporter of the amendment that established New Mexico's new sexting regime, told

The Guardian, ''Our laws have to change with technology.'' To keep up with those changes, the first step is to decriminalize consensual sexting by creating exceptions in child pornography laws for teenagers who are close in age.

Once we do this, we can concentrate on developing better ways to deal with the new digital forms of harm.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about my amendment to H.R. 1761, ''Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act.''

As Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, I offer this amendment to help make H.R. 1761 a better bill to achieve its intended purpose.

Though troubled by any sexually explicit activity that may exploit and otherwise, harm our children, I believe that H.R. 1761, the ''Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act,'' is deadly and counterproductive to ensuring protection of our youth population in our new technology era.

This bill will exacerbate overwhelming concerns with the unfair and unjust mandatory minimum sentencing that contributes to the over-criminalization of juveniles and mass incarceration generally.

Simply put, this bill will add to the already tragic realities of many juveniles. Rather than proceeding with the caution befitting an expansion of the mandatory sentencing penalty, H.R. 1761 is being rushed to the House Floor, without a single hearing and without the opportunity to consider amendments directly relevant to whether our system of criminalizing juveniles for sexting is fair, just, and sound policy.

Though presented as a proposal to protect children, H.R. 1761 excessively penalizes juveniles and creates life altering criminal charges when engaged in 'sexting'.

Rather, it raises new constitutional concerns; and it does not address documented and systemic unfairness and racial disparity in the imposition of mandatory sentencing and its overbroad sweep of criminalizing juveniles.

My amendment fixes that problem. It creates an alternative punishment (not more than one year of imprisonment) under section 2251 for teenagers who participate in ''sexting'' and might otherwise be subject to mandatory minimum sentences of at least 15 years in prison.

The Jackson Lee is a thoughtful, narrowly-drawn provision that provides judges with a sensible sentencing option for teenagers no more than 19 years old who participate in sexting that may be applied in the judges' discretion, in appropriate cases.

The Jackson Lee amendment is a reasonable approach to treatment of adolescent behavior that should not be left to prosecutors. The pervasiveness of personal technology, such as cellphones and tablets, has given rise to teenage ''sexting.'' Research has shown that teenage sexting is widespread, even among middle school-aged youth. Under section 2251, teenagers prosecuted for taking and sending such messages would be subject to mandatory prison sentences of at least 15 years and sex offender registration. In light of the recent troubling statements made by Attorney General Sessions, Congress should provide an alternative to existing mandatory minimum penalties in ''sexting'' cases.

A study conducted by Drexel University found that more than half of the undergraduate students who took part in an online survey said that they sexted when they were teenagers. Thirty percent said they included photos in their messages and 61 percent did not know that sending nude photos via text could be considered child pornography. Another online survey published in 2008 found that almost 40 percent of teenagers between ages 13 and 19 had sent ''sext'' messages, almost 50 percent had received a sext message, and 20 percent posted nude or semi-nude content online.

The Jackson Lee amendment recognizes that not all sex offenses are the same. Currently, section 2251 employs a one-size-fits-all sentencing scheme. Under section 2251, a 19 year-old, who engages in ''sexting'' (sending or receiving a sexually explicit photo or video of a minor) with a willing, 17 year-old girlfriend or boyfriend, would be subject to the same mandatory minimum sentence as a 50 year-old man, who engages in the same conduct with a 17 year-old.

The Jackson Lee amendment would provide a better alternative. The alternative punishment would be available in prosecutions involving offenses under section 2251(a)(2) or 2251(a)(3), when the defendant is no more than 19 years old, the difference in age between the defendant and victim is no more than four years, and the sexually explicit conduct depicted in the photo or video was consensual. Judges would not be required to sentence teenagers pursuant to the alternative punishment.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman and congratulate her on this very important amendment.

This amendment creates alternative sentencing specifically for teenagers who participate in sexting and could, as a result of this bill and the application of current mandatory minimum sentences, be subject to mandatory sentences of at least 15 years. We should not, as she has already stated so well, leave it to prosecutors to determine whether teenagers take part in teenage behavior.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I have tremendous respect for my colleagues on the other side, Mr. CONYERS and Ms. JACKSON LEE. I understand her amendment is heartfelt and has the proper motive and attention.

I would just suggest, again, that the risk of this amendment outweighs any potential benefit because it creates the kind of loopholes that we are trying here desperately to prevent.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the amendment will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of the bill, if ordered, and passage of H.R. 1973.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 180, nays 238, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 283]

YEAS—180

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—238

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)

Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Panetta
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—12

Cummings
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Kustoff (TN)
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Meeks
Newhouse
Nolan
Quigley
Swalwell (CA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1132

Ms. STEFANIK, Messrs. WILSON of South Carolina, ARRINGTON, BURGESS, BISHOP of Michigan, GARRETT, ROGERS of Alabama, YOHO, and DIAZ-BALART changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. RICHMOND changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

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

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.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 368, noes 51, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 284]

AYES—368

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blunt Rochester
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Levin
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Neal
Noem
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—51

Amash
Bass
Beyer
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Cárdenas
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Conyers
Davis, Danny
DeSaulnier
Ellison
Evans
Fudge
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hastings
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Khanna
Lee
Lewis (GA)
Lowenthal
Massie
McEachin
McGovern
Moore
Nadler
Pallone
Payne
Pocan
Richmond
Rush
Schakowsky
Scott (VA)
Sherman
Smith (WA)
Takano
Veasey
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—11

Cummings
Davis (CA)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Kustoff (TN)
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Meeks
Newhouse
Nolan
Swalwell (CA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1140

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed her vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the

sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 3, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 285]

YEAS—415

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Noem
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—3

Amash
Hastings
Massie

NOT VOTING—12

Cummings
Higgins (NY)
Johnson, Sam
Kihuen
Kustoff (TN)
Maloney, Carolyn B.
McSally
Meeks
Newhouse
Nolan
Speier
Swalwell (CA)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1147

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I mistakenly voted "no," when I meant to vote "yes" on rollcall No. 285.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, the man who has served as a father figure to me for the past twenty years has taken a turn for the worse in his battle against cancer and his health is rapidly deteriorating. As such, I have returned home and will miss votes today, Thursday, May 25. Had I been present, I would have voted: "NAY" on rollcall No. 283, "YEA" on rollcall No. 284, and "YEA" on rollcall No. 285.

TO AMEND SECTION 1214 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, TO PROVIDE FOR STAYS DURING A PERIOD THAT THE MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD LACKS A QUORUM

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be discharged from further consideration of the bill (S. 1083) to amend section 1214 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for stays during a period that the Merit Systems Protection Board lacks a quorum, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1083

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

SECTION 1. STAYS BY MSPB DURING PERIODS WITH NO QUORUM.

Section 1214(b)(1)(B) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(i)'' before ''The Board may''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) If the Board lacks the number of members appointed under section 1201 required to constitute a quorum, any remaining member of the Board who was appointed, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall, upon request by the Special Counsel, extend the period of any stay granted under subparagraph (A).''.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY JODY B. HICE OF GEORGIA

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

In section 1214(b)(1)(B)(ii) of title 5, United States Code, as proposed to be added by section 1(2) of the bill, strike ''shall'' and insert ''may''.

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING BRIAN C. COOPER ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Brian C. Cooper, who is retiring from the Office of the Parliamentarian after 35 years on Capitol Hill.

Brian is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, and a graduate of Frederick Douglass High School and the Community College of Baltimore County, where he received his degree in commercial and graphic arts.

Brian began his Capitol Hill career in September of 1992, when he was hired in the stockroom of the Longworth Building, working in publication and distribution services.

Throughout the eighties and early nineties, Brian held a variety of positions on Capitol Hill, including roles on the Small Business Committee and the Government Operations Subcommittee. Through this experience, Brian learned the intricacies of the legislative process and the inner-workings of House operations, skills that would serve him well when, in 1995, he was hired as an Assistant Clerk to the Parliamentarian.

Brian would spend the next 22 years in the House Parliamentarian's Office and became Chief Clerk to the Parliamentarian in 2009. For over two decades, Brian has been a fixture at the House rostrum, dutifully assisting the presiding officer in timekeeping, recognizing Members on the floor, and preparing and reviewing reams of legislative paperwork for the House.

Brian has prepared the House Chambers for both visiting dignitaries and State of the Union addresses alike, and everything in between. If that wasn't enough, Brian also created the first computer network for the Parliamentarian.

An accomplished artist, Brian remains active in artistic endeavors, which run the gamut from pencil drawings, watercolors, and oils, to photography and architectural design. His retirement will offer new opportunities to continue these pursuits. A devoted Orioles fan, it is my hope that Brian will spend some of his well-earned free time at Camden Yards.

A consummate professional, Brian has spent his career on Capitol Hill committed to assisting with an orderly and accurate legislative process, observed in a fair and nonpartisan manner. He is a quintessential legislative resource for this entire body, and I am certain the House of Representatives has known few individuals more dedicated to its proper functioning and legacy than Brian Cooper.

On behalf of everyone affiliated with this, the people's House, including my colleagues gathered in front of me here as I speak, Brian, we are happy to celebrate this important milestone in your life, and we thank you for your dedicated service to the House and to America.

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the President's fiscal year 2018 budget calls for the elimination of the Minority Business Development Agency. This is shameful and counterproductive to the progress that minority-owned firms have achieved.

I led on this issue by sending two bipartisan letters to the House Appropriations Committee, joined by over 70 Members, advocating for Congress to fund the MBDA at fiscal 2017 levels, and recommending that the MBDA provide annual policy reports to Congress.

The agency has one of the highest returns on investment in the Federal Government, helping minority-owned firms secure $40 billion in contracts and capital over the last 10 years. The 8 million minority businesses in the United States contribute $1.4 trillion in economic output to the economy. My home State of California leads the Nation with 1.6 million minority-owned firms, which represents 45 percent of all businesses in my State.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to continue funding the Minority Business Development Agency so that we can continue to see this progress in our economic growth and for the communities of our Nation.

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, today is National Missing Children's Day. This day of recognition was started by President Reagan in 1983 to raise awareness of the threat of child abduction, and reminds us today that we still have work to do.

Following the tragic murder of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman in 1996, Congress authorized the AMBER Alert system to create a coordinated alert system to assist law enforcement in finding abducted children in the important first hours after an abduction. Since its inception, more than 800 children have been recovered through the use of the AMBER Alert system.

However, the original legislation did not include Indian Tribes as eligible users of the program, and we saw the tragic effects of this exclusion when 11-year-old Ashlynne Mike was abducted and murdered on the Navajo Nation.

For this reason, I have introduced the AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act. This act will include our 567 Federally recognized tribes as partners in the AMBER Alert Program to ensure that everyone is able to utilize this important tool. My bill is a bipartisan effort and it is endorsed by criminal justice, child safety groups, and Indian Tribes around the country.

Mr. Speaker, the AMBER Alert has helped many families experience the joy of being reunited with an abducted child. It is time we extend this alert to Indian Country so that no child is outside the jurisdiction of this vital program.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so we can continue to protect our children.

AMERICA NEEDS A RAISE

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, America needs a raise.

It has been years since we have increased the Federal minimum wage, which is an abysmal $7.25. All over this country, we see ballot measures passing in red States and blue State increasing the minimum wage, like Alaska and Arkansas. We have seen the minimum wage go up in New Jersey and all over the country. While people in Congress may not realize that America needs a raise, people across the United States do.

Today I am going to participate in a press conference to say that we are going to propose a bill to raise the minimum to $15 an hour and index it. This is a simple recognition that if you work full time, you shouldn't live in poverty. If you work full time, you shouldn't have to rely on food stamps, you shouldn't have to rely on housing assistance, and you shouldn't have to rely on medical assistance.

I believe in those programs and I support them, but if you work hard every day, you shouldn't have to rely on government assistance just to put food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of the people who benefit from an increase in the minimum wage are women. This is a gender issue. This is a general inequality problem.

We have to fight. America needs a raise, Mr. Speaker. Let's do it.

□ 1200

REMEMBERING DR. AMY REED

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Dr. Amy Reed, a recognized physician, exemplary mother and wife, and dedicated patient advocate.

Dr. Reed didn't ask for the situation she found herself in following a procedure in 2013, but it was immediately evident to anyone that met her—and her family—that she was going to be a fighter, not only for herself but for others.

Through her loving husband's, Hooman's, campaign to bring awareness to the dangers of power morcellators, there is no doubt that women's lives around this country have been saved and device manufacturers and regulators have been forced to review their safety protocols and standards.

This is Amy's gift, and we are eternally grateful. My thoughts and prayers are with her dedicated husband and partner, their six children, and her entire family. Let our community embrace them in their time of sorrow and vow to carry Amy's legacy and mission forward.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today, Attorney General Jefferson Beauregard Sessions spoke in Memphis, Tennessee. I felt like I was listening to something out of the fifties or sixties. He put out all the platitudes about being tough on crime and locking people up and thinking that was going to help solve the crime problem.

He didn't talk at all about the cost of crime and the Bernie Madoff-like budget that we have been presented by the Trump administration, cutting minority business centers, cutting SNAP funding, cutting LIHEAP funding, and cutting opportunities for Medicaid, healthcare, and education.

There are causes to crime that should be attacked. There is a smart way to attack crime, and there is a dumb way to attack crime. The dumb way is to return to the era where we failed because we locked up so many people at $30,000 a year that the only people who are happy about his approach are the private prison industry who make money out of people's misery and crime.

MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to honor our country's fallen servicemen and -women. This weekend, we will observe Memorial Day, a day dedicated to those who have fought and died selflessly to protect our country.

Since 1868, Americans have celebrated what was once called Decoration Day to honor the fallen. Every year since then, we have honored those who have fallen at Gettysburg, at San Juan Hill, in the Argonne Forest, on the shores of Normandy and Guadalcanal, at Inchon, at la Drang, in the desert at Objective Norfolk, on the streets of Fallujah, and in Zabul Province.

This important day is not only meant to commemorate those who lost their lives fighting for our country but also to highlight why they were called upon to serve our country in battle. They fought to preserve the great privilege of freedom that we must never take for granted.

America's promise of liberty would not be possible without the courage and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. We owe these patriots a debt that can never be repaid but that must be remembered always, not just on Memorial Day.

This day of remembrance is a solemn occasion, and, therefore, let us not only say prayers for the fallen, let's also celebrate their lives and give heartfelt thanks to God and their families for their sacrifices in protecting our Nation, the world's bastion of liberty and freedom.

CHILD RESCUE COALITION

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I supported the Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act to help stop the unspeakable cruelty of child pornography.

The trade of child pornography on the internet is not just information streaming across wires, it is abuse; and those who trade in child pornography are compounding the physical abuse of innocent victims who are depicted in these horrible images. They are real children next door and across the country.

An astounding 28 percent of American youth will be sexually victimized at some point in their lives. Thankfully, the Child Rescue Coalition in Boca Raton, Florida, is already fighting back. They are using real-time data to help law enforcement track sexual predators from the darkest corners of the internet to their front door.

Child Rescue Coalition has used their cutting edge technology as a critical partner with law enforcement and child advocates to help rescue over 2,000 lonely, afraid, and hurt children across the world.

I thank my constituent, Carly Yoost, for the heroic work of the Child Rescue Coalition—shielding, rescuing, and safeguarding children from sexual exploitation.

THE FIGHT TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue support for this week's focus on combating human trafficking.

Some of the people most vulnerable to trafficking are unaccompanied alien children who cross our southern border. These children are oftentimes released to sponsors or relatives, and sometimes they simply disappear. Once released, unaccompanied alien children receive one follow-up phone call, and many are never contacted, leaving them potentially vulnerable to trafficking.

No child should fall into the hands of traffickers because of our lack of surveillance. When I was in practice as a physician, if I ever suspected that a child had been abused, I was required by law to notify authorities. We should require no less of our Federal agencies.

Today, I am asking the Office of Refugee Resettlement to redouble their efforts to make certain these children never end up in the care of the wrong people.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our Denton County sheriff, Tracy Murphree. Just last weekend, they conducted a significant human trafficking operation that led to 11 arrests. I am grateful for them and for all law enforcement officials for taking the steps to end this abuse.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR AN IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to go home and join my community in honoring the fallen as we come together and say thank you. But as I go home, as well, I will be visiting with so many constituents who will be asking the question: Why?

This week in the Budget Committee, a very callous statement by the OMB Director about diabetes victims or individuals who have that disease who are sitting on their couch and eating nonnutritious food, because the budget that the President has offered wants to take 23 million people off of healthcare, take $880 billion away from seniors who are in nursing homes who need Medicaid, and shutting down the Meals on Wheels. That is inhumane and cruel.

At the same time, they will be asking me about the ridiculous, if you will, actions of the President firing the FBI Director because he was involved in the Russian investigation, asking the National Security Agency Director to block or to avoid talking about Russian collusion, and the National Intelligence Director asking him to cover up such things.

I believe now it is time for an impeachment inquiry that goes along with the other investigations, along with the U.S. commission, along with the legislation on the special prosecutor because a special counsel can be fired. Our constituents are asking for the truth, and we need to give the truth.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS

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

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Mental Health Services for All Veterans Act.

Last week, on May 18, just before noon, a man in his car did a U-turn in Times Square, New York, and mowed down 23 people, killing a young woman. This man is obviously mentally ill. This man is also a Navy veteran.

He is not alone. Every day in America, roughly 22 veterans commit suicide. In fact, according to a study by the GAO, 60 percent of troops that have been discharged for misconduct in recent years suffered from a mental illness.

It is simply too difficult for many veterans in this country to receive mental health counseling, and we need to make mental health counseling available for every single veteran in this country, regardless of whether they were in the National Guard, in the Reserves, or in Active Duty.

It is obvious when someone loses a limb or is injured tragically in war to identify that their injury is service related. But for veterans who go home at night and are alone by themselves suffering with a mental illness, too many are suffering alone, and it is not easy to identify these problems—especially when they are in crisis—to show up at a counseling center or to show up at a VA and demonstrate that their injury, their mental illness, is service related.

We need to change this in this country. We need to make mental health services available for every single veteran in this country, regardless of their status and regardless of their income, in every single circumstance.

VA SCHEDULING

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the passage of the Veterans Administration Scheduling Accountability Act.

All too often, I hear from veterans across the 22nd District of New York who have waited months, and some years, to have their claims addressed.

In their service to our great Nation, our veterans sacrifice so much. They should never die waiting for care they deserve and need. That is why the House took important steps to reform the scheduling and appeals process while expanding access to the important resources that our veterans depend on. This bill will hold every VA accountable. We seek to correct a wrong that has hurt so many of our veterans.

On behalf of the veterans in the 22nd District, I thank my colleague, Representative JACKIE WALORSKI, and my colleagues in the House, for putting our Nation's heroes first and unanimously passing this important piece of legislation right before Memorial Day.

NATIONAL ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, May is Asthma Awareness Month. As co-chair of the House Asthma and Allergy Caucus, I would like to talk about what we can do for our constituents living with asthma.

About 24 million Americans have asthma, and more than one-quarter are children. Asthma costs our health system more than $56 billion every year, along with billions lost in lost productivity.

In New York, where more than one and a half million live with asthma, we are all too familiar with these staggering costs which come on top of a heartbreaking human toll: about 3,600 Americans die every year because of asthma.

I have asked appropriators to fund the CDC's National Asthma Control Program which helps States monitor and treat asthma at $29 million. This program has brought down asthma-related costs by billions and literally saves lives.

Since the program's inception, deaths from asthma episodes have fallen nearly one-quarter. So this works. It is money well spent, and we can't afford not to have it.

In honor of Asthma Awareness Month, I implore my colleagues to support this program and bring Americans living with asthma much-needed relief.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 45th anniversary of the University of Massachusetts Amherst University Without Walls, one of the oldest and most highly regarded adult bachelor's degree completion programs in the Nation.

Founded in 1971, UWW provides nontraditional students with access to the resources of our best universities. It has developed into a national leader in adult education, having graduated nearly 4,300 students, including basketball legend, Julius Erving.

One of the first programs in the Nation to offer an innovative blend of online and classroom learning, UWW provides an excellent education to students, including many veterans who are unable to complete a traditional college degree due to financial constraints, family obligations, or personal hardship.

The key to success is the incredible team of UMass Amherst faculty and staff who have dedicated their lives to teaching and supporting adult students as they balance family, community, and academic responsibilities.

I wish to personally thank all of the faculty, staff, and UWW students for their dedication to excellence.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET

(Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to President Trump's proposed budget. This budget proposal confirms our worst fears about the priorities of his administration.

The budget is cruel, it is shortsighted, and would be a disaster for efforts to strengthen the middle class in my district and across this country.

It will hurt hardworking families and communities throughout New Hampshire. It guts public education, afterschool programs, and student loan support. It jeopardizes clean air, clean water, and our response to the opioid epidemic that is reaching crisis proportions.

It eliminates critical programs for the most vulnerable, like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which keeps low-income seniors and families warm in the cold winter months and SNAP which helps families feed their children, and decimates successful economic development programs like the Northern Border Regional Commission and community development block grants.

The last thing we should be doing is eliminating effective programs that create jobs and boost our economic competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose these misguided cuts.

□ 1215

SEXUAL ASSAULT IN CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Nolan Bruder's younger sister believed that she could trust her big brother. So when this 19-year-old brother offered her marijuana ''dabs'' and the opportunity to get high, she accepted, trusting him. But with Nolan's pushing, she became so stoned that she no longer recognized the man in front of her, that it was her older brother.

Taking advantage of her drugged state, he sexually assaulted his own 16-year-old sister. This is repugnant, Mr. Speaker.

On May 17, Nolan was sentenced for rape of an intoxicated person. The sentence? A mere 240 days in prison and

then probation. Why? Because the judge decided that prison would severely impact Bruder.

Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't that the point?

Even evidence showed the defendant had no remorse and was smug at the trial.

I was a prosecutor and a judge in Texas for over 30 years. I met a lot of rape victims and learned that their lives were forever devastated by rapists.

Mr. Speaker, sexual assault is never the fault of the victim, contrary to what Judge Follett thinks. Judge Follett got it wrong, Mr. Speaker. He got it wrong in this case. It is time for him to pack his toothbrush and leave the bench.

And that is just the way it is.

INTRODUCING THE UNITED STATES-ISRAEL AGRICULTURE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACT

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the United States-Israel Agriculture Strategic Partnership Act, H.R. 2659, a bipartisan bill that permanently authorizes the U.S.-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development program, otherwise known as BARD, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

I thank my co-introducer, Congressman YOHO, as well as you, Mr. Speaker, for being a cosponsor, and many others in the Florida delegation.

I could wax ecstatic and poetic about BARD, but let me just say this: the program works. It inspires healthy competition of good ideas. It is beneficial to both countries and provides a fantastic return on investment; over $440 million worth of benefits for the United States and $300 million of benefits for Israel.

BARD is focused on urgent goals like increasing agricultural productivity, particularly in hot and dry climates.

BARD is training the next generation of innovators through ag science workshops and postdoctoral fellowships. It funds programs in over 25 States, including our great State of Florida. It strengthens our relationship with our best ally in the Middle East: Israel.

This is a forward-looking, commonsense, bipartisan bill supported by experts and advocates on both sides of the aisle.

MEMORIAL DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the heels of Memorial Day to discuss what we must learn from those we specifically remember on this and every Memorial Day going forward.

All among us, every single person in this Chamber, every single person that visits here, we all have those days of the year where the history that is buried down deep inside of us is stirred up for whatever reason that may be. For some of us maybe it is that we lost a loved one right around Christmas and now we can't get through the holidays without remembering that person each year and the ways in which that person touched our life.

Maybe for others it was right around your birthday when you lost a loved one or somebody passed, and on each year on the celebration of your own life, you find yourself remembering the loss of that life, the loss of that friend.

Maybe for you that history is buried down inside and gets stirred up because of a certain smell in the air that brings you back to a time and place in your life. It can be hearing a special song that had meaning and somehow connected that person to you.

For others, maybe it is driving past a certain restaurant or an intersection or a park that really weighs heavily on your heart.

I find those feelings each and every day as I look down at my wrist and I read these bracelets with the names of friends who left this world in the most honorable way that any person can: in defense of our Nation.

Men like Army Ranger Medic Jonathan Peney. On his fourth tour in Afghanistan, he died on June 1, 2010, from wounds that he sustained while giving medical aid to another wounded Ranger. He was only 22 years old. When I speak to his mother, I know just how much she misses him.

Or Army Sergeant Justin Allen. He was killed on July 18, 2010. I can remember the last thing that I said to him. I remember the mission vividly that we were on, and I remember the Rangers who spoke about him the next day on the flight line as we sent him home.

I remember Bradley Rappuhn and Andrew Nicol and the compound that we were assaulting when they passed.

You know, for me and many others across this Nation, the day that stands out above all for us is a day that is just a few days from now. It is Memorial Day, the day that America has specifically set aside to remember the men and women that relinquished their life while serving in the United States Armed Forces. And it rests as the day that is most heavy on our hearts.

This day is so heavy on my heart that, to my shame, one year I asked my wife, Brianna, that she and our children, Magnum and Maverick, not accompany me to the cemetery that I was going to be speaking at that Memorial Day. I asked that she stay at home with our two little boys.

I made that request because I didn't want my little boys to have to see me in pain. And at that point in life, I just wasn't strong enough. I wasn't strong enough to tell them why their daddy had tears or was crying on that day.

And today I try to be more courageous, and I try to tell my boys why I have tears on that and every Memorial Day. And whenever I hear the slow solemn hum of taps, whether it is on Memorial Day or Veterans Day or in the presence of some newly fallen comrade or playing on a TV in the background, I have to pause and wipe my eyes and regain my composure.

Or when I hear that cold crack of a 21-gun salute, I do find myself too numb to the sound of gunfire to be startled by it, but it still reverberates to my core as though I was struck by the shots myself. That is the pain that I feel.

You know, those little boys of mine, they need to know that there were brave men and brave women who showed strength and courage and patriotism with every fiber of their being on their behalf so that they may live free. That they may live free.

Think about that. They served never thinking about personal gain or personal sacrifice, but thinking about their personal contribution to our Nation. And as we find ourselves on the heels of Memorial Day, I believe every Member of this House, every Member of Congress, must reflect on every tear shed across this Nation, every empty seat at every dinner table, every name etched onto a piece of stone that is for a son or daughter of America who gave everything for the freedom and the life of others.

We in this Chamber must think daily about all the men and women who have fought and died for this cause, this Nation that they loved more than their own breath.

I think about those that I knew personally, those that I have heard about. I think about those who came long before me. And I ask myself every single day: Would they be proud of the work that we do in this Chamber, how we represent our Nation and the values that they fought for that they gave their life for? Would they want us as a member of their team?

I used to tell folks that, to date, in our theaters of war, I have lost 67 close friends. That used to be true. But the reality is I no longer know how many friends I have lost. I have stopped counting. What I know is that we must live the way that they lived every day: without excuse, without regret. Full throttle, as one of my friends used to say.

For some of them, their blood has stained my own uniform. Some of them I lost simply being on the same mission. And some were on other missions

in other places around the world. And each year on Memorial Day and many other days, I think most often of one of my friends specifically, Ranger Sergeant First Class Lance Vogeler, who, after four tours in Iraq and eight tours in Afghanistan, made the ultimate sacrifice on October 1, 2010, while in battle just a few short days after my own injury.

I know that he is deeply missed by me and all of his friends, and certainly by his wife and his two children that he left behind. You know, I can remember him telling me about them one night as we were in Afghanistan and he and I sat against a fence in the dark of night waiting for a helicopter to come and pick us up. I can remember him telling me about his family. I wasn't there when he passed, but I am told that his last words were of his wife and of his children.

I think often if he would be proud of the way that this place conducts itself. He is the definition of a hero. He is exactly what Memorial Day honors. And knowing him, I know that none of us here can measure up, but I want to know that we honor him and every other hero who is remembered officially in just a few days with our actions in here each and every day. We owe it to men like him to fight to make America the strongest version of itself that it could ever be.

I want us to honor each of those close friends that I have lost in our theaters of war and every other who has traded their life for our freedom, for our America, with their own actions on each day.

As we approach Memorial Day, I always remember well a lot of things about those friends. I remember their smiles. And I remember the jokes that we would play on each other. I can remember hiding somebody's gear or adding a big rock into their pack without them knowing, just to weigh it down, make them sweat a little bit more. And I can remember where they were from. I can remember the time that we spent training together, shooting together, jumping out of aircraft together, roping from helicopters together, blowing things up together. I can remember their hobbies, and I can remember their plans for what they wanted to do whenever they returned home. I can remember the pictures that they themselves would carry in their breast pocket of the ones that they loved most, just like the one that I would carry of my wife, Brianna, and our one son that I had at that time. I can remember their lifesaving actions on the battlefield. I can remember their acts of valor, and I can remember the way that we each confidently put our lives in each other's hands.

□ 1230

I remember some who are no longer with us today who placed themselves in the line of fire to carry me from the battlefield that I not become a casualty of war. I can remember their loyalty and their determination and their grit, and, for some of them, I can remember their last breaths. I can remember saluting their casket with the most beautiful flag that I have ever seen draped gracefully across it, and I can remember seeing that flag folded and handed to those whose pictures they had been carrying. I can remember seeing the way that those family members would cling to that flag.

As I remember these moments, I want to see, more than anything, that the way we, here in the House of Representatives, conduct ourselves honors the way those who gave the last beat of their heart conducted themselves on our behalf. If statues of those men and women surrounded our floor here, would they look onto each of us each day and would they swell with pride over our service, or would their hearts sink? Would they turn away and be ashamed? Would they look on and be proud?

The goal of American heroes has always been country first, themselves second. They knew, those who gave on behalf of this place, that the establishment of this country, the maintenance of America, its safety, the protection of each and every citizen is not a product of chance. It is not a product of luck. It is not a product of indifference. So they stood between every American and evil with purpose and resolve regardless of what it was going to cost them.

They knew the job was never easy, it was never safe, it was always dangerous, and it was almost always deadly. While they may have disagreed on how to conduct a mission, I know they never wished for the failure of their comrade or, for that matter, the failure of any American ever. They certainly never wished for the failure of the leaders of our Nation.

My office is in the Rayburn House Office Building, and in one of our entrances is the name of each who has fallen in the war on terror listed year by year. All of those friends of mine are listed there. When I see them, I stop, and I think about them every single time. I wish that the name of every single American who has fallen well in defense of our Nation adorned each and every wall of this Chamber in here, as it does in my office building, that we would look on each time we speak on this floor and question ourselves as to whether our motives are as pure as their motives were.

Every American child, every adult, every man and woman has the limitless opportunities to enjoy their life, to become whatever it is in the world they want to be, to achieve whatever they have the courage to attempt and the determination and the fortitude to spend themselves in fully to accomplish. That limitless opportunity each citizen has and each of us in here in the House is afforded has been paid for with the blood and the spirit of men and women who traded their own life to fulfill an oath to our great Nation.

Their oath was the same that we as Members of Congress vow to fulfill: to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; to bear true faith and allegiance to the same; to take that obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help us God.

And though we take that same oath, I know we do not always show the same commitment. Those heroes never thought about what was easy or popular to masses or what they would get out of their actions. It was not reelection on the line for them. It was their life on the line, and they gave it freely.

As I think about Memorial Day, I wish we could, daily, see every heroic name across our walls here and recall the harrowing stories of the Second World War and the over 400,000 U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine, Coastguardsman, and each and every Merchant Marine who fought and died in Europe and in the Pacific and in Africa for the freedom of the entire world from being ruled by an evil and intolerant empire. They died in places named Ardennes Forest and Midway and Guadalcanal.

I wish we thought about each vote we took and looked at the names of our over 36,000 servicemembers who would never return home from the frozen mud of Korea and think is that what they fought for at the Chosin Reservoir. I wish we could recount the names and the stories of the over 58,000 servicemembers who died in combat or while captured or who went through torture and starvation before giving their life or while missing as a part of the Vietnam war in places like Khe Sanh and Saigon.

I wish we saw the names of the servicemembers who put their country first and themselves second while serving in the Dominican Republic or Iran or El Salvador or Beirut or Grenada or Panama or the Persian Gulf as we thought about what we will say when we are given the chance to speak on this floor and if our words would be worth even one second of their life.

I wish we could think about the Delta operators or the Army Rangers or the Black Hawk pilots who gave it all in the dusty sands of Somalia, Medal of Honor recipients like Master Sergeant Gary Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall Shughart, who volunteered to go into a situation that they knew would claim their life in order to save their fellow fighters. They were devoted to their duty, and their duty was to their brothers and to their country.

Or those who fought and died in Bosnia and Kosovo and on the USS Cole, and all those who fought in places that we may never know because of threats to us that we never even knew existed, we need to ask if they would give the last beat of their heart for the way in which we legislate our country.

Most personally for me, I would think deeply on the thousands of soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, coastguardsmen who defended this country with the last beat of their heart in a place like Iraq or Afghanistan or Syria, would they be proud. These were the men and women who I served alongside, men and women who served selflessly and repeatedly year after year, knowing full well the hazards of their profession.

I couldn't be more proud than to have the few moments that I did with the best and the most honorable that our Nation has ever produced, who sacrificed their whole self because it was best for the men and women to their left and to their right in battle, because it was best for the freedom and the liberty and the security of every person. I don't know how to ever make the pain of their loss go away. I do know how to honor them. We do it with the way that we live each day going forward that they do not have the opportunity to live.

They would want every American to cherish the gift of freedom that they have been given by God, which was defended by those angels whose names are now etched in row after row of plain white markers in Arlington National Cemetery. They would want us all to live exactly as they lived: with no regrets, loving this country more than we loved ourselves, fighting as hard as they fought, never quitting, never giving up. We owe it to them to do so, to not ask ourselves what we can take for ourselves, but to ask what we, ourselves, can give.

I want my kids to grow up honoring these men and these women who have sacrificed. I want my young boys to know that they get to give me a hug or a smile, but there are men and women who are willing to risk never having one more of those from their own families, and I want them to live the way that those heroes lived. I want my children to know it is honorable to have the courage to mourn them, and I want them to have the resolve to not squander the opportunities which have been paid for with the selfless blood of every American warrior.

I get grief in my heart when I think of all those who have gone in defense of our flag, but I also think about each of the great warriors that they were, and I smile because there can be no more honorable way to leave this world than in a pile of brass while fighting for the greatest nation ever to be established on the face of this Earth.

We here need to think of the thousands who gave their lives selflessly, without expectation of anything in return, true selfless servants serving simply to do what was best for the United States of America. Some were infantrymen; some were mortarmen; some were engineers or tankers or something else. They were men and women who, through the ages, created the reputation and the legacy and the tradition that made me say: ''That is what I want to be. That is how I want to serve. That is how I want to help.''

Here, we must learn from those who we think about most on Memorial Day. We need to look at them and their names and their lives and their stories and their sacrifice and demand the same thing out of ourselves. They pushed through the cold. They pushed through the snow. They pushed without adequate supplies. They fought back tanks. They always pushed forward in the face of bombarding artillery. They pushed so hard that their weapon would overheat. They pushed through trench foot. They did it with fixed bayonets, which they used to defend their own foxholes and then used them to carve our enemy out of their foxholes. They stayed in the fight when they were wounded, even though it would certainly mean a bitter end that was very far from home.

They did not stop because they were tired. They did not stop because they were exhausted or freezing or hungry. They did it even though they had to sleep on the ground or sleep in the field or sometimes never sleep at all. They only stopped when the job was done. They only stopped when the mission was accomplished. This is the grit with which Americans have always defended America.

We have taken that same oath in this House, and American heroes, they set the precedent for every generation about how to do that job. To do it for them was not just a job or a paycheck, it was a calling. It was a calling that few have the stomach to undertake and that, certainly, even fewer still are capable of ever doing. It requires uncommon characteristics such as courage and valor and selflessness.

Today those words are thrown around very lightly by many, but those we remember on Memorial Day have actually lived and breathed the definition of these characteristics.

They did it by flying aircraft or driving armored vehicles. They did it by setting sail with the most powerful fleet ever seen on our seas. They did it by yoking their bodies with a rifle or a pistol, by carrying hundreds of rounds of ammunition and hundreds of pounds of gear, wearing a helmet and explosives, carrying everything that they required to save the life of another servicemember as well as everything that they needed to survive for days or months on end.

They did it while being targeted by snipers, while having bombs or mortars or grenades hurled at them, while having an RPG fired at them. They did it while walking in fields of mines and improvised explosive devices. They did it by carrying that load for miles and days across mountains, across rolling hills, and through fields and forests and rivers.

They did it while carrying letters for their friends, which they promised to deliver to their family should anything ever happen to them. They did it while missing births and birthdays and ball games and bath times and holidays and every other good time that they missed with their families. They did it in the face of mortal combat. They did it while holding both the lives of their friends and the lives of our enemies in their hands.

We honor those we remember who are not with us today by taking no charge more seriously than honoring their sacrifice with the lives that we now live. What those heroes have done in defense of our Nation can never be taken away from them. We must remember that so, too, what we do here in defense cannot be taken away by the years that pass if we endeavor to be warriors, willing to defend America at any and all costs.

Those we remember are a testament to the importance of the values and ideals sewn into the fabric of our Nation, the absolutes. And all I can say is: Thank God for men and women like that, for creating such patriots for us to revere as the standard by which all other Americans should serve America.

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

□ 1245

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER). 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, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), my friend.

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

Mr. Speaker, as a Floridian, I have to take a moment to share my gratitude to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) for the remarks he just shared.

During my occupancy of the rostrum, my own eyes welled with tears as I thought of the empty chairs at the table in my own district and all throughout the country as people, as families have made sacrifice and sent those to fight for us.

I can only be reminded, hearing the gentleman from Florida's remarks, that each and every day in this House we do fall short of that great patriotism that is reflected by our servicemen and -women: We could do better; we could be more worthy of the sacrifice; we could resist the influences of special interests more; we could make the tough decisions that are necessary; we could put America on a better footing forward.

It is my belief and my sincere hope, by hearing the words of my colleague, by raising our gaze to an even broader and more accepting patriotism, that we can do it. And I believe Mr. MAST will be one of the people that lead us in that regard.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for those remarks. Mr. GAETZ represents the First District of Florida, a brother in arms,

since I represent the First District of Texas.

We are very grateful for BRIAN MAST and what he has given for his country, what he has been willing to give for his country; and it is an honor to serve with him in the trenches—sometimes literal trenches around here—a great, honorable patriot for America.

On Monday, that is what we will celebrate, Memorial Day, and I want to talk further about that.

Right now I want to touch on an issue that has occupied a lot of people's concern and time this week over CBO scoring, rather important, but it should not be.

The Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Tax Commission do the scoring. Historically, the projections by CBO seem all too often to be far too out of line that any governmental entity would base important critical decisions over people's lives, their healthcare—it will certainly affect their lives—and base it on a group that, as they have explained: We set up models. And we feed the garbage—they don't use that term. But, as far as I am concerned, they feed garbage in and they get garbage out.

And projections: Oh, we have to wait and see what CBO says. People waiting with bated breath: Oh, is it going to be in line?

For heaven's sake, anybody that waits on a score for the JTC or the CBO in dealing with the tax reform that we should do doesn't have much sense. And there is nothing wrong with not having much sense. It just hurts the country when people without much sense are here in Washington making decisions about people's lives and encroaching on their liberty and freedom.

So we have people like BRIAN MAST, and we have those who have given all, the last measure of devotion, for our liberty. Then we turn around and have a Federal Government that passes laws about healthcare reform and decides that they have to have all of the medical records here in the Federal Government.

And do you know what? We need to have a Consumer Finance Protection Bureau to protect people from unscrupulous bankers, so we are going to get everybody's banking records.

Well, as a former judge and as a former prosecutor, if you wanted somebody's banking records, you had to have sworn proof rising to the level of probable cause that a crime was committed and this person committed it, and then you got the records when a judge signed off on it. Not now. Not with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. They just get everybody's records.

And then, without reining in ObamaCare and if we did not rein in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Washington continues to gather people's medical records through sweetheart deals with private entities, a hypothetical I raised many years ago as ObamaCare was being pushed through, came ever closer—really, is here—to the point that we could reach a day—it is not quite here. We have still got a chance to save America from the Orwellian nature of ObamaCare and the CFPB combined.

But years ago I said, you know, if we don't stop this craziness, we are going to reach a point where you could get a letter from the Federal Government, saying: Hey, we have got your medical records, but we notice that you made a purchase at the grocery store this last week and bought some bacon, a pound of bacon. We know, from having your medical records, that your cholesterol, weight is not at a very healthy point right now, so you are either going to have to quit eating bacon or we are going to be penalizing you substantially, since we are in charge of your healthcare, your health insurance. We are in charge of it.

That is where we have been heading. And it is something the Founders, who would not have seen the advent of the computers and the IT age, but what they did foresee, whatever developments in technology that came along, they foresaw this ongoing battle to keep government from controlling people's lives and eliminating their liberty. That is what they saw coming. They didn't have to see the technology. They knew what was coming if we didn't keep the Federal Government reined in.

I know there are groups out there that are gathering information that say: Well, this Member of Congress, this Senator, he doesn't get many bills passed. Well, if you look at most of the things we have passed, other than funding bills, so often they are creating more government agencies and more government power. Each time we do, no matter how noble the purpose is, we are taking just a little bit of freedom and a little bit of liberty away from individuals and giving more power to the government.

Why I think it is appropriate to bring this up as we approach Memorial Day is people have not fought throughout our history—going back to 1775, 1776, on to 1783 and the winning of the American Revolution, on through each of the wars that has been fought in the name of liberty—they didn't fight so that we could come to the floor and pass more and more bills and create more and more government. Even when we are told, ''Oh, but CBO says this will only cost $5 million this year, or only cost $5 million, so it is not that big a deal,'' it is still eroding people's liberty. It is still taking away freedom and giving more control to the government.

So, as we look briefly at some of the history on CBO scoring, this is an article by Paul Teller, Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs. He says:

A new report from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation calculated average monthly premiums for health insurance in the 39 States that use healthcare.gov. The research found that from 2013 to 2017 the average ObamaCare premium increased by 105 percent across the country. The report also looked at the cost spikes by State.

While we await further analysis of the CBO score for the American Health Care Act as passed by the House, this information is an important reminder about the negative impact of ObamaCare.

Besides just how unaffordable ObamaCare has been for hardworking Americans, you might consider three key things about today's CBO score in the context of this new report.

Number one, the original CBO estimate of ObamaCare premiums, November 30, 2009, said that premiums for the ''nongroup'' exchange markets would increase slightly and ''would be about 10 percent to 13 percent higher in 2016.''

CBO has the gall to act like they are so important and so accurate, but over and over, if you look at critical projections they have made and for people to have said, and CBO, in 2009, you know, by 2016, you might have a 10 to 13 percent increase in your premiums is, or would be, laughable except for the crying of Americans across the country who can't afford the premiums that have gone up 2, 3, 4, or 10 times.

One of our small-business employers said he paid, a couple of years ago, $53,000 for his employees' health insurance, and the following year it was $150,000 for his employees. That leaves him without personal income because he had such a dramatic increase in the premiums. But how could that be? CBO said maybe a 10 to 13 percent increase over that 7-year period.

It comes back to show, once again, as I told Bloomberg this morning, it appears those folks, figuratively speaking, couldn't find their rear end with both hands.

Number two, even if you assume CBO's AHCA estimate is completely accurate, the first score, March 17, 2017, showed that the bill would bring down nongroup premium costs over the next 10 years. While CBO did say that premiums would rise slightly over the transition period, attributed to the repeal of the individual mandate, by 2020 the AHCA would change the trajectory of premiums and ''By 2026, average premiums for single policyholders in the nongroup market under the legislation would be roughly 10 percent lower.''

□ 1300

So you hang around and wait for 10 years under the original AHCA and you might have a 10 percent decrease 10 years from now, which is absurd. They were so desperately wrong on their projections.

And I don't have it in front of me. It may be in one of these articles here, but I think originally their projection of cost of ObamaCare was about 1.1, $1.2 trillion over 10 years; and then, of course, the President got upset, because he had said: Oh no, it is going to be under $1 trillion for 10 years.

He calls the Director of CBO over to the Oval Office. They have a conversation and, amazingly, the Director of CBO comes out and says: You know what? After meeting with the President, while I—things came clearer for

me, and turns out it probably will be $800 billion or so. It will be like the President said. I just needed to speak to the President to all of a sudden have a lot more clarity than I did before I went to the Oval Office. But it is under $1 trillion, like the President said, now that I think about it with more clarity.

And then, of course, after ObamaCare passed, very quickly we started learning, no, it wasn't going to be under a trillion; it was going to be over a trillion; maybe 1.7, 1.9. And before long, we start seeing projections more like $2.6 trillion over 10 years. And even one that I had seen that said, you know, maybe 3.6, roughly $4 trillion over 10 years.

As I have said a number of times, you know, any scoring agency whose margin of error is plus or minus 400 percent really shouldn't be relied on by anyone trying to create meaningful law in Congress. That is why for a number of years I have been pushing for the elimination of CBO for a better system, where, as Americans, we believe in competition—or we used to.

Now, I know we have got some folks that can't compete. They need a safe space if somebody is going to compete with them. But what made America great was American competitiveness. We could compete with anybody and prevail.

So why wouldn't we have scorers compete so that we could score the scorers, so that every critically important bill to the American public didn't get sidetracked by some bogus models?

And I am not saying they do it intentionally. You don't have to do it intentionally to have a margin of error plus or minus 400 percent. You can be legitimately that bad at projecting what things will cost; and it has happened throughout the time that we have had projections.

So what I was proposing—and I got my friend, who was the chairman of the Budget Committee, to agree to sit down to dinner with a dear friend of his, Dr. Arthur Laffer, former economic adviser to Reagan, now an adviser to President Trump, and also a friend of both of ours, Steve Moore, who had been the senior editor with The Wall Street Journal. I asked if the Budget Committee chairman would sit down with me and Arthur Laffer and Steve Moore and talk about CBO.

This has been a number of years ago. We sat down at the Capitol Hill Club one evening and, of course, my friend, Dr. Tom Coburn, walks by and says: Okay. Is this one of those puzzles? Figure out which piece doesn't belong here? I get chairman of the Budget Committee, I get Wall Street Journal guy, Steve Moore, I get economic adviser Art Laffer. Louie, what are you doing at this table?

But it was my idea. We needed to come up with a way to have competitive scoring by competitive scorers, and then get to where we can score the scorers, so that when we look at a score that is presented to us on a bill that is being proposed, you can look at the score of that scoring entity. And if they have a score, say, of 10 percent, being right within 5 percent, plus or minus margin of error, then we can probably take very seriously their scoring in the future.

My friend—at that time he was Chairman RYAN—was very open to discussing it, but really kind of felt like we needed to keep CBO and have an official government scorer.

But since then, Dr. Laffer called sometime later to let me know that he had received a private grant, and that he, his firm, and his son would be working on a model that could work for Congress, the House and Senate, to begin having competitive scoring and scoring the scorers so we could have something more reliable, so that we didn't have a bunch of bureaucratic melees from models created that kept us from doing what was good for America.

So, as I think has been pointed out before, whether you ask CBO, ''How much Federal revenue would we have come in if we had 100 percent income tax or 200 percent income tax,'' or if you said, ''Tell us how much Federal revenue comes in if we create a 200 percent income tax,'' since they are not allowed to consider reality and history, but only the models they create mechanically, it's probably a good chance that they would probably dutifully come in and say: You know what? If you set up a 200 percent income tax in the United States of America, then next year you will bring in twice as much money to the Federal Treasury as all Americans make in that year.

Because they are divorced from reality, it doesn't work into their models they create.

In talking to my friend, I hope he doesn't mind my sharing it. I hope he will invite me to have spaghetti with his family at his home in Nashville again sometime. I love visiting with him there, being with his great family.

But he was very encouraging. I was a little depressed. He said: You are a big-idea guy. Don't get discouraged when you propose big ideas like the CBO, getting rid of them, having competitive scoring, or having a—

See, we get beat up every time we say: You know what? Like DAN WEBSTER had found, we have 82 Federal programs charged with getting people to and from appointments, and we don't need 82 Federal agencies. Most of them have white, 20-seat vans, carry three people when they ever carry anybody.

But if we try to eliminate one of the 82, well, you Republicans hate seniors or children or puppies or whatever it is. You are evil. So we keep 82 Federal programs to get people to and from agencies; whereas, if we could create—maybe it is a standing committee and we pull people from different committees—a public assistance committee where we have all 82 of those in every area of public assistance, we see all the duplication because it is all in the same committee, then we can start getting some kind of reasonable Federal Government back under control. Another idea that we just need to move on.

But I have been joined by my friend, and I would be glad to yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY COMMISSION

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Texas for yielding to me.

I just want to take a few moments to thank the House for the work they did recently on H.R. 1242, and I want to urge the Senate to take action on this bill as well.

So I rise today in support of H.R. 1242, entitled 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act. I am a cosponsor of this legislation. I worked with my colleagues to pass this act in the House, and I look forward to the Senate also passing this bill.

I believe it is important for all citizens of the United States to recognize the unique history, sacrifices, and remarkable contributions that African Americans have made to build our great Nation.

I am invigorated by this legislative intention to identify and educate the public on the arrival of Africans and their role in building this great country. It is equally important to understand the generational impact that slavery and laws that enforced racial discrimination have had on our United States.

While there have been many successful and inspirational African Americans with enumerable contributions, we must address ongoing disparities in employment and education by focusing on achieving six milestones for success. These milestones include: entering school ready to learn; reading at grade level by third grade; graduating from high school ready for college or career; completing postsecondary education or training; successfully entering the workforce; reducing violence and providing a second chance for returning citizens.

I applaud the many organizations actively working to address these opportunity gaps faced by African Americans. In my community of the Second Congressional District of Nebraska, I appreciate the efforts of Willie Hamilton, president and founder of Black Men United. He is a true grassroots leader.

In addition, I want to highlight some other organizations and work that is ongoing in the district I serve to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people. These organizations include: the Urban League of Nebraska; the START Center, that is run by my friend, Julian Young; the Omaha Empowerment Network, coordinated by Willie Barney; the Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership; the 100 Black Men of Omaha; the Malcolm X Foundation; the Operation

Youth Success; members of the Midlands Mentoring Partnership; the efforts of the City of Omaha through the Black Male Achievement Program, previously coordinated by Cameron Gales, another friend of mine.

Like all complicated issues facing Americans, we need this type of strong community support, along with smart bipartisan legislation to address these problems.

As the African-American History Commission develops programs, I hope they will consider inspiring communities to continue building partnerships between local organizations, government, businesses, and foundations. This will connect young African-American men and women with support networks, mentoring programs, and the skills and training they need to succeed in the classroom and in the workforce.

While we learn from and celebrate the past, we must also look to a much brighter future for all Americans.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those important observations. I would like to point out something that is not getting enough attention, as the media seems to be driven over issues like charge of misdemeanor assault on a reporter, or a Russian connection, these kind of things.

This story by Luke Rosiak, May 22, ''Democratic Aide Suspected of Major Security Breach Under Government Protection in Pakistan.'' There are some really critical issues here. These Pakistani individuals—we don't know if they have fled now from the U.S., some gone back to Pakistan, but they have been working for our Democratic colleagues in the House—some of them—like my friend DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, been working for her since 2005; may have worked for the DNC.

Now, there are allegations of stealing, perhaps a couple of hundred thousand dollars or more of computer equipment from people here at the Hill; accessing the government information they should not have been allowed to access. They were banned from accessing the House system. One of them, particularly the one that has been working for Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, apparently, according to the story, had stolen or taken a laptop of hers, hidden it, and a Capitol policeman found it.

It is kind of important to us, even though the DNC never let the FBI, CIA, NSA, or any Federal agents examine the DNC computer system before they said: Oh, yeah, it is definitely the Russians.

Really? How can you say it is definitely the Russians? You didn't even examine it.

But that is the way things have been going lately. But this is regarding Congressional computer systems, and we need to get to the bottom of how badly our system has been compromised.

In addition to the thefts and, you know, making over $4 million since 2010, having people they owed money to—at least one—put on the system, now we learn he may have never visited the Hill, and still gotten over $200,000. Just a lot of issues need to be dried up, cleared up, but those are major issues that need to be clarified.

No evidence of Russian collusion, but there is definitely evidence of Pakistani collusion and corruption through the fine Democratic Congress Members that they worked for. We just don't know how badly they corrupted the system. We know they got money that they surely should not have. But let's have an investigation into that.

In the meantime, we owe it to all of those who gave their last full measure of devotion for this country, we owe it to them to do a better job here in Congress, passing better laws of giving people more liberty and more freedom for those who died for it.

□ 1315

There is one thing that is absolutely certain, and Jesus knew what He was talking about—John 15:13: ''Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.'' He knew. He did it.

And for all of those, Mr. Speaker, who have laid down their lives for Americans and for those around the world for their liberty, we just say thank you. Thank God for you. May God continue to bless America by giving us such patriots in the days ahead.

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

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 375. An Act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, May 26, 2017, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

1425. A letter from the Adjutant General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, transmitting the proceedings of the 117th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Charlotte, North Carolina, July 24-27, 2016, pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 1332; (Public Law 90-620 (as amended by Public Law 105-225, Sec. 3); (112 Stat. 1498) (H. Doc. No. 115—44); ; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

1426. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Isopyrazam; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0143; FRL-9960-76] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1427. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Flazasulfuron; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0112; FRL-9961-54] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1428. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Fenazaquin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0029; FRL-9961-99] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1429. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's interim final rule — Determination to Defer Sanctions; Arizona Department of Environmental Quality [EPA-R09-OAR-2017-0255; FRL-9963-07-Region 9] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1430. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Determination of Attainment and Approval of Base Year Emissions Inventories for the Imperial County, California Fine Particulate Matter Nonattainment Area; Correction [EPA-R09-OAR-2016-0772; FRL-9962-82-Region 9] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1431. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans (Negative Declarations) for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Revisions to State Plan for Designated Facilities and Pollutants: New Hampshire [EPA-R01-OAR-2017-0202; A-1-FRL-9962-41-Region 1] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1432. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Revisions to Allegheny County Health Department Rules [EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0064; FRL-9962-77-Region 3] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1433. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Control of Nitrogen Oxide Emissions from Coal-Fired Electric Generating Units [EPA-R03-OAR-2016-0238; FRL-9962-73-Region 3] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1434. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental

Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Redesignation of the Belding Area in Ionia County to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2016-0044; FRL-9962-72-Region 5] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1435. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; South Carolina: Air Emissions Reporting [EPA-R04-OAR-2016-0217; FRL-9962-30-Region 4] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1436. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Ohio; Redesignation of the Cleveland Area to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2016-0395; FRL-9963-01-Region 5] received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1437. A letter from the Program Analyst, Office of the Managing Director/Financial Operations, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment of Part 1 of the Commission's Rules [MD Docket No.: 17-123] received May 23, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1438. A letter from the Chief, Pricing Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Business Data Services in an Internet Protocol Environment [WC Docket No.: 16-143]; Technology Transitions [GN Docket No.: 13-5]; Special Access for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers [WC Docket No.: 05-25]; AT&T Corporation Petition for Rulemaking to Reform Regulation of Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier Rates for Interstate Special Access Services [RM-10593] received May 23, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1439. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a six-month periodic report, covering November 15, 2016 to May 15, 2017 on the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, and has been continued by the President each year, most recently on November 8, 2016, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1440. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2017 Recreational Accountability Measures and Closure for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia [Docket No.: 101206604-1758-02] (RIN: 0648-XF106) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1441. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 160920866-7167-02] (RIN: 0648-XF287) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1442. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Several Groundfish Species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XF064) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1443. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Inseason Adjustment to the 2017 Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pollock, Atka Mackerel, and Pacific Cod Total Allowable Catch Amounts [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XF108) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1444. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Sablefish Managed Under the Individual Fishing Quota Program [Docket No.: 160920866-7167-02 and 161020985-7181-02] (RIN: 0648-XF270) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1445. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XF206) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1446. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 610 in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XF224) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1447. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Trawl Catcher Vessels in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 160920866-7167-02] (RIN: 0648-XF273) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1448. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Adjustment of Georges Bank and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Yellowtail Flounder Annual Catch Limits [Docket No.: 170207156-7225-01] (RIN: 0648-XF219) received May 23, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1449. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; West Coast Salmon Fisheries; 2017 Management Measures and a Temporary Rule [Docket No.: 161222999-7413-01] (RIN: 0648-BG59) received May 23, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1450. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Pot Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XF244) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1451. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan [Docket No.: 161222999-7201-01] (RIN: 0648-BG58) received May 24, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1452. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, International Security Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting a progress report; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Armed Services.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 10. A bill to create hope and opportunity for investors, consumers, and entrepreneurs by ending bailouts and Too Big to Fail, holding Washington and Wall Street accountable, eliminating red tape to increase access to capital and credit, and repealing the provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act that make America less prosperous, less stable, and less free, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–153, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISHCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, Committees on Agriculture, Ways and Means, the Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform, Transportation and Infrastructure, Rules, the Budget, and Education and the Workforce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 10 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

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 Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. HOYER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. POCAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MOORE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. CLAY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. COHEN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. LEE, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RASKIN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. WELCH, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. DESAULNIER, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. SOTO, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. NADLER, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. KIHUEN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. POLIS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. TITUS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. TONKO, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. BEYER, Ms. PINGREE, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BASS, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. MENG, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. SIRES, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. GABBARD, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. KILMER, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. PETERS, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. HECK, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. EVANS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CRIST, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. WALZ, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida):

H.R. 15. A bill to provide for increases in the Federal minimum wage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa):

H.R. 2650. A bill to amend the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and other laws to clarify appropriate standards for Federal employment discrimination and retaliation claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BARR (for himself and Mr. TONKO):

H.R. 2651. A bill to improve the integrity and safety of horseracing by requiring a uniform anti-doping and medication control program to be developed and enforced by an independent Horseracing Anti-Doping and Medication Control Authority; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. POLIS, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. BOST):

H.R. 2652. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an independent review of the deaths of certain veterans by suicide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. PETERS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. TONKO, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BEYER, and Mr. LIPINSKI):

H.R. 2653. A bill to direct the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to carry out programs and activities to ensure that Federal science agencies and institutions of higher education receiving Federal research and development funding are fully engaging their entire talent pool, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. AMASH, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. BUCK):

H.R. 2654. A bill to amend the provisions of title 40, United States Code, commonly known as the Davis-Bacon Act, to raise the threshold dollar amount of contracts subject to the prevailing wage requirements of such provisions; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. EVANS:

H.R. 2655. 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 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 Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. TSONGAS, and Mr. LYNCH):

H.R. 2656. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to establish an Office of Public Participation and Consumer Advocacy; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MASSIE (for himself, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. AMASH, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. JONES, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. POLIS, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. WITTMAN, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 2657. A bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to exempt from inspection the slaughter of animals and the preparation of carcasses conducted at a custom slaughter facility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 2658. A bill to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. SOTO (for himself, Mr. YOHO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. CRIST, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ):

H.R. 2659. A bill to authorized the establishment of a program for cooperative research and development in agriculture with the Government of Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Appropriations, 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. PALMER (for himself, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. BRAT, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, and Mr. DAVIDSON):

H.R. 2660. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to provide exclusive original jurisdiction to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia of certain cases relating to the powers of the Executive, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CHENEY (for herself and Mr. PEARCE):

H.R. 2661. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to convey to a State all right, title, and interest in and to a percentage of the amount of royalties and other amounts required to be paid to the State under that Act with respect to public land and deposits in the State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. NOEM (for herself, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. MULLIN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. COLE):

H.R. 2662. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to improve the recruitment and retention of employees in the Indian Health Service, restore accountability in the Indian Health Service, improve health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and 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. MARCHANT (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 2663. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make changes to documentation of eligibility for Medicare home health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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. WALBERG (for himself and Mr. SABLAN):

H.R. 2664. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to train certain Department of Labor

personnel how to effectively detect and assist law enforcement in preventing human trafficking during the course of their primary roles and responsibilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BACON (for himself, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. GALLAGHER):

H.R. 2665. A bill to reduce the pay of Members of Congress in any year following a fiscal year for which there was a Federal budget deficit; to the Committee on House Administration, 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. BIGGS (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. SOTO, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ISSA, Mr. BUCK, Mr. GALLEGO, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 2666. A bill to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 2667. A bill to restrict the use of funds for the long-range standoff weapon until the Secretary of Defense completes a Nuclear Posture Review that includes an assessment of the capabilities and effects of the use of the long-range standoff weapon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Ms. LEE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. POLIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 2668. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. COHEN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEYER, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. KIND, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. PALLONE, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California):

H.R. 2669. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections, to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for automatic voter registration; to the Committee on House Administration, 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. BROWN of Maryland (for himself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIMES, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. KEATING, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. HOYER):

H.R. 2670. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect more victims of domestic violence by preventing their abusers from possessing or receiving firearms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN of Maryland (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KEATING, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. CICILLINE):

H.R. 2671. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the credit for increasing research activities, to increase such credit for amounts paid or incurred for qualified research occurring in the United States, and to increase the domestic production activities deduction for the manufacture of property substantially all of the research and development of which occurred in the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. BUSTOS (for herself, Mr. BOST, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. KINZINGER):

H.R. 2672. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 520 Carter Street in Fairview, Illinois, as the ''Sgt. Douglas J. Riney Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mrs. BUSTOS (for herself, Mr. BOST, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. KINZINGER):

H.R. 2673. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 514 Broadway Street in Pekin, Illinois, as the ''Lance Corporal Jordan S. Bastean Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 2674. A bill to establish a grant program in the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to fund the establishment of centers of excellence to support research, development and planning, implementation, and evaluation of effective programs in financial literacy education for young people and families ages 8 through 24 years old, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. POSEY, Mr. COOPER, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 2675. A bill to require adequate information regarding the tax treatment of payments under settlement agreements entered into by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 2676. A bill to require States to report to the Attorney General certain information regarding use of force incidents involving law enforcement officers and civilians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California (for herself and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H.R. 2677. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for behavioral and mental health outreach and education strategies to reduce stigma associated with mental health among the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself and Mr. TROTT):

H.R. 2678. A bill to require all Members, officers, and employees of the House of Representatives to complete annual ethics training, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. BARLETTA, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 2679. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve service-connected disability determinations for purposes of loan discharge; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CRIST (for himself and Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 2680. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a credit against tax for certain small businesses hiring new employees; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 2681. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the age range at which the earned income tax credit is allowed to former foster children and other individuals without qualifying children; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 2682. A bill to support foster youth in successful parenting by reducing unintended pregnancies and promoting the well-being of expectant or parenting foster youth and their children; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. SINEMA, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. JONES, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. RUSH, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. HIMES, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H.R. 2683. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to delay the inclusion in consumer credit reports and to establish requirements for debt collectors with respect to medical debt information of veterans due

to inappropriate or delayed billing payments or reimbursements from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Ms. LEE, and Mr. LAWSON of Florida):

H.R. 2684. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to modify the exception to the work requirement; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. HIMES):

H.R. 2685. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to establish a pilot program for providing portable benefits to eligible workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ESPAILLAT:

H.R. 2686. A bill to codify the Small Business Administration's Growth Accelerator Fund Competition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 2687. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with an option to provide medical assistance to individuals between the ages of 22 and 64 for inpatient services to treat substance use disorders at certain facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas (for himself and Mr. RICHMOND):

H.R. 2688. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide the same level of Federal matching assistance for every State that chooses to expand Medicaid coverage to newly eligible individuals, regardless of when such expansion takes place; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself and Mrs. TORRES):

H.R. 2689. A bill to prescribe procedures for effective consultation and coordination by Federal agencies with federally recognized Indian Tribes regarding Federal Government activities that impact Tribal lands and interests to ensure that meaningful Tribal input is an integral part of the Federal decision-making process; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GUTIÉRREZ (for himself, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. VELA, Mr. WELCH, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SOTO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SIRES, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mr. JEFFRIES):

H.R. 2690. A bill to improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. HASTINGS (for himself and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 2691. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 to provide for expedited project implementation relating to the comprehensive Everglades restoration plan; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. HIGGINS of New York:

H.R. 2692. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the time limitation for use of eligibility and entitlement to educational assistance under certain programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed 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. HUNTER (for himself, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, and Mr. CALVERT):

H.R. 2693. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to limit attorney fees and penalties in citizen suits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. DENT, Mr. HENSARLING, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. DUNN, and Mr. PETERSON):

H.R. 2694. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to enhance protections regarding voter registration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Ms. BARRAGÁN):

H.R. 2695. A bill to establish an Office of Environmental Justice in the Environmental Protection Agency and to authorize an environmental justice small grants program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Ms. BARRAGÁN):

H.R. 2696. A bill to establish the Office of Environmental Justice in the Executive Office of the President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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. KILDEE:

H.R. 2697. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require additional disclosures by creditors when lending to members of the Armed Forces and their dependents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 2698. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow veterans affected by school closures to continue receiving monthly stipends under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for a certain period, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. KILDEE (for himself and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 2699. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to more effectively provide mental health resources for members of the Armed Forces at high risk of suicide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 2700. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax as an incentive to partner with educational institutions to improve workforce development and job training for students and a credit against income tax for certain expenses of job training programs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. NEAL, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 2701. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company, in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service as a ''Ghost Army'' that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Mr. LAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 2702. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to establish a commercialization assistance pilot program under the SBIR program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. KEATING, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 2703. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into agreements with public and private entities to provide pro bono legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mr. WALZ, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. KIND, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mr. LYNCH):

H.R. 2704. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to extend military commissary and exchange store privileges to certain veterans who have been awarded the Purple Heart and to their dependents; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LOUDERMILK (for himself, Mr. GRIFFITH, and Mr. RUSSELL):

H.R. 2705. A bill to limit the applicability of the final rule entitled ''Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Fuel Efficiency Standards for Medium- and Heavy-Duty Engines and Vehicles-Phase 2'' to the extent such final rule relates to trailers that do not themselves emit greenhouse gases in connection with a propulsion system; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER (for himself, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BUDD, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. MACARTHUR, and Ms. TENNEY):

H.R. 2706. A bill to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. PEARCE):

H.R. 2707. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an Ombudsman within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT):

H.R. 2708. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal the limitation on the number of veterans authorized to be enrolled in programs of independent living services and assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 2709. A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2710. A bill to establish a commission to study how Federal laws and policies affect United States citizens living in foreign countries; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Ways and Means, the Judiciary, House Administration, and Energy and Commerce, 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. MARSHALL (for himself, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. YODER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. NOLAN, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 2711. A bill to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MAST (for himself, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. DEUTCH, and Mr. SUOZZI):

H.R. 2712. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign support for Palestinian terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. MCKINLEY (for himself, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia):

H.R. 2713. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer certain funds to the 1974 United Mine Workers of America Pension Plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, 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. MEADOWS (for himself, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Mr. BUDD, Mr. BRAT, and Mr. PALMER):

H.R. 2714. A bill to facilitate the use of outcome-based performance standards by the Department of Transportation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2715. A bill to require refunds for delayed or lost baggage; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. O'HALLERAN (for himself and Mr. JONES):

H.R. 2716. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make certain grants to assist nursing homes for veterans located on tribal lands; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself and Mr. QUIGLEY):

H.R. 2717. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize certain aliens who have earned a Ph.D. degree from a United States institution of higher education in a field of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics to be admitted for permanent residence and to be exempted from the numerical limitations on H-1B nonimmigrants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. BERA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. PANETTA, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 2718. A bill to allow certain student loan borrowers to refinance Federal student loans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. PINGREE (for herself, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 2719. A bill to direct the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to conduct coastal community vulnerability assessments related to ocean acidification, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Ms. PINGREE (for herself, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. COURTNEY):

H.R. 2720. A bill to require notice of cost-free Federal procurement technical assistance in connection with registration of small business concerns in procurement systems; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. POSEY (for himself, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H.R. 2721. A bill to allow seniors to file their Federal income tax on a new Form 1040SR; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina:

H.R. 2722. A bill to encourage the development, certification, and adoption of environmentally sustainable swine waste disposal technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, 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. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina):

H.R. 2723. A bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself and Mr. CARTER of Texas):

H.R. 2724. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to replace the diversity visa program with a new program under which an immigrant visa can be obtained by paying a fee of $1,000,000, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Homeland Security, 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. ROKITA (for himself and Mr. HASTINGS):

H.R. 2725. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. RUIZ (for himself, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. EVANS):

H.R. 2726. A bill to provide for the establishment of a pilot program to train individuals for employment in the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 2727. A bill to support the education of Indian children; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 2728. A bill to require labeling of ingredients of cleaning products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. RUPPERSBERGER:

H.R. 2729. A bill to direct National Security Council, in consultation with the Director of National intelligence and the Attorney General, to ensure that a mitigation process and protocols are in place in the case of a disclosure of classified information by the President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Foreign Affairs, 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. RUSSELL:

H.R. 2730. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to eliminate premium subsidies for crop insurance for tobacco; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 2731. A bill to amend the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 to eliminate the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to make value-added agricultural product market development grants to support the development, production, or marketing of alcoholic beverages and to rescind a portion of the Commodity Credit Corporation funds made available for such grants; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. SCHIFF (for himself and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina):

H.R. 2732. A bill to prohibit travel-related transactions to, from, and within North Korea by persons subject to the jurisdiction

of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Ms. STEFANIK):

H.R. 2733. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot grant program to acquire and renovate abandoned homes for homeless veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER:

H.R. 2734. A bill to require the Department of Commerce to address the trade deficits between the United States and other countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 2735. A bill to make certain footwear eligible for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SUOZZI:

H.R. 2736. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish free and comprehensive mental health care to former members of the Armed Services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 2737. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a study to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, especially in regards to women veterans and minority veterans, in transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 2738. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the approval of certain programs of education for purposes of educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TURNER (for himself and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 2739. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish additional protections for victims of crimes punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself and Mr. MAST):

H.R. 2740. A bill to posthumously award a Congressional gold medal to Rabbi Michoel Ber Weissmandl in recognition of his acts of valor during World War II; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WALKER:

H.R. 2741. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment for certain trafficking offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. WALORSKI (for herself and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 2742. A bill to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2743. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require that proprietary institutions of higher education derive not less than fifteen percent of revenues from sources other than funds provided under title IV of such Act; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2744. A bill to revise the 90-10 rule under the Higher Education Act of 1965 to count veterans' education benefits under such rule, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs, 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 Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN (for herself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. MOORE, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TONKO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

H.R. 2745. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to provide for a special enrollment period for pregnant women, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and 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. WELCH (for himself and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico):

H.R. 2746. A bill to amend title VI of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a Federal renewable electricity standard for retail electricity suppliers and a Federal energy efficiency resource standard for electricity and natural gas suppliers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. YOHO (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 2747. A bill to catalyze market-based economic growth in developing countries, create opportunities for the private sector of the United States to effectively engage in foreign assistance programs, improve planning and coordination among relevant United States departments and agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BEYER, Mr. CRIST, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. MAST, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 2748. A bill to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on 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. AMASH (for himself, Mr. POCAN, Mr. MASSIE, Ms. LEE, Mr. JONES, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.J. Res. 102. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the proposed export to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of certain defense articles; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GIBBS (for himself, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. LOUDERMILK):

H.J. Res. 103. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses''; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. POCAN):

H.J. Res. 104. A joint resolution to provide limitations on the transfer of air-to-ground munitions from the United States to Saudi Arabia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. POCAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. LEE, Mr. POLIS, Mr. CLAY, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. NADLER, Ms. PINGREE, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts):

H. Con. Res. 63. Concurrent resolution supporting efforts to enact a bold jobs and infrastructure package that benefits all Americans, not just billionaires; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. HUIZENGA):

H. Res. 357. A resolution reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances United States national interests, and urging increased bilateral cooperation on security, economic issues, and energy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. DEUTCH (for himself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CRIST, Mr. POSEY, Mr. KILMER, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. KENNEDY):

H. Res. 358. A resolution expressing support for the designation of May 25 as ''National Moonshot Day'' and recognizing the importance of conquering scientific challenges from medicine to space and beyond; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. SCHNEIDER):

H. Res. 359. A resolution urging the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and increase pressure on it and its members; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. BROWN of Maryland):

H. Res. 360. A resolution honoring the 100th anniversary of the 82nd Airborne Division; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois (for herself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. RUSH, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BEYER, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. DEGETTE, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. MOORE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. RICHMOND, and Mr. CLAY):

H. Res. 361. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of ''National Gun Violence Awareness Day'' and ''National Gun Violence Awareness Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCEACHIN (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Ms. BARRAGÁN):

H. Res. 362. A resolution affirming the need to achieve environmental justice, commending the work of environmental justice advocates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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. NOLAN (for himself, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. WALZ, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. EVANS):

H. Res. 363. A resolution supporting a Federal, publically funded universal school meal and nutrition program; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H. Res. 364. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the need to eliminate partisan redistricting and gerrymandering; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. NORTON:

H. Res. 365. A resolution recognizing the denial of full voting rights in Congress for active duty service members, National Guard members, reservists, veterans, and their families who are District of Columbia residents; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. O'ROURKE (for himself and Ms. LEE):

H. Res. 366. A resolution recognizing and commemorating St. Joseph's School and their service to the El Paso community; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COOPER, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. LEE, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. POLIS, Mr. MCEACHIN, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. CRIST, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SOTO, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. HIMES, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CORREA, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida):

H. Res. 367. A resolution establishing the Select Committee on Gun Violence Prevention; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER):

H. Res. 368. A resolution disapproving of the irresponsible actions and negligence of President Trump which may have caused grave harm to United States national security; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 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. WITTMAN:

H. Res. 369. A resolution recognizing May 29, 2017, as ''National 529 Day''; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

48. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas, relative to House Resolution No. 6031, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the American System of Conservation Funding; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

49. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii, relative to House Resolution No. 25, H.D. 1, urging the United States Congress to restore free and fair elections; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:

H.R. 15.

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. SCOTT of Virginia:

H.R. 2650.

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. BARR:

H.R. 2651.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 2652.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas:

H.R. 2653.

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. DUNCAN of South Carolina:

H.R. 2654.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Because this legislation adjusts the formula the federal government uses to spend money on federal contracts, it is authorized by the Constitution under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1, which grants Congress its spending power.

By Mr. EVANS:

H.R. 2655.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 8

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 2656.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MASSIE:

H.R. 2657.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This act is justified by the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution which, by granting Congress the power to regulate commerce among the several states, also allows Congress to prevent or prohibit federal interference with Americans' ability to slaughter and process meat. This act is also justified by the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the Constitution, which recognize that rights and powers are retained and reserved by the people and to the States.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2658.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. SOTO:

H.R. 2659.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. PALMER:
H.R. 2660.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article III, Section 1 gives Congress the power to ''ordain and establish'' inferior Courts.
By Ms. CHENEY:
H.R. 2661.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 4, Section 3: 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 Mrs. NOEM:
H.R. 2662.
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. MARCHANT:
H.R. 2663.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. WALBERG:
H.R. 2664.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution
By Mr. BACON:
H.R. 2665.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I. Section 6
By Mr. BIGGS:
H.R. 2666.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section VIII of the Constitution
By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 2667.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The U.S. Constitution provides the Congress with the necessary authority under Article I, Section 8.
By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 2668.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The U.S. Constitution provides the Congress with the necessary authority under Article I, Section 8.
By Mr. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 2669.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 4, Clause 1
By Mr. BROWN of Maryland:
H.R. 2670.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 18)
By Mr. BROWN of Maryland:
H.R. 2671.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Commerce Clause (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Cl. 3)
By Mrs. BUSTOS:
H.R. 2672.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 7
By Mrs. BUSTOS:
H.R. 2673.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 7
By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:
H.R. 2674.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 18 of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.
By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:
H.R. 2675.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:
H.R. 2676.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.
By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:
H.R. 2677.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution
By Mr. CICILLINE:
H.R. 2678.
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. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania:
H.R. 2679.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.
By Mr. CRIST:
H.R. 2680.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, clause 3 provides Congress with the power to ''regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''
By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:
H.R. 2681.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I of the Constitution and its subsequent amendments and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:
H.R. 2682.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I of the Constitution and its subsequent amendments and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Mr. DELANEY:
H.R. 2683.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8
By Ms. DELBENE:
H.R. 2684.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Ms. DELBENE:
H.R. 2685.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8
By Mr. ESPAILLAT:
H.R. 2686.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article One of the United States Constitution, section 8, clause 18:
The Congress shall have Power—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof
or
Article One of the United States Constitution, Section 8, Clause 3:
The Congress shall have Power—To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;
By Mr. FOSTER:
H.R. 2687.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas:
H.R. 2688.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.
By Mr. GRIJALVA:
H.R. 2689.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
U.S. Const. art. I, §8, cl. 3.
By Mr. GUTIÉRREZ:
H.R. 2690.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 of the U.S. Constitution.
By Mr. HASTINGS:
H.R. 2691.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 8
By Mr. HIGGINS of New York:
H.R. 2692.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. HUNTER:
H.R. 2693.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. ISSA:
H.R. 2694.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 Clause 14
The Congress shall have Power to the United States Constitution which empowers Congress ''To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;''.
And; Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:
The Congress shall have Power to the United States Constitution which empowers Congress ''To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.''
And; The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution:
Which guarantees, in part, that no State shall ''deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws,'' which

the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled to be inclusive of those laws pertaining to the right to vote.

By Ms. JAYAPAL:

H.R. 2695.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Ms. JAYAPAL:

H.R. 2696.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 2697.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 2698.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 2699.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire:

H.R. 2700.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, the Taxing and Spending Clause: ''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 . . .''

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire:

H.R. 2701.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, clause 6, Congress is empowered ''to coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures.''

By Mr. LAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 2702.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution for foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 2703.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 2704.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1, Clause 12 and Clause 16 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution of the United States grants the Congress the power to enact this law.

By Mr. LOUDERMILK:

H.R. 2705.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 2706.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the explicit power of Congress to regulate commerce in and among the states, as enumerate in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause, of the United States Constitution, and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1, which grants Congress the ability to make laws necessary to carry out that power. Additionally, Article I, Section 7, Clause 2 of the Constitution allows for every bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and signed by the President to be made law; and therefore it implicitly allows Congress to amend any bill that has been passed by both chambers and signed into law by the President.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 2707.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 2708.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2709.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: the Commerce Clause

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2710.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 10

The Congress shall have Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Consitiution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer therof

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 2711.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 2 of section 3 of article IV of the United States Constitution

By Mr. MAST:

H.R. 2712.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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

By Mr. McKINLEY:

H.R. 2713.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 2714.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to 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. . . .'' According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, the Congress ''shall have Power . . . To . . . . regulate Commerce . . . . among several States . . . .'' According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, the Congress ''shall have Power . . . To . . . Make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2715.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. O'HALLERAN:

H.R. 2716.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 2717.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section VIII

By Mr. PETERS:

H.R. 2718.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 2719.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 2720.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. POSEY:

H.R. 2721.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution. Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution. Amendment 16 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina:

H.R. 2722.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution; the general welfare clause.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 2723.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

the authority enumerated in Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution

By Mr. ROHRABACHER:

H.R. 2724.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 Clause 4 ''To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States.''

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 2725.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8, Clause I ''Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;''

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 2726.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 2727.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 2728.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution

By Mr. RUPPERSBERGER:

H.R. 2729.

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. RUSSELL:

H.R. 2730.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. RUSSELL:

H.R. 2731.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. SCHIFF:

H.R. 2732.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the Commerce Clause:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 2733.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER:

H.R. 2734.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska:

H.R. 2735.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, speficially Clause 3 related to the regulation of commerce with foreign Nations.

By Mr. SUOZZI:

H.R. 2736.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress has the power ''to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof''

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 2737.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 2738.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 2739.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 3 and 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 2740.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States; . . .

By Mr. WALKER:

H.R. 2741.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. WALORSKI:

H.R. 2742.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.''

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2743.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2744.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN:

H.R. 2745.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. WELCH:

H.R. 2746.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power To . . . make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. YOHO:

H.R. 2747.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 2748.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. AMASH:

H.J. Res. 102.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have Power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. GIBBS:

H.J. Res. 103.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Improve Tracking of Workplace Unjuries and Illnesses'' (81 Fed. Reg. 29624 (May 12, 2016)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.J. Res. 104.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section I, which includes an implied power for the Congress to regulate the conduct of the United States with respect to foreign affairs; and U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, which authorizes the Congress to: (1) ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States,'' and (2) ''make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers.''

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 19: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 60: Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. GRIFFITH.

H.R. 113; Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 173: Mr. SMITH of Texas and Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 184: Mr. KEATING and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 305: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. CRIST, and Mr. HECK.

H.R. 351: Mr. BANKS of Indiana.

H.R. 360: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 392: Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. GAETZ, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. LEE, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. SIMPSON.

H.R. 422: Mrs. LOVE, Mr. DUNN, and Mr. BANKS of Indiana.

H.R. 426: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 490: Mr. ADERHOLT.

H.R. 502; Mr. MAST and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.

H.R. 545; Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. EMMER.

H.R. 564: Mr. DENT and Mr. FLEISCHMANN.

H.R. 632; Mr. RUTHERFORD.

H.R. 641: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 664: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 741: Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 754; Mr. MAST.

H.R. 756: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DONOVAN, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 778: Mr. COMER.

H.R. 788: Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 795: Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. TORRES, and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.

H.R. 801: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 821: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 849: Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 850: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 873: Mr. BACON, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DUNN, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mrs. COMSTOCK, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 918: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 959: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H.R. 1057: Mrs. TORRES and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 1116: Mr. BUCK, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 1154: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 1158: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. MOOLENAAR.
H.R. 1168: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 1205: Mr. TONKO, Mr. KING of New York, and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 1212: Mr. LANGEVIN and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 1235: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 1267: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1288: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1298: Mr. HARRIS, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 1318: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1339: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 1361: Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 1393: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1405: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 1406: Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1421: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1447: Mr. MACARTHUR.
H.R. 1456: Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1520: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 1550: Mr. STIVERS, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1552: Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 1558: Mr. ROHRABACHER.
H.R. 1649: Ms. LEE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 1681: Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 1698: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 1699: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama and Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 1719: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 1759: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1772: Mr. ROSS and Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 1811: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 1818: Mr. TURNER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. YODER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Mr. KIHUEN.
H.R. 1836: Mr. AGUILAR and Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 1838: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 1886: Mr. HECK.
H.R. 1891: Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 1896: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 1897: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 1904: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 1953: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 1970: Mr. PANETTA, Mr. O'HALLERAN, and Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 2023: Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 2051: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2062: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. KIHUEN, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H.R. 2077: Mr. STIVERS and Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 2092: Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 2119: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 2141: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2158: Mr. POLIS and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.
H.R. 2170: Mrs. NOEM, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 2173: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 2180: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2189: Mr. SMITH of Texas and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 2194: Mr. BACON and Mr. JONES.
H.R. 2223: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 2258: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. COOK, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. SIRES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2286: Mr. GALLAGHER and Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 2295: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2327: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. CRIST, Mr. KEATING, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2336: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 2337: Mr. SERRANO and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 2358: Mr. HECK and Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 2369: Mr. RUTHERFORD and Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 2372: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 2391: Mr. MASSIE.
H.R. 2412: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2413: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2414: Mr. POCAN, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2417: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KHANNA, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. PETERS, Ms. LEE, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. NORTON, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. KEATING, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. CARDENAS, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. NIMES, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2422: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 2428: Mr. PALLONE and Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 2431: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina and Mr. BRAT.
H.R. 2432: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2452: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2465: Ms. ROSEN, Mr. COLE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WALZ, Mr. RUTHERFORD, and Mr. PALAZZO.
H.R. 2492: Mr. LAMALFA and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 2499: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 2508: Mr. POLIS and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 2520: Mr. TAYLOR and Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 2523: Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 2526: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 2534: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 2581: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2583: Mr. POLIS and Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 2603: Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 2610: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 2630: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 2645: Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.J. Res. 51: Mrs. ROBY, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. LAMALFA.
H. Con. Res. 8: Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. KIND, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. POLIS, and Ms. BORDALLO.
H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 15: Mr. ESTES of Kansas and Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H. Res. 30: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H. Res. 161: Ms. KAPTUR.
H. Res. 201: Mr. DESANTIS.
H. Res. 267: Mr. DUNN, Mr. SOTO, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. BACON, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. MAST.
H. Res. 279: Mr. MAST.
H. Res. 319: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. GARRETT.
H. Res. 328: Mr. ENGEL.
H. Res. 337: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. CLAY, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. PLASKETT, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H. Res. 351: Mr. KIND, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WELCH, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. LEE, Mr. DESANTIS, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. NADLER.
H. Res. 354: Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. NUNES, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. BEYER, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. DENT, and Ms. BORDALLO.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017 *No. 91*

Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious Father, fill our government's legislative branch with Your truth. Where it is in need of purging, cleanse it. Where it is in error, direct it. Where anything is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is in want, furnish it. Where it is divided, unite it.

Today, use our lawmakers for Your purposes. As they have the opportunities, may they strive to do good for Your glory. Guide and strengthen them as You provide for their needs. Lord, remind them that they are laborers together with You.

We pray in Your sacred 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 assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 25, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. STRANGE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what has happened in the years since Democrats forced ObamaCare on our country? Health choices have plummeted downward year after year. Health costs have skyrocketed higher year after year. And what have Democrats, who promised the opposite, done all these years since, as Republicans repeatedly warned we had to act before ObamaCare hurt more Americans on its inevitable path to collapse? Well, they have done basically nothing. They said we were exaggerating. They were wrong. They said things would get better. They got even worse. Rather than work with us to fix healthcare, they pretended things were fine, while more Americans got hurt.

So you can imagine my surprise when Democrats recently sent a letter that essentially conceded that the status quo of ObamaCare is unsustainable. Was it because they actually wanted to work together on reform? I sure wish that were the case, but so far it seems part of a new strategy to—get this—blame someone other than themselves for the failures of ObamaCare. Did they actually think anyone was going to buy this? Come on.

Just the other day, a bombshell report came out that reminded us exactly where the blame for ObamaCare's failures has always belonged. The blame belongs with ObamaCare. The official report said that since ObamaCare's full enactment in 2013, premiums had, on average, doubled in the vast majority of States that use ObamaCare's Federal exchange, and premiums even tripled in a handful of others. Think about that. Premiums doubled in the vast majority of these States, and premiums tripled in a handful of others. There is no serious way to now try to spin away these years and years of ObamaCare's failures on cost.

By the same token, there is no serious way to try to spin away or ignore the years and years of ObamaCare's failures on choice. Just take a look at the chart behind me. It shows that 49 percent of the counties in my State have just one insurer. Half of the counties—one choice. And when you have one choice, you have no choice at all. That is the latest in a long-term trend we have seen under ObamaCare. To add insult to injury, predictions show that next year could be even worse for families when it comes to their choices under this law.

Unfortunately, my State is not alone either. This year, there are 26 States with at least 1 county where residents have just 1 insurance option under ObamaCare. That means millions of Americans living in more than 1,000 counties across our country really have no choice at all.

Thanks to ObamaCare, things could again get even worse next year. Just yesterday, tens of thousands of Missourians across 25 counties—from small towns to Kansas City—learned that they may join the ranks of Americans without a single insurance option to choose from next year—not one—thanks to ObamaCare and its years-long trend of fewer and fewer choices.

Does any of that sound like what Americans were promised?

A mother in Louisville recently wrote to my office begging for Members of Congress to address the failures.

Printed on recycled paper.

''Middle class Kentuckians are hurting because of ObamaCare,'' she said. ''Residents [have] little choice for health plans'' and ''our family is not the only one suffering from the high costs of health insurance.'' She concluded, ''I hope you will push hard to fix our healthcare system.''

I know many of my colleagues have received letters like this one from their constituents as well.

ObamaCare has caused so much pain for families across our country, and it is not going to just magically somehow get better on its own. I know that, like so many families across the country, I am not satisfied with the ObamaCare status quo, and I don't think it is acceptable for its failures to be considered the new normal. As the people of Kentucky have shown in election after election, they don't either.

Senate Republicans are working together to move past the problems of ObamaCare and to help those who have been hurt by it. We would love for Democrats to join us. Democrats have already effectively conceded that ObamaCare has failed. Now the question is, Will they work with us to actually fix this mess, or will they waste more time in some futile attempt to now redirect blame? The ObamaCare status quo is unsustainable. It is indefensible, and we have to move beyond it before more Americans get hurt.

NOMINATION OF AMUL THAPAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, later today Senators will vote to confirm Judge Amul Thapar of Kentucky to the U.S. Appeals Court for the Sixth Circuit. Judge Thapar will make an outstanding addition to the U.S. Appeals Court for the Sixth Circuit. He has a reputation as a qualified judge with an impressive legal mind. He will fairly apply the law to all those who enter his courtroom because, in Judge Thapar's own words, ''the most important attribute of a judge is to be open-minded and not to prejudice a case without reading the briefs, researching the law, and hearing from the parties.''

In 2007, President Bush nominated him to be a U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. At that time, the Senate confirmed his nomination on a voice vote, and Judge Thapar became the first South Asian American Federal judge in the history of our country. When we confirm him to the Sixth Circuit later today, he will be the second South Asian American judge ever to serve on a Federal circuit court.

Judge Thapar has been recognized for his work on the bench. The most recent edition of the Almanac of the Federal Judiciary quoted attorneys who ''agreed that Thapar has excellent legal ability.'' Additionally, the American Bar Association, which prominent Senate Democrats have called ''the gold standard'' for evaluating judges, awarded him its highest rating—unanimously ''well qualified.'' In other words, the people involved in rating him couldn't find anybody who didn't say he was well qualified. That is the highest rating one can achieve.

Judge Thapar has the necessary credentials, integrity, and respect from his colleagues to join the Sixth Circuit. I am proud to support him, and I urge all Senators to vote to confirm Judge Thapar's nomination later today.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we approach the Memorial Day weekend, we are reminded of the great sacrifices so many men and women in uniform have made on our behalf throughout the years. The servicemembers whose memory we honor paid the ultimate price in defending our Nation, our families, and our freedom. We are forever indebted to them. But as we reflect upon the fallen soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, we are also reminded of the responsibility we have to the heroes who have returned home—our veterans.

I don't have to tell colleagues how important keeping our commitment to our veterans is. We have an All-Volunteer Force. We cannot break faith with the Americans who bravely and willingly fight on our behalf. One way we can honor them is by working to ensure that they receive the quality, timely care they need through the Department of Veterans Affairs. That is why, after the State work period, we will be taking up a bipartisan bill reported out of committee just yesterday that will enhance accountability at the VA, improve the care veterans receive, and empower the VA with the tools necessary to remove employees who are failing to perform at the high-quality level our Nation's heroes richly deserve. Importantly, this bill—the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act—will build on progress we have already made with the 2014 Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act.

We know that many challenges remain in ensuring that veterans have access to the care they need and deserve at the VA, but this legislation will further improve our ability to meet our commitment to them. I appreciate Chairman ISAKSON for his continued efficacy on behalf of our veterans, as well as Senator RUBIO for his leadership on this critical legislation. I look forward to the full Senate taking up the bill and passing it soon.

CELEBRATING THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY'S 225th ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MCCONNELL. One final matter, Mr. President. Next week on June 1, the Commonwealth of Kentucky will celebrate the 225th anniversary of its admittance as a State into the Union. Originally part of Virginia known as the Kentucky County, it became the 15th State of this Nation in 1792. So today I rise to celebrate my home State of Kentucky, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, a place the Native American Wyandot Nation called the ''land of tomorrow.''

Once considered the far western frontier, Kentucky has developed into a State with diverse industries, a strong heritage, and international prominence.

When you think about my home State, many things follow as distinctly Kentuckian. The natural beauty of our mountains, farmlands, and riverways foster deep love. Blessed with fertile land and an abundance of coal, Kentucky's cultural heritage has developed in both the fields and the mines. The proud tradition of the Commonwealth includes bourbon and basketball, but also pioneers, statesmen, artists, scholars, and athletes.

From the days of Daniel Boone's heroic exploration through the Cumberland Gap, Kentucky has been home to numerous courageous men and women. The trailblazing spirit has animated Kentuckians from all walks of life throughout the generations. A pioneer of abdominal surgery, Ephraim McDowell expanded the boundaries of medical science. Tori Murden McClure rowed across the Atlantic Ocean as the first American and first woman to brave the waters alone. Responsible for a world famous fried chicken recipe, Colonel Harland Sanders franchised his store at the age of 62 and taught us all that it is never too late to chase our passion. Acclaimed news anchor Diane Sawyer, born in Glasgow, began her career as a weather forecaster in Louisville. Muhammad Ali, an international sports legend, became a global ambassador for peace.

The Commonwealth has given rise to statesmen who have defended the Union, protected our liberties, and represented Kentucky values. Leaders like Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln, and Alben Barkley each left an indelible imprint on the history of our Nation. Civil rights icon Georgia Powers fought against racial injustice in our State, inspired Kentucky to open public accommodations, and was the first African American to serve in the Kentucky State Senate.

Kentucky's poets, musicians, and actors have garnered international acclaim for their craft. Jesse Stuart's poems and short stories captured the beauty of Kentucky's mountains, and Pulitzer Prize winning author Robert Penn Warren described the unbreakable link between poetry and democracy. The National Quilt Museum in Paducah is a global center of creativity and tourism. Kentucky is also home to music legends and Grammy Award winners like Loretta Lynn and Chris Stapleton and the birthplace of entertainment stars such as Jennifer Lawrence, George Clooney, and Johnny Depp.

In the world's greatest college basketball rivalry between the University

of Louisville and the University of Kentucky, legendary coaches and unforgettable players have, for decades, kept fans on the edges of their seats until the final buzzer. For over 140 years, the Kentucky Derby has been known as a mile and a quarter that makes champions and brings the eyes of the world to Louisville.

I am exceptionally proud to represent Kentucky in the U.S. Senate, and I am forever grateful to the people of my home State for giving me the opportunity to do just that. Kentucky has a distinguished history, and I am confident that trailblazers and pioneers from across the Bluegrass State will continue to make it the land of tomorrow. It is my honor to call the Commonwealth my home, and I look forward to celebrating this 225th anniversary next week.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Thapar nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of Judge Amul Thapar to serve on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judge Thapar is President Trump's first nominee to serve on a Federal appeals court. Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee considered this nomination and no Democrat voted for it.

Judge Thapar is on the list of 21 candidates that the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation have selected for President Donald Trump to choose from when filling Supreme Court vacancies.

Judge Thapar is well known to the Federalist Society. He was a member of that organization prior to becoming a district court judge, and since he became a judge he has spoken at Federalist Society events 17 times.

Some of my colleagues on the Republican side are like Captain Renault in Casablanca, who claimed he was ''shocked, shocked'' to find out there was gambling going on in Rick's Cafe.

They are shocked that anyone could be concerned about the Federalist Society, which they claim is just a simple debate club. Far from it—consider the following background.

The organization was founded in 1982 by students at two law schools, Yale and the University of Chicago, under the faculty supervision of Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia, who just happen to be the two most prominent conservative legal scholars of their generation.

According to a recent article about the Federalist Society by Jeffrey Toobin: ''within just a few years, the group was embraced and funded by a number of powerful, wealthy conservative organizations, which eventually included foundations associated with John Olin, Lynde and Harry Bradley, Richard Scaife, and the Koch Brothers.''

The Federalist Society's website includes the group's purpose statement. It claims that the legal profession is: ''currently strongly dominated by a form of orthodox liberal ideology which advocates a centralized and uniform society.''

The statement describes the Federalist Society as a group of conservatives and libertarians calling for: ''reordering priorities within the legal system,'' to fit their principles. Does that sound like the mission statement of a nonpartisan debate society?

How has the Federalist Society gone about this reordering? It's been largely the work of Mr. Leonard Leo, the longtime executive vice president of the Federalist Society who is currently serving as an advisor to the Trump White House.

Mr. Leo has been credited with being a driving force behind the Supreme Court nominations of Justice Neil Gorsuch, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito. That is one-third of the current Supreme Court that he has helped put in place.

Mr. Leo recently gave a speech where he said: ''I've seen that comment about the third of the Supreme Court. I prefer controlling interests. But we haven't quite been able to launch a hostile takeover yet.''

Mr. Leo went on to advocate for radical change, saying: ''I would love to see the courts unrecognizable.'' He has said of the judicial confirmation process: ''it's like war.''

In an unprecedented move, President Trump outsourced the selection of Supreme Court candidates to Mr. Leo, the Federalist Society, and the right-wing Heritage Foundation. He publicly thanked these special interest groups for putting together his list of 21 Supreme Court candidates, and Mr. Leo was the first person to call Neil Gorsuch about his nomination.

As Jeffrey Toobin wrote, Leonard Leo: ''knew how to play the game—how to find a nominee who met Trump's ideological requirements as well as his own, while observing the proprieties expected for judicial nominees.''

Mr. Leo told Mr. Toobin that it was: ''easy'' to find these nominees because: ''when you've been working in this vineyard for twenty-five years you know everybody.''

That brings us back to Judge Thapar.

Leonard Leo, and the big money right-wing interests that fund the Federalist Society, feel that they know Judge Thapar well enough to include him on the list of 21.

They have had plenty of opportunity to get a sense of his views, as Judge Thapar had been a member of the Federalist Society and has frequently spoken at their events.

At his hearing and in my questions to him, I sought reassurance from Judge Thapar that he would be independent from this right-wing group and President Trump.

His answers did not provide that reassurance.

For example, I asked Judge Thapar whether he agreed or disagreed with the Federalist Society's purpose statement. He ducked the question, saying he didn't know what the Federalist Society meant by the statement.

I asked him if he thought it was appropriate for the President to delegate his Supreme Court selection process to the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation, since this creates incentive for judges not to contravene the views of those organizations and their big-money donors. He ducked again, saying he would not opine on this because he claimed it was a ''political question.''

In the aftermath of Citizens United, special interest groups pour dark money into campaigns in support of Republican judicial nominees like Judge Thapar. I asked Judge Thapar if he would discourage secret donations in support of his nomination.

After all, if we don't know who is secretly donating in support of his nomination, how will we know when Judge Thapar needs to recuse himself because one of those donors has an interest in a case he is considering?

He dodged that question too, saying he wasn't aware of any donations about his nomination. Of course, he wouldn't be aware of secret donations—that's the problem.

I also asked him about the original understanding of the Constitution's Emoluments Clause. He said he could not discuss it because there is pending litigation on the matter.

That is curious, because I thought the Federalist Society's view was that the original meaning of constitutional provisions was immutable and unchanging. If the meaning of the Constitution doesn't change, why do Federalist Society nominees decline to tell us this meaning when there is litigation underway affecting President Trump?

I asked Judge Thapar about his decision in Winter v. Wolnitzek. This was a major campaign finance decision in which he applied strict scrutiny to invalidate a ban on judges making political contributions. A unanimous Sixth Circuit panel reversed his ruling.

A group of 24 campaign finance reform organizations sent a letter saying: ''Judge Thapar embraced the troubling 'money is speech' paradigm in a radical way that goes beyond Supreme Court doctrine.'' These groups oppose his confirmation, and I ask unanimous consent to have their letter printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Given Judge Thapar's evasiveness on questions about his views, I am left to judge him on his record, such as his troubling decision in the Winter case, and the fact that the Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation handpicked him for their judicial wish list.

I need more reassurance than that to support a nominee for a lifetime appointment on the Federal court of appeals. I will oppose his nomination.

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

MAY 17, 2017.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: We the undersigned organizations write to oppose the confirmation of Judge Amul Thapar to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit due to his troubling record on the issue of money in politics.

We are deeply concerned with the power of wealthy campaign donors in American politics, and specifically with the aggressive role the U.S. courts have played in undermining our democracy by elevating the voices of a wealthy few over the views of everyday Americans.

Much of the problem can be attributed to four decades of flawed Supreme Court rulings. These decisions have twisted the meaning of the First Amendment and prevented our elected representatives and the people from enacting reasonable protections against big money. In fact, nearly half of the money in the 2016 federal elections—more than $3 billion—can be directly tied to a few of the Court's most damaging rulings.

What concerns us about Judge Thapar's record is that he has gone beyond the Supreme Court's directives in his antagonism towards basic rules designed to ensure we have a government that is of, by and for the people.

In Winter v. Wolnitzek, 186 F.3d 673 (E.D. Ky. 2016), Judge Thapar struck down a prohibition on judges making political contributions by applying strict scrutiny to this contribution ban, in spite of the fact that the Supreme Court has been clear that contribution limits and bans are to be reviewed under a lower form of scrutiny. The Sixth Circuit overturned Judge Thapar's ruling on this point and reinstated the contribution ban.

Further, Judge Thapar embraced the troubling ''money is speech'' paradigm in a radical way that goes beyond Supreme Court doctrine, writing ''there is simply no difference between 'saying' that one supports an organization by using words and 'saying' that one supports an organization by donating money.''

Sen. Whitehouse pointed out in Judge Thapar's Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that ''those of us who are in politics know that that is a false statement, that it is indeed a preposterous statement factually because money has a completely different effect than speech once it enters the political arena.''

The Supreme Court itself does not treat financial contributions as being equal to actual speech. Rather, the Court considers contributing to a campaign a form of association or attenuated speech since the contributor does not control the content of the communication resulting from the contribution.

If Judge Thapar had his way, wealthy donors and special interests could be able to give unlimited sums of money directly to candidates for office. Thapar would make it even harder than it is now for everyday people to be heard and affect who runs for office, who wins elections, and what issues get attention; and easier for powerful politicians to make secret wink and nod deals with their richest contributors.

Judge Thapar's responses to questioning on the subject during his hearing and in subsequent ''questions for the record'' did nothing to allay our concerns. In response to Sen. Klobuchar's questions about why he applied strict scrutiny to the contribution ban, for example, Judge Thapar struggled to explain why he assumed (without analysis) that the same standard should apply to contributions as to solicitations.

The role of big money in politics became a central issue in the debate over Justice Neil Gorsuch's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court because the public cares deeply about this issue. To ensure that all voices are heard, not just those of powerful corporations and wealthy donors, it is essential that we confirm judges and justices who understand that the Constitution gives we the people the power to protect our democracy from big money.

Unfortunately, Judge Amul Thapar does not appear to see our pro-democracy Constitution as the vast majority of Americans do—and for this reason we urge you to oppose his confirmation to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Teachers, Americans for Democratic Action, Center for American Progress, Center for Emergent Diplomacy, Class Action, Communications Workers of America, CODEPINK, Democracy Spring, Demos, End Citizens United, Every Voice, Free Speech for People, Friends of the Earth, Just Foreign Policy, Maplight, MAYDAY, National Association of Social Workers, Participatory Politics Foundation, People for the American Way, PeopleNow.org, Reverb Press, Small Planet Institute, United for Democracy, Voices for Progress.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to address the comments that were made by the Republican majority leader about the issue of healthcare. What he said today I have never heard him say before. He said it was the fault of the Democrats for refusing to work with the Republicans to change the Affordable Care Act. I had not heard that before.

I find it an interesting suggestion because what happened after the House of Representatives passed a measure 3 weeks ago to change the healthcare system in America, the issue then came to the Senate but did not go through the regular order of business.

It is my understanding—and has been reported widely in the press—that Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, assembled a group of 13 Republican Senators who have been meeting in private over the last 3 weeks to discuss an alternative to the healthcare bill that passed in the House of Representatives. There are no Democrats in that room. None have been invited. Incidentally, there are no women in that room from the Republican side—13 male Senators meeting in private.

So to hear this suggestion from the Republican leader that the real problem they are running into is that the Democrats are not helping, we were not invited to this party. They are meeting privately to come up with something, and I don't know what it might be, but I have an idea of how we can achieve a bipartisan real effort when it comes to healthcare in America.

I would suggest we create a committee in the Senate. I have a name for it, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. I suggest we have 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats on that committee. I suggest they sit down, take the bill sent by the House, and improve it, make it better. Now, this suggestion is such a good one that the committee already exists.

It is under the chairmanship of LAMAR ALEXANDER—whom I respect personally very much—and the ranking member, PATTY MURRAY of the State of Washington, a Democrat. I know, having spoken to Senator MURRAY, she is ready to roll up her sleeves and go to work to write a revision to the healthcare bill, the healthcare system in America.

There have been no hearings, none, on the measure passed by the House of Representatives. So when the Republican leader says he wishes the Democrats would join in the effort, this committee is ready and willing to work. I am sure, if he picked up the phone and called Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY, they could get to work on doing a much better job than what the House of Representatives did.

Why am I so critical of the House of Representatives? Not because of the traditional rivalry between the Chambers, but because yesterday the Congressional Budget Office took a look at the bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives 3 weeks ago by two votes. It was all Republicans voting for it. It passed by two. A number of Republicans refused to support it. It had no support from the Democratic side.

It was an unusual bill because it went out of the regular order of business. The regular order of business suggests that when you are going to do something that might have an impact—a large impact—on America, you should go to an agency that is a nonpartisan, expert in the field, that will analyze your bill and tell you what impact it will have. Most of us think we have pretty good ideas for making America a better place to live and good ideas for legislation.

Luckily, we have something called the Congressional Budget Office, which sometimes brings us back down to Earth and says: It might not work exactly as you thought it would work. Traditionally, bills—significant bills that affect a lot of Americans and families and things important like healthcare—they are submitted to the

Congressional Budget Office so they can analyze them and decide the impact they will have.

Well, 3 weeks ago, Speaker PAUL RYAN and Republicans in the House said something I had not heard before in my service in Congress. They said: We are not going to wait for this analysis. We are going to vote on this bill even before the Congressional Budget Office has a chance to analyze its impact. Remember, we are talking about changing the healthcare system in America, and that literally impacts every single American. It is one-sixth of our Nation's economy. You would think, before anyone was bold enough to suggest they wanted to change the system, they would at least send their proposal to the Congressional Budget Office for an analysis. The Republicans in the House failed to do so, refused to do so, passed the measure by two votes, and sent it to the Senate.

So, yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office completed its analysis. Now that we have an analysis of what is known as TrumpCare or the Republican healthcare approach, it is pretty clear why they did not want the Congressional Budget Office to take a look at it. This is what the Congressional Budget Office reported publicly last night: Next year, under the Republican proposal for healthcare reform, 14 million Americans will lose their health insurance. Over the next 10 years, 23 million Americans will lose their health insurance.

Do you remember when we started this conversation? The goal was to make sure we changed the laws in America so more Americans would have the protection of health insurance. Just the opposite occurs if the Republican plan goes forward. The second thing we were looking for is a goal in healthcare reform to reduce the growth, the rate of growth, in health insurance premiums.

Every one of us knows what that is all about. Health insurance premiums have been going up way too high for way too long. The Republicans have been critical of the current system, saying the cost of health insurance is going up too fast. So they put in their reform proposal which passed the House of Representatives.

Here is what the Congressional Budget Office had to say about the Republican approach: Next year, premiums for health insurance will increase by 20 percent in the individual market. That is the market where we have seen this dramatic growth in costs already, and the Republican plan makes it worse.

The third thing we find is this argument by the Republicans that somehow the current healthcare system in America, the Affordable Care Act, is in a death spiral. Listen to what the Congressional Budget Office said about the health insurance market in America today. The CBO affirms that under current law, marketplaces—health insurance marketplaces—are stable.

However, under the Republican repeal bill, one out of every six Americans will be living in parts of this country where the individual market would become unstable as a result of the Republican bill. So instead of stabilizing the market and ending the so-called death spiral, the Republican bill makes it worse.

It turns out that when you take a close look at this so-called death spiral, you find the Republicans have their hands around the throats of the healthcare system of America choking it and claiming this patient is not looking good, Doctor. If they would stop their efforts to sabotage the current system and work to improve it and make it stronger, then we could save health insurance for a lot of Americans and bring stability to the system.

The Republican bill at its heart is not about a healthcare bill, though, it is about tax cuts. The Republican proposal for healthcare reform starts with eliminating almost $900 billion in taxes paid by the wealthiest people in America. By taking $900 billion out of the healthcare system, they are unable to keep health insurance alive for so many Americans. The Republican approach eliminates $834 billion in the Federal Medicaid Program. What is the Federal Medicaid Program? Let me give you three examples of what it is.

In Illinois today, half of the babies who are born are paid for—their medical care is paid for by the Medicaid system: prenatal care for mom so the baby is healthy, the delivery of the baby, and postnatal care afterward. These are lower income individuals. Half of them are paid for by Medicaid today, but that is not the most expensive part of Medicaid.

The most expensive part of Medicaid is for your mom and dad and your grandmother and grandfather who are in a nursing home and have no savings left. All they have is Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. That is the most expensive part of Medicaid. Those who are disabled living in my State, in Alabama, in New York, and other States—disabled people and low-income people need medical care and they rely on Medicaid.

So when the Republican healthcare reform and repeal cuts $800 billion-plus out of Medicaid, it is at the expense of the groups I just mentioned: babies and moms, elderly people in nursing homes, and the disabled. Those are the ones who will see a cutback in medical services so we can give a $900 billion tax cut to the wealthiest people in America.

I know the Democratic leader is here. I want to yield the floor when he arrives, but I want to close by telling a story. Yesterday, I had three moms and a dad who brought their children to a press conference. It was a great press conference, if I may say so. These kids stole the show, as they should. Each one of them—each one of them had a compelling story about having survived a terrible illness. Many of them were cancer victims.

Moms told stories. One mom said: I was changing my little girl, and I noticed a lump in her abdomen. It turned out to be a neuroblastoma cancer tumor. It was removed. My little girl spent weeks, months in the hospital, and she is still going back.

Each one of them told a story. As you looked at these kids, smiling and happy and bouncing around, you thought to yourself: Thank goodness. Thank goodness for America, with its great medical care, and thank goodness these families had health insurance—because they were there concerned about what the Republicans are doing when it comes to preexisting conditions.

Because these kids have survived cancer, they are risky from an insurance viewpoint. We decided 6 years ago to put an end to that worry for these families. You cannot discriminate against a person or a family in America based on a preexisting condition—thank goodness—because one out of three of us have a preexisting condition. The Republican approach takes away that protection and says Governors can ask for a waiver so health insurance in their State can discriminate against people with preexisting conditions.

So three moms and a dad came yesterday and said: Please stop this Republican plan. What will our families do? Our kids have preexisting conditions. We cannot afford to see our premiums go through the roof because the Republicans withdraw this protection.

That is the real-life consequence of this debate. This is not just about a lot of politicians on Capitol Hill blowing hot air. It is about families—real families with real kids and real challenges and whether they are going to have real protection when they need it.

The Congressional Budget Office yesterday came out with a report and said the measure that passed the House, the Republican measure, is a disaster for families across America. We have to stop it. We have to do everything in our power to do it. I might say to my friend from New York, the Democratic leader, that when the Republican leader came to the floor this morning and said: Why won't the Democrats join us in repairing the Affordable Care Act? I say to the Republican leader: Open the door of that room where you have 13 male Republican Senators sitting down and debating the future of healthcare. Open the door, open the windows, and let's have an honest, open, bipartisan conversation not about repealing our healthcare system but making it stronger, protecting the very families who showed up yesterday at a press conference and whom I am going to remember for a long time.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me thank my good friend from Illinois for, as usual, his articulate, compassionate, and outstanding work and for the great job he and others did yesterday when they invited the people here. I reiterate just what the Senator from Illinois stated; that is, once they take repeal off the table—they are having real trouble with repeal—we want to sit down and make our healthcare system better. It is not perfect. No one thought it was.

It is better than it was. Many more people are covered. Preexisting conditions, college kids—kids get out of college, and they get healthcare. All of that is better. We don't want to get rid of everything, but we want to improve it. We are working. Forty-eight Senators, as my colleague from Illinois knows—every Democrat signed a letter to Leader MCCONNELL saying we want to work with you to improve this system, not to sabotage the existing system, not to repeal the good things we have but to improve it.

And we have gotten no answer in that regard.

TRIBUTE TO BILL DAUSTER

Mr. President, I have just a few words first about Bill Dauster, someone who has labored long and hard and well in this body. We depend on our hard-working staff. I am so blessed to have such a great, dedicated, loyal, hard-working, smart staff. One of their best traits is that they are not afraid to tell me when they think I am off base, and it helps keep things going right.

Well, Bill Dauster was one of the great staffers I have met in all the years I have been here in the Senate. He worked, of course, for Harry Reid, my dear friend. He is now working for Senator VAN HOLLEN, but he will be retiring tomorrow.

Now, Bill was Leader Reid's deputy chief of staff for policy for many years. Before that he worked for the Budget Committee, the Finance Committee, and for Senator Feingold of Wisconsin. The list of legislation that Bill has worked on is long and illustrious. He was known as a great friend and mentor to his colleagues wherever he went.

In Reid's office, he was jokingly called ''the butler'' because he was constantly trying to help other members of the staff. Senator Reid's staffers fondly remember Bill Dauster during the final days of the debt ceiling negotiations, running in and out of Senator Reid's office as he rushed to go meet with younger staffers on the Hill who were sent to him for advice. Even on his busiest days, Bill made time for others.

In an industry in which many rub shoulders and network after work, Bill was a different kind of guy. He was known to give the same response to any coworker who asked him to come to a social event. He would repeat: I love you, but I love my family more, and I need to be home with them. He was so dedicated to his family, we heard. He would regale us with many stories about them.

He came up with great ideas. He was a great sounding board for me.

So on behalf of all of us in the Senate, we want to thank Bill for his long service to the Senate, for his role in crafting legislation over three decades, and for his mentorship to other Senate aides, old and young. He is retiring, but his influence in this body will last long after he has left.

We all wish him well in this next phase of life, where, hopefully, he will be able to spend more time where he enjoys it the most—at home with his family.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. President, another matter—healthcare. Yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office, led by a Director who was handpicked by current HHS Secretary Tom Price, Donald Trump's appointee, released its analysis of the House Republican healthcare bill—TrumpCare.

The report makes clear that TrumpCare would be a cancer on the American healthcare system—causing costs to skyrocket, making coverage unaffordable for many seniors and those with preexisting conditions, all the while leaving 23 million fewer Americans with health insurance.

Now, when people hear this, they say: Why would the Republicans want to do it? That just seems mean-spirited. Well, I will tell you why: because their No. 1 goal is to give a tax break for the wealthiest of Americans. People making above $250,000 pay an additional charge to help everyone else with healthcare on their unearned income—not on what they do when they are working, but on stocks, bonds, and investments. The No. 1 goal of our colleagues across the aisle, sadly, is to help those very rich people get even richer.

Now, to do that, they have to take away people's healthcare. To get the money for those tax breaks, they take away people's healthcare. So the bottom line is very simple: Unless you are a healthy millionaire, TrumpCare is a nightmare. I think that is why our Republican colleagues are having such trouble putting together their own bill, because, as Senator DURBIN has noted, they have excluded us from their negotiations.

Well, the CBO report ought to be a final nail in the coffin of the Republican effort to sabotage our healthcare system. Republicans in Washington and the President should read the report cover to cover, throw their bill in the trash can, and begin working with Democrats on a real plan to lower costs and improve care.

There is a lot to unpack in this report. It came out late yesterday. So I want to focus on a couple of provisions this morning.

First, on health insurance costs, the CBO report makes clear that premiums under this bill are headed up in the next several years. Consumers would see their premiums increase by 20 percent for next year's plans. Now, Republicans will crow about premiums going down in the outer years—years away. But the decrease in premiums occurs for only one reason: The quality of the insurance will plummet. If you have a barebones plan that hardly helps you, where you have to pay huge deductibles, huge copayments, and huge premiums and it covers next to nothing, of course, the cost will eventually go down. What good is that? Why even talk about that kind of healthcare? People don't need it and don't want it. Cheaper insurance isn't going to help anyone if it doesn't actually lead to the healthcare people need.

Listen to this one. Older Americans—everyone in America 50 to 64 who doesn't have a lot of income, making say $25,000 a year—TrumpCare is going to force you to pinch pennies just to be able to afford health insurance. The CBO report says that some seniors could see their premiums go up a whopping 800 percent under this bill.

In one of the newspaper articles I saw, I think the senior citizen was in his early sixties. They were making about $25,000 or $30,000 a year—not unusual for a senior of that age—and their premiums went up from $1,700 to $13,000. How are you going to vote for that, my friends, telling these people who have worked hard their whole lives that they have to pay a lot more and a lot of that money is going to wealthy people for a tax cut?

What about out-of-pocket expenses? By the way, out-of-pocket expenses really bother people. How many of us have heard over and over again: I have healthcare, and, when I went to the doctor, they said: You, first, have to lay out $5,000. How many of us have heard that? Everybody. The Republican bill makes it worse.

According to the CBO report, out-of-pocket costs could balloon for vital services in States where they decline to cover essential health benefits. Americans could be paying thousands of dollars more every year if they need maternity care or programs that treat substance abuse or mental health services.

Listen to this one. According to reports, in States that elect not to include maternity care, which every State could elect to do under the Republican bill—and many will—insurers would most likely sell maternity benefits as an add-on at $1,000 a month—$17,000 more in total. Under TrumpCare, women may well have to pay more—much more insurance—just because they are a woman, because of pregnancy. So costs go up, up, up. If, God forbid, this bill becomes law and costs go up, any citizen of this country should go to their Senators who voted for this and say: What the heck did you do? You made it worse.

Now, uncertainty in the market is the second issue. The CBO report confirms that the Republican attempts to

repeal the Affordable Care Act and the Trump administration's refusal to guarantee to continue making cost-sharing payments is causing the instability in the market.

Here is what the report says. Now, this is the report put out by the Republican-appointed head of the CBO. So this is not some Democratic propaganda-type document. These are ''just the facts, ma'am,'' as Mr. Friday said. Here is what the report says: ''Substantial uncertainty about the enforcement of the individual mandate and about future payments of the cost-sharing subsidies'' have led insurers to withdraw from the current marketplace.

AHIP—that is the biggest organization of our Nation's insurers, the insurance companies; they are nonpartisan—said the same thing.

Why, if our colleagues want more people to stay in the market and are complaining that people are leaving the market, don't we come together—hopefully, with the President, who thinks that he could do this on his own—and say: We are going to make this cost-sharing permanent. We all know insurers want certainty in the future or they pull out. That is what the insurance business is all about. Yet, grudgingly, one little step at a time, they don't take away the cost-sharing because they know the damage it would do—this is President Trump—but they are afraid to make it permanent and that causes problems.

So there is only one word for what the President is doing and our Republican colleagues are doing when it comes to the present healthcare system—sabotage. If our Republican friends continue to allow the President to play coy about these cost-sharing payments—which bring premiums down, which bring costs for average citizens down—as a potential threat, if we don't make cost sharing permanent, the system will deteriorate. Again, it will be on the President's back, on our colleagues' backs. I hate to say that, but those are the facts.

We want to make it permanent. We tried to put it in the appropriations bill, to make it permanent, which would have kept costs low or kept people in the exchanges. Our colleagues said no.

Finally, as to preexisting conditions, the CBO report states:

> People who are less healthy would ultimately be unable to purchase comprehensive non-group health insurance at premiums comparable to those under current law, if they could purchase it at all.

Let me repeat the last part of the CBO report written by an appointee of our Republican head of HHS: ''if they could purchase it at all.'' Think about that for a minute.

Under TrumpCare, if you have a preexisting condition, if you are sick, your health insurance costs could go up so high that you can't afford insurance. Before the new healthcare law passed under President Obama, how many of us heard from families: My daughter has cancer, but the insurance company won't cover me, or I got kicked off and I have to watch her suffer because I can't afford the treatment, the payments. It is horrible, heart-wrenching. It is going back to those days under this bill, unfortunately.

This report ought to be the final nail in the coffin of the Republican effort to sabotage our healthcare system. It will make much more certain that sick people are priced out of insurance companies, that the most vulnerable are left high and dry when they need care the most, when there is an illness in the family.

Is that the sort of healthcare system our colleagues envision for this country? When you are sick, when one of your family members is sick, is that when they are not allowed to give you healthcare? What in the heck do you have it for?

I certainly hope that is not the idea on the other side of the aisle, but this bill that the House passed would do it.

In conclusion, the nonpartisan scorekeepers have spoken loudly and clearly—no ambiguity. TrumpCare means higher costs and less care for the American people, the average American. Let's not lose sight of what is at stake here. The health and well-being of the American people is on the line. There are life-and-death consequences for so many millions of people. They are relying on us to get this right.

So for the good of the country, President Trump and our Republican colleagues should abandon TrumpCare, stop sabotaging the healthcare system, and work with Democrats—we are waiting—to fix our healthcare system, not pull it from under them.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. President, finally, I have one more note. It is Memorial Day. I want to take a moment to express my deep and abiding gratitude for the men and women in our armed services who gave their last full measure of devotion in defense of our Nation and our liberty.

In big cities and small towns throughout America and in my home State of New York, we will honor our fallen veterans and pay tribute to them. We will give a hug to the Gold Star moms who have made the ultimate sacrifice. May we never forget their sacrifice so that we may enjoy the blessings of freedom.

Since the founding of this country, since the farmers on Bunker Hill put down their plows and took up muskets, Americans have been willing to make that ultimate sacrifice for our great way of life, our freedom. May we never forget them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Connecticut.

RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I join my colleague from New York in expressing the special respect and passion that we all feel in honoring this great holiday that remembers the service and sacrifice of great Americans, to make sure we sustain and preserve and enhance our democracy. Part of that democracy is indeed the rule of law, as well as protecting the institutions that make us great as a Nation, including our elections system and its integrity.

Today should also be a time to observe and commemorate the continued respect for the law that makes us great. Part of that respect was demonstrated recently when the Deputy Attorney General appointed a special counsel to investigate possible coordination between the Trump administration and the Presidential campaign with the Russians as they interfered with those democratic institutions. Make no mistake, there is consensus and unanimity in the intelligence community, and more broadly among us in this body, that the Russians purposefully and relentlessly interfered in the 2016 election through a cyber attack on this Nation. In my view, it was an act of cyber warfare.

The questions now are who and how in the Trump team may have colluded with the Russians in that illegal, outrageous activity and, indeed, whether there has been obstruction of justice since then. Mounting evidence indicates that there has been.

I have joined many of my colleagues in praising the appointment of a special prosecutor because it is vitally necessary for a fair and impartial, as well as aggressive, investigation. The special prosecutor must follow the evidence wherever it leads, and I have confidence that Bob Mueller is the right person for this assignment. He has the grit and backbone to stand up to pressure. He has the prosecutorial experience and expertise to conduct a truly professional investigation.

I called for a special prosecutor back in February. I was one of the first, if not the first, among our colleagues to do so because the conflicts of interest raised by the recusal of the Attorney General and the potential involvement of the Deputy led me to think that such an appointment was absolutely necessary.

I now call on the President to support this investigation. With the utmost respect for the Office of the President, it should be unnecessary to call for that cooperation and support. My hope was that the President would say as soon as the appointment occurred that he would indeed cooperate. But, instead, he has continued to characterize this investigation as a witch hunt and a charade. He has demeaned and disrespected it and indicated that, if anything, there will be less than full cooperation. That would be a grave disservice to our democracy and to the American people.

The integrity of our electoral system is bigger and more important than any single electoral contest or even any occupant of the White House. It is about the freedom and independence of this Nation, something we cherish and celebrate on this Memorial Day weekend.

I urge President Trump to demonstrate his adherence to the rule of

law by cooperating and articulating fully his cooperation with this investigation. I hope that not only President Trump but all of his associates will do so and that they will provide whatever testimony and documents are necessary to complete this investigation as quickly and effectively as possible.

I also believe that the Attorney General of the United States owes the American people his adherence to the rule of law by committing himself to follow the guidelines that respect the press. Indeed, we would know very little, if anything, about many of the events that prompted the appointment of a special prosecutor without the free press reporting development after event after development that have led to this day.

There are guidelines and regulations that protect the President against any kind of compulsory process or punishment. If there is punishment to be accorded to lawbreakers, the press should be recognized for the special role they have in our democracy and the special protections, the constitutional guarantee they enjoy under the First Amendment. There are guidelines under 28 CFR 50.10 that provide legal guidance and regulations that should be observed, and I hope that the Attorney General will demonstrate in deed and word his adherence to those guidelines rather than threatening to lock up reporters—as the President has unfortunately done currently in conversations with Director Comey—or punishing them.

Whatever the violations of government officials may be, there should be an articulate, clear, and explicit adherence to those regulations by the Attorney General.

Let's take a moment to go through where we are right now.

Last July, after a disturbing series of reports suggesting the attempt by a foreign power to influence an American election, the Federal Government began to investigate the Russian Government's interference in the Presidential election.

We learned just yesterday from a published report that this activity included conversations among Russian officials regarding how best to sway individual Trump officials and that the FBI's early handling of this matter may have been influenced by an unreliable document traceable to Russian intelligence—a form of interference in our justice system that is stunning.

In December of 2016, U.S. intelligence officials concluded that the Russians had orchestrated the theft of electronic materials from the Democratic National Committee and John Podesta in an attempt to undermine Hillary Clinton's Presidential campaign. The Obama administration responded by implementing sanctions on the Russian Government.

Shortly after President Trump took office, Attorney General Sally Yates warned the White House that National Security Adviser Michael Flynn had lied to officials about discussing sanctions with the Russians and was vulnerable to Russian blackmail. The White House waited 2½ weeks to take action and did so only after a March 9 Washington Post report and, in fact, days after Sally Yates' warning, fired her.

We also know that Director Comey was warned or asked—in fact, demanded by President Trump that he pledge his loyalty and that he would be in jeopardy of losing his job if he did not. Shortly thereafter, the President clearly expressed to Director Comey his sense of that warning when he asked Director Comey to shut down, in effect, the Flynn investigation. As we all know, Director Comey resisted both of the President's requests.

In early March, following sharp criticism about his failure to disclose meetings with Russian officials under oath, Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from the Department of Justice investigations.

Later that month, President Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, became the third high-ranking Trump administration official caught misrepresenting potentially his ties to an admitted meeting with Russian officials from his security clearance application.

On May 9, President Trump fired FBI Director James Comey, a stunning event amidst these unprecedented revelations. After clumsy and contradicting explanations seeking to advance a false narrative that the firing was a result of Director Comey's handling of the Hillary Clinton email matter, the White House essentially abandoned that conflicting series of stories, and President Trump admitted publicly that he was thinking about the FBI's Russia investigation when he decided to fire Comey. He boasted the next day in his meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister that he felt greatly relieved of pressure resulting from that investigation.

The New York Times has reported that Comey was seeking increased funding and resources to expand the Russia probe. The Times also subsequently revealed that Director Comey had discussed with others and wrote memos detailing how President Trump asked him to pledge his loyalty and shut down the Federal investigation into Mr. Flynn.

We must wait for all the facts to emerge, but even if only some of these reports are accurate, the conclusion is almost inescapable that the President of the United States fired the FBI Director in an attempt to shut down the investigation into ties between his associates, including Michael Flynn, and the Russian Government. The names of these associates have been well documented—Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, Carter Page, as well as Michael Flynn.

There is, unfortunately, more. Just in the past few days, additional disturbing facts and press reports have surfaced, including testimony by former CIA Director John Brennan before the House Intelligence Committee. He said that before he left office, he became deeply concerned that Russian intelligence services were attempting to manipulate Trump associates to influence the Presidential campaign. He noted that many Russian contacts of individuals linked to the Trump campaign emerged in those reports. The Washington Post reported that Comey had informed Congress about the FBI Russia investigation late in March and that Trump had asked Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats and National Security Director Michael Rogers to push back on that investigation—in effect, to clear the President—and deny Trump campaign collusion with the Russians. According to this report, both officials, to their credit, refused to do so.

In the Armed Services Committee, I asked Director Coats whether he discussed with Director Rogers any attempts by the administration to interfere with the investigation. He refused to answer—a pause and silence that spoke volumes.

Revelation after revelation shakes our confidence in this administration's truthfulness and confidence. This investigation by the special prosecutor is vitally necessary.

We must not lose sight of the damage that has already been done. These reports paint a deeply disturbing picture of possible obstruction, a mosaic pieced together by facts that show not only events and conversations but also motives. After a series of these events and conversations, they can no longer be seen as isolated or accidental or inadvertent. The cumulative effect, like threads in a fabric, is to establish a picture of motive, intent, mens rea, and criminal activity.

Special Counsel Mueller must have the mandate and all of the funding and resources that he needs to follow the facts wherever they may lead—resources, independence—but also support.

That is why, again, I call on the administration to express its support and its intention to cooperate.

This kind of investigation can mean the difference between the upholding of our democratic institutions and placing them in jeopardy. Therefore, I urge that we as a body remain vigilant and continue the Judiciary Committee's oversight, inquiry, and investigative activity so as to assure that we know the reasons then-FBI Director Comey was fired—we have that responsibility as a matter of oversight—and continue that kind of scrutiny in order to assure the independence and resources the special prosecutor needs. Likewise, the Intelligence Committee's activities are absolutely necessary.

Almost certainly, the special prosecutor will produce no report or elaborate public explanation. He will bring criminal charges if they are warranted by the evidence. He will seek convictions in court if those prosecutions are

justified under his finding. A report with recommendations and finding as to how we can avoid this kind of interference with our democratic institutions in the future must be the work of the Intelligence Committee and of an independent commission, which I have supported. An independent, bipartisan commission can do the kind of public, transparent, vigorous, and independent work that is necessary, just in the way that we have done in the wake of other crises.

I urge that we proceed on all of these fronts. They are vital to our democracy. They are an essential, inextricable part of freedom, the rule of law, and freedom of the press.

I hope that the press will continue its unfettered use of its First Amendment freedom to give us the truth and to continue those reports that have brought us to this day, because the truth will be uncovered in the course of the criminal process. It will be uncovered by the Intelligence Committee and, hopefully, by an independent commission. The essential role of the free press in fostering government accountability is recognized by existing regulations, and the Attorney General of the United States should leave no confusion that the Department of Justice will adhere to those regulations.

Indeed, 28 CFR 50.10 recognizes the ''essential role of the free press in fostering government accountability'' and, therefore, sets parameters and procedures, for approval by the Attorney General of the United States, under standards that are set forth for any government action that may, in any way, inhibit or impede the press.

We will probably never know the real impact of Russia's intervention in the outcome of the 2016 election. These investigations are not about assessing the impact. They are about determining who participated criminally with the Russians in that interference. The American people deserve a thorough and impartial investigation into the Trump team's ties to that interference and the effort by President Trump and others to cover it up.

In the wake of Watergate, the saying arose that the coverup was worse than the crime. It was then, and it would be worse—or at least as heinous—in the crime here. Make no mistake that the crime is, actually, a theft of our democracy—an interference by the Russians in our democratic institutions—which they will repeat if we do not make them pay a price and, likewise, if we do not make the Americans who cooperated with them pay a price as well. This principle is central to our democracy and our rule of law.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to join me in calling for the cooperation of the Trump administration as well as for recognizing the importance of the investigation—its independence, its resources—for the free press and the rule of law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

OPIOID CRISIS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in speaking about the opioid crisis that has devastated families in States across the country.

I thank my colleague, Senator MANCHIN, for organizing the speeches today.

In my State, deaths from prescription drug abuse have now claimed the lives of more Minnesotans than have homicides or car crashes. We lost our beloved Prince because of an opioid overdose, which is still being investigated. Just as importantly, we lost a student in Duluth and a mom in Rochester, MN—over 400 people in just the last year. We continue to see dangerous synthetic opioids shipped across our borders in increasing amounts—a trend that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection expects to continue, as we heard in a Judiciary Committee hearing last week.

Today, I joined Senator PORTMAN in his subcommittee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and we talked about what is going on from that perspective as well.

While there is more work to do to combat this epidemic, first, I recognize that we have made some meaningful progress on a bipartisan basis. We passed the CARA Act, which is something that was led by Senators PORTMAN, WHITEHOUSE, AYOTTE, and me. We set a framework up for the Nation, and I look at it in three ways.

The first way is that we have to do everything we can to prevent addiction. That means changing some of our prescription practices across the country. Do you really need 30 pills when you get your wisdom teeth out? It is about asking those questions and changing those practices.

The second thing would be to look at prescription drug monitoring. Senator PORTMAN and I have a bill that would make it mandatory for States to share their data across State borders. I found a guy in Moorhead, MN, through his rehab counselor, who had 108 different prescriptions for opioids from something like 80 different doctors in 50 different cities. He went from North Dakota to South Dakota, to Minnesota, to Wisconsin. That is why sharing that data would greatly reduce that doctor shopping.

I see here the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN. Senator CORNYN and I led a bill years ago to make it easier for people to throw away their leftover prescription drugs so they would not get in the hands of those who should not be taking them. Those are ideas for reducing that demand.

Then you go to the next area, which, of course, is that of trying to reduce the illegal drugs from coming in, like with the STOP Act, which Senator PORTMAN and I introduced, making it harder to get these drugs in through the Postal Service, and doing more with law enforcement. By passing the SALTS Act, which is a bill that Senator GRAHAM and I introduced, it will make it easier for prosecutors—the Presiding Officer is a former prosecutor—to prove up cases with analogue drugs, which is when perpetrators basically take a substance, change it a little, and then say: Hey, it is a new drug. Then it makes it harder for the Feds to go after it, and you have to prove it up in court.

So we are making some changes to our law to make it easier, especially in rural areas, where they are not going to be able to get a medical doctor in to prove up what the substance is in order to make it easier to prove these cases.

These are all very good ideas, but what we are here to talk about today is the issue of the funding and what will happen if we do not have the funding for treatment. We did a good job with the Cures Act last December, in which we made $1 billion available over 2 years, as well as the work that was done on a bipartisan basis with the budget for the rest of the year. I consider those good signs.

Unfortunately, the budget and the CBO score of the healthcare repeal bill that was released this week—the bill that came over from the House—shows us that we are at risk of working backwards on this issue.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, mental health and substance abuse benefits could be cut under the healthcare bill, which would increase out-of-pocket costs by thousands of dollars for those who need these vital services. This is on top of the $839 billion in cuts to Medicaid under the bill and additional cuts in the President's budget of more than $600 billion to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, even though these programs cover 3 out of every 10 people who have an opioid addiction. This would be devastating for so many, if these budget cuts took effect.

I would like to do more. I would, actually, like to pass the LifeBOAT Act, which Senator MANCHIN introduced and I am a cosponsor. That would simply put an extra fee on some of these opioids so that the people who have been reaping the profits from these drugs would be helping to pay for the treatment. I think that is a great idea. Unfortunately, this budget takes us the other way.

It eliminates programs that help rural communities build hospitals and get access to vital telemedicine services. It cuts critical medical research that is happening at the NIH—just when, at the end of last year, we added that money to the NIH's funding. It was shown just in the last month that, with the budget for the rest of the year, we have continued that positive trend. The budget also doubles down on other cuts that would hurt small towns and rural communities, which would impact jobs and opportunities. It eliminates rural business programs, which have helped to create hundreds of thousands of jobs. It cuts rural housing programs and infrastructure grants and loan programs.

Altogether, these cuts not only threaten the progress we have made in fighting against the opioid crisis, but they also threaten the prosperity of the rural communities, which have been the hardest hit. We need a budget that helps and not hurts rural America.

We have a lot of work to do. I appreciate, again, the work of our Democratic and Republican colleagues in the Senate. As we have shown with the budget—from last month through the rest of this year—we have put some common sense in there and have done a good job and have gotten a lot of bipartisan support. My hope is that we will do the same thing here and make a smart budget and reject the one that has been proposed by this administration and come up with something much better that helps and not hurts the people of our States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to spend a little bit of time today talking about how badly ObamaCare is failing the American people and how my Republican colleagues and I are working to repeal and replace it with healthcare that works. I wish I could say that Democrats and Republicans were working together to replace it with healthcare that works. Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues have taken a walk on this particular topic and, apparently, are not interested in participating.

Even though 30 million Americans remain uninsured under ObamaCare, the individual market—where people buy their health insurance if they do not have employer-provided coverage or government-provided coverage—is in a death spiral. This was confirmed by a study by the Department of Health and Human Services. It was also the subject of a Wall Street Journal article today that makes the point that average premiums in the individual market have increased 105 percent since 2013 in the 39 States in which the ObamaCare exchanges are federally run. This translates into $3,000 more out-of-pocket for middle-class, hard-working families—a 105-percent increase in premiums since 2013.

I dare anybody to say ObamaCare is working as it was intended. All one has to do is look back to President Obama's very words, when he said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; if you like your health insurance policy, you can keep that. He also said: Oh, by the way, we are going to save you money too. A family of four will save $2,500 a year. Contrast that to the $3,000-a-year increase since 2013 in the individual market—a 105-percent increase.

As I said earlier, this week the Department of Health and Human Services released a report that underscores the negative impact ObamaCare is having on families across the country. The report highlights the incredible increase in annual premium prices since ObamaCare took effect, and I mention that in the aggregate.

Let's look at places like Texas. In Texas, the average monthly premium jumped from $222 in 2013 to $404—about an 82-percent increase. If you are a young person buying health insurance, a young family or anybody, for that matter, spending $222 a month and it jumps 82 percent, to $404, that is a big bite out of your disposable income. That is pretty bad, there is no question about it, but Texas wasn't close to being the hardest hit.

For example, in Wisconsin, premiums have almost doubled. In Montana, they have gone up 133 percent. In some States, the premiums have actually tripled. As I said, the average individual premium has more than doubled in the 39 States using healthcare.gov—an increase of 105 percent since 2013.

That is not the only problem with ObamaCare. This year, one in three counties across the United States have just one insurer on the ObamaCare exchange. In other words, ObamaCare has gotten it so wrong that the risk pools are mainly people who are older and who need healthcare more, and many younger people—young, healthy people who are important in the risk pool to help bring premiums down for everybody—are simply taking a walk. This isn't the mark of a healthcare law that is working for the American people or helping our country grow healthier. It is the mark of a law that is actually hurting families by giving them fewer options at a higher cost and failing to deliver on any promises. We wonder why people are cynical about their own government. Well, it is because of promises made and promises not kept, and ObamaCare—I have said it before and I will say it again—is one of the biggest examples of consumer fraud I have ever seen in my lifetime.

We are talking about real-world consequences here. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to talk about how many people would be potentially hurt by repealing and replacing ObamaCare. Of course, that is purely speculative. They are making it harder because they refuse to participate in this process, but we are determined to make sure we bring premiums down and make health insurance more affordable for those who want to buy it.

Let me talk about concrete examples of people terribly affected by the ObamaCare healthcare law. One of my constituents wrote me a few weeks ago and said she and her husband got their insurance from her husband's job, but since ObamaCare came into effect, their premiums have tripled, and she estimates their deductibles have doubled. What is also frightening is that her prescriptions have skyrocketed too. As an example, an inhaler that previously cost her $35 now costs almost 10 times that amount—well over $300.

Given the outrageous costs, this Texan decided to see if she could get a better deal on the exchange since her insurance costs kept going up and up and up. She said the deductible she would have gotten was $6,000 a year. Add that to higher premiums, and she said ObamaCare was too high to even think about changing to.

ObamaCare has had so many negative ripple effects throughout our entire economy. It restricted the number of hours people can work because of the employer mandate. It raised taxes, depressing economic activity and growth—things like the medical device tax. The medical device industry is one of the most innovative, lifesaving industries in our country and literally in the world. Yet ObamaCare imposed a medical device tax and chased those jobs and the innovation that goes along with them offshore. I remember one of my constituents from Dallas, TX, said they had a location in Costa Rica, and as long as the medical device tax applied to things they did in Texas and in the United States, they were going to take their business and build it in Costa Rica for one reason and one reason alone; that is, to avoid this crushing tax.

The result has not been good for the economy, and it has not been good for healthcare. Many folks can't find any reasonable insurance that will actually pay for what they want. They can't afford what insurance they do have, and they feel hopeless and helpless as the rates keep climbing.

Because I know these stories apply not only in Alaska or in Texas, they apply all across the country, one would think we would have Senators on both sides of the aisle clamoring and working together to try to come up with some solutions, but, once again, it is stony silence from our colleagues across the aisle.

As my constituent rightly pointed out, so much of their income is now going toward premiums and other healthcare costs, she said she and her husband feel like they are actually being robbed. That is why we believe, on this side of the aisle—I wish I could say on both sides of the aisle but certainly on this side of the aisle—that we need to find a solution that works for our country.

So here is an open invitation to any of our colleagues in either House of Congress: Please come work with us, not for our benefit, not for any political gain or advantage but because it is the right thing to do. That is why we get elected. That is why we serve, not to engage in petty politics but to actually do things that help our constituents.

This isn't just a red-State problem. I pointed that out earlier when I referenced Wisconsin and Montana. This is a problem that confronts our entire country.

So we are going to continue to keep working on a bill that repeals this ObamaCare disaster and replaces it with patient-centered, accessible healthcare that make sense for the

American people. I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle come around to join us because we do intend to get this done.

I just want to read a couple of other excerpts from this Wall Street Journal editorial today. They talk a little bit about how to read the CBO report. The Congressional Budget Office, as the Presiding Officer knows, really has the final word on interpreting, from an official standpoint, what the impact of proposed legislation would be, but I have to say this is far from the holy writ.

Here is a good example. In this article, they point out ObamaCare coverage estimates—CBO estimates for ObamaCare coverage by year in millions of enrollees. For example, in 2013, they projected that 7 million enrollees would enroll in ObamaCare, and it was 6 million. That is not too far off, but let's look at 2015. In 2015, they said 13 million would enroll, and 11 million enrolled. Again, that is ballpark, but then we go to 2016. They predicted that 21 million people would enroll in ObamaCare. Do you know how many enrolled? Twelve million. They missed it by almost 50 percent. That is not close. Then, in 2017, they projected it would be 15 million, and it was 10 million.

I say that not to disparage the Congressional Budget Office because I know they are doing the best they can, but it is hard to predict the future, and it is also hard to predict how markets will work and how people will respond to the incentive of more choices and lower costs.

This is not a red-State or a blue-State issue because, as I mentioned, in Missouri alone HHS has said that premiums have increased 145 percent. So wouldn't we think we would have both Senators from Missouri on the floor working with us to try to solve the problem? I know Senator BLUNT is working with us to try to solve the problem, but we would benefit from having a bipartisan effort to address the problem.

They also point out that there are other things the CBO report talks about which is significant, particularly in terms of getting our economy growing again. They said, for example, that the House bill cut taxes by $992 billion, spending by $1.1 trillion, and reduced the deficit by $119 billion. Now, I know that is not the primary effort here when it comes to healthcare, but if we want to get our economy growing again, if we want to make it possible for more people to buy healthcare coverage at a price they can afford, it helps if they have a job, and it helps if the economy is growing.

Here is the thing that, to me, is perhaps the most cynical argument by the critics of what we are trying to do in repealing and replacing ObamaCare. Despite the fact that there are 30 million people uninsured now—hardly a success, hardly the gold standard for providing access to healthcare coverage—the Congressional Budget Office points out what I think is pretty obvious. If you take the gun away from people's heads and you don't force them to buy a product they really don't want, fewer people are actually going to buy it because it doesn't suit their needs, and it is not available at a price they can afford. As the Wall Street Journal points out, without the threat of government to buy insurance or else pay a penalty, some people will conclude that ObamaCare coverage isn't worth the price, even with the subsidies.

Sometimes I wish we would have honest and open debates about the problems that confront our country, and certainly healthcare is something near and dear to all of our hearts. Too often I feel as though we are ships passing in the night or reverting to our talking points rather than having an open and honest discussion. This is an area where we can benefit from an open and honest discussion and an acknowledgment that the status quo is unsustainable.

If Hillary Clinton were President of the United States today, we would be revisiting ObamaCare because the individual market is, as I described earlier, failing. It is failing. I am confident our colleagues across the aisle would be eager to try to step forward to address that, but because the candidate they did not choose won the Presidency, then they are in full-blown resistance, not offering to lift even a finger to try to help us solve this problem, and it is a shame, but it is not too late.

We invite them again to join us as we repeal and replace ObamaCare, providing people with more choices at a price they can afford, not because we are going to hold a gun to their head and say you are going to have to buy a product you don't want, at a price you can't afford, we are going to give people the freedom to choose. That is not a bad thing. That is a good thing. That is what America is all about—not having government force you to make decisions that you don't view are in your own economic self-interests.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I rise to speak on the same subject as my friend from Texas.

Listen, Democrats are ready to talk to Republicans about improving our healthcare system, but we aren't going to engage in a debate that presupposes that the end result is going to be millions of people losing care and rates going up for everybody in order to fund a tax cut for the wealthy. That is the plan Donald Trump and the Republicans are pushing.

So my Republican friend is right: Democrats are not interested in having a discussion about how many people are going to lose coverage. We are not interested in having a discussion about how high the rate increases are going to be. We are not interested in having a discussion about big tax breaks for millionaires, billionaires, insurance companies, and drug companies.

Let's be honest. If Republicans were serious about working with Democrats, we wouldn't be using an arcane Senate rule which allows them to push through a bill with 50 votes. If Republicans really wanted to work with Democrats on healthcare reform, they would do it through normal business. If Republicans were really serious about working with Democrats on healthcare reform, they would be going through regular order and going through the committee process.

Whatever we want to think about the Affordable Care Act, it went through the committee process. I think 160 Republican amendments were accepted in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in 2009. The Finance Committee held multiple meetings. The bill was on the floor of the Senate for a month. Republicans are jamming this bill through—no committee process, no committee meetings, no committee markups, no open-floor process.

Even Senator CORKER called out his own party and said that this is no way to rewrite one-sixth of the American economy—13 male Republican Senators, behind closed doors, in secret.

Democrats are desperate to work with Republicans on fixing what is wrong with our healthcare system. Not every problem has been fixed, but we are not going to start with 17 million people losing healthcare or rates going up by 20 percent. And we want to do it in a way that is transparent to the American public, where everybody can see.

On the second point my friend from Texas raised—this idea that CBO got the numbers wrong when they estimated how many people would be insured by the Affordable Care Act in 2009—as he mentioned, they weren't off by that much, but to the extent they were off, there is a simple reason for it: CBO did not take into account that Republican States would seek to undermine the Affordable Care Act in every conceivable way possible. CBO gave Republican Governors and State legislatures the benefit of the doubt that once this law was passed, once it was presenting an avenue to insurance for millions of people across the country, both parties would seek to implement it. That is not what happened. Republican States refused to set up State-based exchanges. Republicans brought lawsuit after lawsuit to try to stop the Affordable Care Act from going forward. Republicans, in control of the House and the Senate, jammed through legislation that reduced the risk insurance provided to insurance companies. CBO did not estimate that Republicans would wage a 6-year-long campaign to undermine and undo the Affordable Care Act.

In States that implemented the act, such as Connecticut, numbers met or beat expectations. In States that didn't

implement the Affordable Care Act, sought to undermine it, numbers didn't meet the expectations.

Then comes President Trump, who openly telegraphs his desire to undermine the Affordable Care Act, cuts off all of the advertising, tells the IRS to stop enforcing the law, bleeds out payments to insurance companies one month at a time, teasing that this will be the last month they get their money.

Finally, on this question of a gun to the head of consumers—I guess that is a reference to the provision of the Affordable Care Act that says: If you don't buy insurance, then you will pay a penalty. That is absolutely part of the Affordable Care Act. Why? Because if you want protection for people with preexisting conditions, then you have to have a mandate that people buy insurance, or else people just won't buy insurance until they are really sick, knowing they can't be charged more.

Actuarially, the protection for people with preexisting conditions only works with the individual mandate. I remember Senator CRUZ, during his marathon filibuster, admitting that. Republicans and Democrats know that. That is why the American Health Care Act, which just came out of the House of Representatives, includes an individual mandate. So let's not pretend like this is a partisan issue.

The rightwing American Health Care Act that came out of the House of Representatives 2 weeks ago includes an individual mandate—it is in there—because they know the same thing: If they want to preserve any modicum of protection for people with preexisting conditions, they have to require people to buy insurance. They just put the mandate in a different place. In the Affordable Care Act, the penalty kicks in if you don't buy insurance. In the House bill, the penalty kicks in after you have lost insurance and you try to sign up again. It is the same mandate, the same penalty, just a slightly different timetable for payment.

Here is what TrumpCare does: higher costs, less care, tax cuts for the rich.

I want to talk about the CBO score that came out last night—not major adjustments from the first CBO score, but there are some important amendments that they make. But the bottom line is that if you care about costs, there are going to be higher costs. That is what CBO says. There is a 20-percent increase in cost the first year, 5 percent in the next year for good measure. There is less care—I mean significantly less care—23 million people. Big improvement—24 million people lost care in the first House bill; 23 million people lose care in the second House bill. And all of this is done in order to pass along tax cuts to the wealthy. We are talking about $662 billion of tax cuts for the wealthy.

Here is what CBO says: Premiums are projected to rise 20 percent in 2018. So our Republican friends who came down to this floor for 6 years and said we need to repeal the Affordable Care Act because costs are too high just passed a bill in the House of Representatives that CBO guarantees will raise premiums by 20 percent in 2018.

And it got a lot worse. CBO says that if you are an individual with a preexisting condition and you live in a State that takes advantage of one of these waivers, the premiums, frankly, don't even matter to you because you won't be able to afford the catastrophic high cost associated with your illness.

If you are an older American, especially an older American living on Social Security, then you are targeted by the American Health Care Act. A 64-year-old making $26,000—and I have a lot of 64-year-olds in Connecticut making $26,000, and I bet a lot of my colleagues here who live in lower cost and lower income States have even more of this population—today you are paying about $1,700 a year for healthcare. That is what your premium is after taxes. Under the American Health Care Act, your premium would go up to $21,000 a year. You are making $26,000, and your premium goes up to $21,000. You would receive about $5,000 in tax credits, but in the end, you would be paying $16,000 in healthcare premiums.

Now, obviously you wouldn't be paying $16,000 in insurance premiums because you couldn't afford healthcare if you still want to pay your rent and you still want to pay your gas bill and you still want a few groceries.

The reason why massive numbers of people lose insurance is because 20 percent is just the average; for some people, premiums will go up 700 to 800 percent, especially if you are older or if you are lower income.

Here is what CBO says will happen if the Affordable Care Act stays: The number of uninsured will go up a little bit. It will tick up to about 28 million. But for all my colleagues on the Republican side who have been claiming that the Affordable Care Act is in a ''death spiral,'' CBO tells you that you are wrong. You are wrong. They state clearly that the marketplaces will remain stable. Now, again, they may not be counting on the kind of sabotage President Trump is engaged in. If President Trump continues to destabilize the markets, maybe this number will be wrong. But if you had an administration that was attempting to enforce and implement the Affordable Care Act, you would get about the same number of people who are uninsured.

Here is what happens if you pass the American Health Care Act: The number goes immediately up to over 40 million uninsured and peaks after 10 years at 51 million people.

Senator CORNYN said: Listen, we still have 30 million people who don't have insurance; let's try to solve that problem. But CBO says that the House bill doesn't solve the problem. It turns a problem of 28 million Americans without health insurance into a humanitarian catastrophe—more people uninsured at the end of this than were uninsured before the Affordable Care Act passed.

So I guess what Senator CORNYN is saying is that whatever product emerges from these secret meetings will insure more people and that CBO will verify that. That is something on which we can work together. Let me guarantee, that won't be the case.

To give a sense of how many people 23 million is, because I know that is kind of a hard number to get your head wrapped around, this is the number of people who lose insurance under the House bill, according to CBO. CBO's new numbers just came out last night. That is the equivalent population of Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Dakota, Rhode Island, North Dakota, and West Virginia. When we put up this chart a couple months ago, I think there was one additional State. So by moving from 24 million losing insurance to 23 million people losing insurance, one State came off this list. But that is the equivalent population of how many folks lose healthcare in this country. That is why I call it a humanitarian catastrophe.

Then let's just think about what CBO says about who benefits. Here are 23 million people who lose insurance—and that is a pretty simple formula. The bill takes insurance from 23 million people in order to pass along a $173 billion tax break for the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry and a $230 billion tax break for very rich people. Some of it will go to people making above $200,000 a year, but most of it will go to people making over $1 million or $1 billion a year. The numbers actually work out pretty squarely. The cuts to healthcare in the bill roughly work out to be about the same amount in tax cuts for the wealthy.

By the way, there is another chart here that is a great one. There is another chart that shows who benefits when we look at the tax breaks. If you make under $200,000 a year, you get zero benefit from the American Health Care Act. Every single dime of the tax cuts for individuals or families goes to those making over $200,000 a year. How about that—a $230 billion tax break, and not a dime of it goes to people making under $200,000 a year. So this bill was a nightmare before the CBO score, and it is even more of a nightmare today.

Let me point out one more important thing that CBO says about this bill. Inside this bill, in a new amendment that allowed it to pass the House of Representatives, is a provision that allows States to get waivers from the essential healthcare benefits requirement that insurance actually provide you coverage for healthcare and the community rating requirement that you spread out the costs of healthcare across the entire population of people who are insured.

What CBO says is that about one-sixth of the population—that is equivalent to about 25 States and Washington, DC—who might obtain waivers, including both the essential benefits requirement and the community rating benefit—that would result in insurance markets coming apart at the beginning of 2020.

CBO states that ''less healthy people would face extremely high premiums, despite the additional funding that would be available'' under the bill to reduce premiums. CBO says specifically: ''In particular, out-of-pocket spending on maternity care and mental health and substance abuse services could increase by thousands of dollars in a given year for the nongroup enrollees who would use those services.''

Let me put a finer point on this. The legislative jujitsu that Republicans did in the House to get this thing passed involved eliminating the requirement that people with preexisting conditions be protected from premium increases, combined with a high-risk pool that would have a bunch of money in it to help reduce premiums for those people.

CBO tells you essentially that those high-risk pools are a fraud. CBO says there is not enough money in the high-risk pools in order to provide any meaningful benefit for people with preexisting conditions. In particular, they say, women going through pregnancy, families going through pregnancy, and individuals with mental health and substance abuse will see thousands of dollars in additional costs because the money in the risk pools cannot cover the cost of that care.

We have an opioid epidemic raging throughout this country, and the House just passed a bill that will increase costs for people suffering from substance abuse by thousands of dollars. We can do better. Republicans can emerge from these secret meetings, set aside their plan to ram through this vote with no committee process through reconciliation, and we can start talking about what to preserve in the Affordable Care Act and what we need to change. That is what Americans want us to do.

The majority of Americans do not want this bill repealed. The majority of Americans today support the Affordable Care Act. Yes, that number is different than what it was a few years ago. Maybe that is because, faced with this benefit, faced with these insurance protections being eliminated, Americans are rallying to the defense of the Affordable Care Act. That doesn't mean Democrats don't believe we can make some commonsense amendments, but it does mean we are not willing to participate in a process that presupposes that the outcome will be less people being insured, costs getting higher in order to finance tax breaks for the very wealthy and for insurance companies and drug companies.

Republicans should come out from behind closed doors, work with Democrats. CBO tells you a humanitarian catastrophe is coming if you don't.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am here to visit about the topic of healthcare. I will be spending time in Kansas this week, and there probably will be no topic of conversation that will be greater than people's concerns about healthcare. I will tell you, as I have indicated to many of my colleagues, this is like no other issue I have ever dealt with as an elected official in how personal the consequences are of the decisions we make here.

While I certainly admit there is plenty of politics and partisanship and too much back and forth that revolves around this concern about healthcare, what I do know is, the people who visit with me, in so many instances, are my friends, my neighbors, our kids' teachers, they are people I go to church with, and in many instances, as they have a conversation with me about what we are going to do in regard to healthcare, tears begin to stream down their cheeks as they worry about themselves but, more importantly, they worry about their family members, their sons, daughters, husbands, wives, and parents.

This is a very personal issue. The concerns Kansans have about this and what we might do is sincere and real. I also know the Affordable Care Act—the law that is in existence today—is failing many Americans as well. In fact, just this week, yesterday, we learned the company Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City is exiting the market and will no longer provide a product in the Kansas City area of our State, which means, in most instances, individuals will no longer have an option in regard to the Affordable Care Act.

What we have in place doesn't work, but I also know what has come from the House isn't the solution to this problem either. The work we have to do—you and I, Madam President, and our colleagues—is serious and one that has real and personal consequences for every American, and we must take our responsibilities seriously.

I have indicated to my colleagues that neither the Affordable Care Act, which I voted against, nor what the House has passed, is anything I would vote for. I really wish we were doing something different than either one of those things.

As I thought about my remarks today, I was about to say that I suppose I came too late to get my ideas adopted by Congress, but really I came to this issue early, and I think it was 2004, maybe 2006, in which, at least in my own mind, I penned on paper and worked on drafting legislation on what I called a 10-point plan to address the affordability and availability of healthcare.

I can tell you that my ideas, which predate President Obama's, were nothing like the Affordable Care Act, and they really were nothing like the conversation we are having today. I wish we would be addressing the underlying reasons that healthcare costs so much rather than focusing so much attention on the issue of health insurance and its premiums.

If we can drive the things out of healthcare that unnecessarily raise the price, the cost of access to healthcare, we can make a tremendous difference in healthcare premiums and the affordability of healthcare for all Americans, not just trying to figure out what kind of plan we can develop, what kind of insurance program, what kind of subsidy or tax credit we can provide, but we would be treating the underlying problem, not just the symptoms.

I suppose, to give a little understanding of what I am talking about, in my view, the things we ought to consider are allowing more competition in the market, more free enterprise opportunities, allowing people to purchase insurance from coast to coast, expanding the support for community health centers. These centers are already in existence. They need to be more available in more places.

We are a very rural State, and it is hard to find those community health centers, but they provide healthcare services to people who have no ability to pay and no insurance. We ought to be more supportive of community health centers, not less, providing, particularly, primary care for people in difficult circumstances.

We also need to give small businesses and organizations the ability to organize and create larger pools so they can negotiate for better premiums. We need to utilize health savings accounts. We need to support medical research. If we can find a cure for cancer, the delay of the onset of Alzheimer's, we can save billions of dollars in our healthcare system as well as save lives and improve the quality of life of people who suffer from the diseases that are so prevalent.

We need to address the issue of prescription drug costs. How do we make certain no drug company takes advantage of cornering the market or how do we make certain they don't utilize our current laws to extend the life of their patent, eliminating the chance for competition to come into play and the introduction of generic medicine that can save, again, consumers and patients lots of money.

We need to promote preventive healthcare. Wellness, fitness, diet, and nutrition are the things that probably give us the biggest bang for our buck and don't necessarily need to be a government program, but people need to work at living healthier and healthier lives and prevent diseases from occurring in the first place.

We need additional physicians and other healthcare providers—nurses and others—and we have not put the attention into developing programs to educate and train the next generation of medical providers. We need to make sure Medicare and Medicaid actually

pay for the cost of the services they promised to pay for on behalf of low-income citizens as well as citizens who are seniors, instead of having the cost shifting that occurs as a result of the system we have today, in which Medicare doesn't pay or Medicaid doesn't pay sufficient amounts of money to actually pay for the services a patient receives under either one of those programs.

Again, those are things that I think would be beneficial to every American, and it wouldn't be spending our time trying to figure out how we modify the insurance system, how we figure out about subsidies or tax credits for people within the system. Again, I don't come late to this issue, but it doesn't seem to be the direction we are going.

Before my time expires, one of the items I wanted to particularly highlight is the value of medical research. I am proud this Congress passed an appropriations bill that includes an additional $2 billion for use in medical research for the National Institutes of Health, and perhaps something that we can even be additionally proud of is, we did that without spending more money. We simply—I shouldn't say ''simply.'' Nothing is easy about it. I am on the Appropriations subcommittee that is responsible for the funding of NIH. We reallocated money that was being spent someplace else in support of medical research. Again, if we find the cure for cancer, if we reduce the onset, the time in which people suffer from Alzheimer's, if we can find the cure for diabetes and other diseases, the lifesaving changes that are being made through that medical research and the costs that will accrue to our healthcare delivery system are hugely important.

I particularly commend the Director of the National Institutes of Health for working so closely with Members of Congress and the American people in support of medical research. Dr. Francis Collins is a national resource. I am not a scientist. I don't understand all the concepts that are spoken about when we talk about medical research—a long shot from that. One of the things Dr. Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, has been able to do is explain to me and to my colleagues and to others across the country the value of medical research without getting me lost in the details of the actual science. He is someone who can talk to a layperson about medical research and science in a way that captures me, captures my attention, but I don't get lost in the medical or technical or scientific words and jargon that so often scientists use in having the conversations.

Dr. Collins has been so bipartisan in his approach. I smiled when I read the story. He indicated that when he was being chosen to be the Director of the National Institutes of Health, he called his mother back home and indicated to her: Mom, I am going to become the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

She said: But we are Republicans. I don't want you working for government.

Here is a man who has used his time not working for government, perhaps working in government, but working for the American people and really for worldwide solutions to problems we all face in our families.

There is no American, there is no one in this Chamber whose family has not been affected by the diseases I described and the other long list of afflictions we have as human beings that NIH is not working to make a difference in their lives.

We need to continue that support for the National Institutes of Health as we pursue appropriations bills into the future, and our ability to do that together is important and a source of satisfaction that can come.

I have indicated, from time to time, that it is sometimes difficult to find the things in the jobs that we have as U.S. Senators where you get the sense of accomplishment. There are a lot of challenges in getting things done, but the idea that we have come together to support medical research and find lifesaving cures gives us something to take great satisfaction in and gives us hope that what we have been able to accomplish in this regard, as Republicans and Democrats but really as Americans, can be a role model as we try to find solutions to other problems. I hope that will be the case as we try to find solutions with regard to how do we care for the American people when it comes to their affordability and availability of healthcare.

You and I, Madam President, come from States that are very rural. In any kind of healthcare solution that we find, we need to make certain we are increasing the chances that hospital doors remain open in rural communities across our States, and we need to make certain there are more physicians, not less, there are more healthcare providers, that nursing home and healthcare services are more available, and that pharmacy remains on Main Street.

In fact, in the cases of our States, you could find ways, I suppose, that reduce the cost of healthcare only to discover that you no longer have a provider, no longer have a hospital or a physician or a pharmacy in your hometown. Sometimes when you talk about the affordability, you must quickly couple that with availability. Whatever its price is, if it is not in your community, if it is not in your county, if it is not in your region of the State, it doesn't necessarily matter what it costs.

Our work is serious, and I look forward to working with you and my colleagues as we try to find solutions to make certain healthcare is something every American has access to.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, just 1 week after a party-line vote in the Judiciary Committee, the Senate is about to vote on the nomination of Judge Amul Thapar to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. It has been more than 16 months since the Senate confirmed a Federal appellate judge and almost 11 months since we voted on a circuit or district nomination. That is because of Leader MCCONNELL's unprecedented obstruction, blocking any votes on President Obama's qualified, consensus nominees, all in an effort to leave as many judicial vacancies as possible for President Trump and the far right special interest groups who are charged with selecting his nominees.

The 7 days Judge Thapar has waited for a vote is quite a contrast with the last circuit judge that Leader MCCONNELL permitted to be confirmed. Judge Felipe Restrepo's nomination languished for 6 months on the Senate floor last Congress before he was finally given a floor vote. Of course, there was no good reason for that. Judge Restrepo had bipartisan support at every step of the process: positive blue slips from his Democratic and Republican home State Senators, a voice vote in the Judiciary Committee, and a bipartisan 82–6 confirmation vote. Likewise, there was no good reason for Leader MCCONNELL to deny votes on other circuit nominees like Donald Schott and Jennifer Puhl. They were reported with strong bipartisan support in the Judiciary Committee and had bipartisan support from their home State Senators, but were left languishing on the Executive Calendar for months, without ever receiving floor consideration. We should not forget the 20 district nominees and the five Court of Federal Claims nominees, who were reported with bipartisan support and then fell victim to Senate Republicans' unprecedented obstruction and were denied a vote after waiting months or even years. Of course, we cannot overlook one of the most shameful inactions of the Senate—the treatment of Chief Judge Merrick Garland, who did not even receive a hearing for his nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.

So why are we now rushing to confirm Judge Thapar? It is only fair to note that the seat to which he has been nominated has been vacant for nearly 4 years. President Obama's nominee to that seat did not receive this expedited process. She did not even receive blue slips from the Kentucky Senators. Now, that is their right. Had I still been chairman, I would have honored that decision—as I did for both circuit and district nominees—however much I might have disagreed with it. We should not pretend that we are required to vote so quickly on Judge Thapar simply because the Republican leadership held this seat vacant.

This is a nomination that requires thorough consideration by the Senate. It is no secret that Judge Thapar is a favorite of the same far right groups that handpicked Justice Gorsuch—in fact, Judge Thapar was on the same shortlist that they gave to President

Trump. Given Judge Thapar's apparent views on campaign finance regulation, it is no surprise that these groups, who are some of the biggest opponents of any efforts to bring transparency to campaign financing, want to see him elevated to a circuit court. His answers during his hearing did not allay my concerns.

I was also troubled by Judge Thapar's responses to my written questions. Like Justice Gorsuch, he dodged a very simple question about whether the First Amendment permits a religious litmus test for entry into the United States, but even that nonanswer was inaccurate. Judge Thapar responded that the constitutionality of a religious litmus test is an active question in pending litigation regarding the president's Executive order targeting Muslim-majority countries, and that he could not comment on it. That is not accurate. There is no question that such a religious litmus test is unconstitutional—even the Trump administration does not argue otherwise. Instead, they are arguing that the Executive order does not impose such a litmus test. Judge Thapar failed to get the facts right, and failed to show me that he understands one of the most fundamental principles of our Constitution. It will be very difficult for me to support any judicial nominee who fails to answer this question with adherence to both the Constitution and the facts.

The role that far right interest groups have played in this nomination and the Gorsuch nomination is troubling. A President is free to consult with whomever he wishes on potential nominees, but the ''advice and consent'' power belongs to the Senate, not the Federalist Society. For decades, Presidents of both parties have consulted with home State Senators, a requirement formalized through the Judiciary Committee's blue slip process. This tradition protects the role of all 100 Senators in the confirmation process and helps ensure that Presidents work with Senators of both parties to find consensus nominees.

During my nearly 20 years as either chairman or ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, I encouraged Republicans and Democrats to work with President Clinton, President Bush, and President Obama to find qualified, consensus nominees, and I protected the rights of Senators in both parties. As Ranking Member FEINSTEIN noted in a memo that was circulated yesterday, no judicial nomination made by the last three Presidents was confirmed without the support of both home State Senators. I cannot recall a nominee being confirmed over the objection of his or her home State Senator. The blue slip is not a partisan issue; it is about constitutional checks and balances and the Senate's role in protecting the independence of our Federal judiciary. I encourage President Trump to follow the example of his predecessors from both parties and work with us to find consensus nominees to ensure that our Federal courts remain the envy of the rest of the world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

OPIOID CRISIS

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I would like to take this time to discuss a critical public health crisis affecting constituents in Illinois and all across the country. Each day, 46 people die from overdose of prescription painkillers in the United States. In Illinois, that number is only growing.

Overdose deaths in Illinois from opioids rose about 275 percent from 2008 to 2014. There are an estimated 460,000 nonmedical prescription opioid users in Illinois alone. A major portion of the total number of drug-poisoning deaths between 2013 and 2015 were a result of opioid and prescription drug abuse. Over 4,000 people died as a result of opioids and prescription drugs, and 2,000 people died due to heroin. Illinois also had the third fastest rising death rates from synthetic opioids in the Nation, with overdoses rising by 120 percent from 2014 to 2015. Unfortunately, Illinois is third from the bottom for treatment of substance abuse because of lack of funding and resources to healthcare providers and law enforcement partners in the State.

These numbers are alarming, but I would like to share a story behind those numbers—a face. Laura Fry is a mother whose family has experienced the worst of the opioid epidemic. Her son, Alexander, is 29 years old and in remission from heroin use disorder.

Alexander was just a normal kid growing up in Wauconda, IL. He had his entire life ahead of him. Then, when he was 17, he had a snowboarding accident and was taken to the emergency room after he lost consciousness. That is when doctors found a mass on his cerebellum and he had to undergo major brain surgery. It was after this surgery that Alexander became addicted to morphine, and his drug abuse began.

When Alexander graduated from high school, he began working at a hospital, where he was able to steal drugs to fuel his abuse. Over time, his drug abuse spiraled out of control. He was fired from his job for stealing narcotics and was arrested for possession of heroin. But because this was his first offense, he was given a very strict 2-year probation. Over the next 4 months, he tested positive for heroin several times, and then he simply disappeared. Laura did not know where her son was or whether he was even alive for 10 months. Finally, he was arrested and taken into custody.

In Lake County, IL, we thankfully have a criminal justice system that recognizes addiction is a disease. The court gave Alexander the opportunity to continue his probation, and he was allowed to perform hundreds of hours of community service and to attend an intensive outpatient program.

In the spring of last year, Laura and her son Alexander appeared in court for the last time. Alexander is now a volunteer for Live4Lali, a substance abuse program in Illinois. He attends community outreach events, shares stories, and offers trainings in naloxone use—a lifesaving drug that reverses opioid overdoses. He has gone from being a user to someone who is transforming lives.

Alexander's story is a reminder that Congress must focus on enhancing recovery efforts, and we are beginning to take steps in the right direction. For example, I was a proud supporter of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, also known as CARA, when I served in the House. CARA, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, establishes, supports, and strengthens a number of programs to fight the opioid crisis in communities. It provides opportunities for rehabilitation, like the outpatient program Alexander attended, and expands access to drugs like naloxone, which are saving lives on the frontlines of this epidemic.

I applaud these efforts, but I have serious concerns about the majority's commitment to actually funding these essential programs to rehabilitate our fellow Americans who are suffering from opioid addiction because, while we can all agree that CARA's intent was to transform our opioid crisis, the bill failed to provide any actual funds to enact these effective programs.

I, along with many of my colleagues, have asked for CARA to be fully funded and to provide additional funding to the drug courts and veteran treatment courts, which essentially reduced crime, saved taxpayer dollars, and saved the lives of more than 1.25 million civilians and veterans. In addition, we must also make sure families have access to medicine that can save lives during an overdose by calling on manufacturers to offer naloxone to rein in the costs.

I share this story because the turmoil that the Fry family faced is not unique. Millions of Americans are experiencing the impact of opioid abuse, and many of these American stories have much more tragic endings. We can and must do more for these families.

I ask that we take the time, consider the story of Alexander and his family, and step up and do the right thing. Let's fund CARA fully.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, let me thank my colleague, Senator MANCHIN, for arranging the time to talk about the ongoing opioid epidemic across the country. I know his home State of West Virginia—much like my home State of Rhode Island—has been hit particularly hard by this epidemic.

This is not happening in some far off place or some distant country. It is happening in Rhode Island, West Virginia, and, indeed, every State throughout the Nation. Last year, over 330 Rhode Islanders lost their lives due to opioids.

Rhode Island is a small State, so let me talk about a national statistic that shows the extent of this crisis. Last year, drug overdoses killed 50,000 Americans. That means more people died last year because of drug overdoses than due to car crashes or gun violence. These numbers are staggering, and it is happening in all of our communities.

Since 2011, the number of overdose deaths has increased by more than 90 percent. Unfortunately, year after year, Rhode Island continues to top the Nation in terms of rates of overdose deaths. We must work to turn this around and get more people access to treatment for opioid addiction.

In 2008, almost a decade ago, Congress enacted the landmark Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Law. For the first time, the law required insurance companies to cover behavioral health services in the same way that it would cover physical health services. This was a critical step, but it ultimately did not solve the problem, as some insurance companies have continued to find ways to avoid complying with the law—or at least its spirit.

It took passage of the Affordable Care Act to improve access to behavioral health services. For the first time, critical consumer protections, like banning discrimination based on preexisting conditions, ensured that individuals with substance abuse disorders could not be denied coverage.

Further, the ACA established a set of essential health benefits that all insurance plans must cover, including mental health and substance abuse treatment. Gone are the days when consumers would pay steep prices for health insurance that in actuality did not even cover basic health services, such as mental health care or maternity care.

In addition, the ACA prohibits lifetime annual limits on care. Before the ACA, many people with chronic health conditions, such as substance use disorders, would hit their annual cap just a couple of months into the year and then would have to pay all other costs out of pocket for the rest of the year.

Lastly, the expansion of Medicaid has made a tremendous improvement in access to behavioral health services. In States like Rhode Island that have expanded Medicaid, we have seen a sharp drop in the percentage of people with substance use disorders who seek care in the emergency department because they are uninsured. Medicaid is the single largest payer of substance use disorder services and pays for one-third of all medication-assisted treatment in the country.

TrumpCare would reverse all these gains. According to the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities, repeal of the ACA would mean 2.8 million people with substance use disorders would be at risk of losing their coverage. Repeal of the Medicaid expansion would cut $4.5 billion from mental health and substance use disorders for those with low incomes, to say nothing of TrumpCare's broader goal of ending Medicaid as we know it. TrumpCare would all but eliminate this critical safety net.

TrumpCare goes even further to turn back the clock on consumer protections like preexisting conditions. People with substance use disorders would be disadvantaged immediately, as their disorder could be considered a preexisting condition. This has the double effect of pricing people with mental and behavioral health issues out of the market entirely and encouraging people not to seek care out of fear of being labeled by their insurance company as having a preexisting condition.

On top of that, TrumpCare would gut the essential health benefits in the ACA. This means that there would be no rules about what health insurance must cover, such as preventive health services and mental and behavioral health services. Even with coverage, people will have to pay out of pocket for the services they need. For substance use disorders, which could add up to $20,000 a year in out-of-pocket costs alone.

Over the last couple of years, I have worked with my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to include historic funding increases for programs that help the opioid crisis. In fact, the fiscal year 2017 omnibus provided $511 million for prevention, enforcement, treatment, and recovery across various agencies, including over $300 million for the Department of Health and Human Services, $50 million for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and over $160 million for the Department of Justice. Last year, we passed the 21st Century Cures Act, which directed $1 billion to States to combat the opioid crisis. We must continue these efforts.

However, this week, the President released his budget proposal for next year, and it does the exact opposite. First of all, the President's budget doubles down on his plan to decimate Medicaid. The President has proposed cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicaid, block-granting the program with no protections for the most vulnerable. In fact, his budget offers no details on how it plans to structure Medicaid—just that he intends to cut the program beyond repair.

On top of that, the President's budget makes enormous cuts to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, SAMHSA, which implements many of our most effective substance use disorder prevention and treatment programs, such as the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Program, which President Trump has proposed cutting by over 20 percent.

Further, President Trump has proposed cutting the National Institutes of Health by nearly $6 billion, which would interrupt critical research into new and better ways to treat substance use disorders, along with research into how we can better treat pain without the use of addicting opioid painkillers. Coupled with TrumpCare, this budget proposal would only worsen the opioid crisis.

I am committed to continuing to work with my colleagues to prevent that from happening. I am heartened to see so many of my colleagues talk about these very issues this afternoon.

It is my hope that we will be able to work together over the coming months to ensure that the gains we have made in the fiscal year 2017 omnibus and the Cures Act are not lost. We have much more work to do, and people in my State and across the country are counting on us to do that for them.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, we have a lot of issues we are working on right now. Some of the big ones include the budget conversation. For the first time in a long time, the budget conversation really circles around, how are we going to get back to balance? It is an interesting dialogue. There is going to be a lot of dispute about elements of the President's budget. There will be a lot of controversy back and forth about aspects in the House and the Senate proposals. But for the first time in a long time, the beginning point of the conversation is, how do we get back to balance? That is a good place to start. I am pleased to see that is a part of the conversation again.

There are a tremendous number of things that have to be dealt with in this process. I want to bring up two quick ones and then talk about some of the small business issues we are facing.

One of them is that when we go through the budget process, I encourage my colleagues to deal with the budget gimmicks that are still in place in the budget process—areas that seem to bring down the deficit but we all know actually do not. Those don't help us as Americans. That may help with some sort of scoring issues; that doesn't really help where we are.

The second aspect to that is, let's actually put the appropriations bills on the floor. For the last several years, there have been continuing resolutions or omnibuses without any amendment process brought. We should be able to, in a bipartisan way, agree to bring these appropriations bills to the floor, actually have an amendment process, and actually deal with this in a public setting. There are straightforward ways to deal with our debt and deficit.

It begins with actually confronting debt and deficit in a way that will really matter.

It is interesting as well that when we talk about a lot of the big issues, regulations often come up as one of the prime problems. Regulations are often big, expensive, and deal with a lot of controversy.

Quite frankly, there are thousands of regulations out there that impact small businesses. For a small business, it is not typically just one regulation, it is the hundreds of little ones that they are constantly trying to live under. It is the culmination of all of these different regulations and trying to figure out where they are. Most small businesses don't have lawyers. They don't have compliance people. They don't have folks lined up to monitor all of these things. They have to try to figure it out as they go. They are small businesses. They are family-owned businesses. They are trying to take care of their own families and the neighbors around them. But all of these regulations come at them as well.

Let me read what Karen Karrigan, the president and CEO of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, wrote in an op-ed just last week. She wrote:

> Red tape is strangling our small businesses and undermining entrepreneurship. Indeed, according to [Small Business and Entrepreneurship] Council research, the cumulative loss of new businesses over the last decade totals 3.42 million missing businesses—

Not workers—

> for America's economy. For existing small businesses, the per-employee cost of regulation is just over $11,000. Excessive regulation in the U.S. has hurt our competitiveness in the global economy. The U.S. ranks No. 51 in the world for ease of starting a business, according to the World Bank. This same report is consistent with other global studies that have found American's friendliness and general ''ease of doing business'' has eroded year after year.

That is according to Karen Karrigan, president and CEO of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, in her op-ed last week.

Each new regulation on small business adds another cost, another burden, another requirement that small businesses have to comply with. This cumulative burden is crushing small business.

Let me give some examples. Julian Lumber Company is in Antlers, OK. You ought to come and see Antlers, OK. It is a beautiful area of our State. Julian Lumber Company, a family-owned business, makes wooden fence posts, treated poles. If you have a telephone pole in that area or other posts and poles, it often came from Julian Lumber Company. It also has a small trucking company to be able to haul posts to retail stores across the Midwest and the Southwest. Julian employs about 50 people but recently had to shift a part-time employee who was doing compliance to full-time—doing nothing but compliance 40 hours a week because of all the Federal regulations. When Robert Julian funded this business in 1974, he didn't set out to just create jobs for a compliance officer, he actually set out to do lumber work, but unfortunately, now his business also includes Federal compliance.

Small businesses are vital to our economy. Surely we can agree on that. They drive job creation and innovation. Excessive and poorly crafted government regulations disproportionately—the burden of them—fall on small businesses and on their growth. If Julian Lumber has to hire more people to just do compliance, not lumber, there is a problem.

Then there is Ander's Shoe Store in Miami, OK, which was founded in 1930 by Joe Ander after he immigrated to Oklahoma from Poland. Today, Ander's Shoe Store is owned and operated by Joe's daughter, Dena Ander, who is 102 years old. She has worked at Ander's Shoe Store for 86 years.

My favorite quote ever from a small business owner came from her when she said, at 101, that her health is better than her help, and so she just keeps working.

Dena Anders is not waking up every day and reading the Federal Register to find out what new Federal regulation came down. She is not trying to track through all the different compliance officers and attorneys that she would have to contact to try to figure out how to read a new Federal regulation that comes down. She is taking care of a shoe store in Miami, OK. She has two employees, but her shoe store has to live by the same regulations that a lot of large stores also have to live by.

Every Member of this body—when they are home, they talk about small businesses and the importance of small businesses and how to help them succeed. I am asking, are we as a body willing to do what we said we were going to do back home? Ninety-seven percent of the businesses in my State of Oklahoma are small businesses. Lots of us make promises to these small businesses. It is time to fulfill them.

Regulatory reform for even small businesses, for whatever reason, is becoming politicized. This is not a political, Republican-Democrat issue. Small business owners are not Republicans or Democrats; they are Americans. They are people, and this should not be a partisan issue. I would be willing to work with every Senator of any party to be able to get this done.

I have introduced the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act. It has passed its way through committee. It is S. 584. It does some simple things—things that should not be controversial.

It closes loopholes in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, which became law in 1980. That bill was designed to help small businesses, but there are some loopholes in it, and the agencies are going around it.

This is not a bill that I just came up with on my own; it is a bill that had been drafted in direct response to small businesses and small business leaders around the country. It has been discussed for a long time, but for whatever reason, it has never been passed. I want to run through a few things that it does.

First, the agencies should account for the economic impact of regulations, especially on small business, and it should be the full economic impact. Agencies have this little caveat that they will do. They will say: Well, it is not a direct cost, it is an indirect cost on business. So they will put a new regulation on them and say: We are only going to count direct costs of the regulations, but we are not going to count anything indirect, such as electricity.

If they put a Federal regulation down and a State entity is then required to create new regulations based on it, they won't count the State regulations based on it.

If permitting from a different agency is required, they will say: Well, that is somebody else who does that.

Well, if you are a small business, cost is cost is cost. The Federal Government plays this game of what is a direct and indirect cost to a business. A small business does not get to play that game, and they have to pay the bills for it.

So it is a very simple thing for us to say: Include the costs. We try to get some clear language on it. An agency would have to consider ''reasonably foreseeable impacts.'' So I get that you are not going to get every pencil in the process, but what is reasonably foreseeable, you should be able to anticipate that.

Second, we require the IRS to actually listen to small businesses before they release IRS rules. So many hours are spent by every small business complying with IRS regulations and requirements. We would like to have the IRS actually engage with small businesses when they put out policy and guidance and say: How is this going to affect small businesses? How can they work this out to make sure it is as easy as possible for small business owners?

Third, increase the transparency in the rulemaking process. Small businesses tell me that when they learn of new regulatory requirements, they are often blindsided. They had no idea the rule was even coming. In the rare instance when a small business owner speaks out to an agency, they are often confused when they see the final rule because it doesn't look at all like what they had recommended or had raised.

Years ago, there was something created called SBRFIA panels. Only Washington, DC, comes up with a term like that. Small businesses were supposed to be able to engage with the Federal Government on designing how regulations would come out. But, again, the loopholes were so present in the law that the agencies were just going around them. We need to close that.

As simple as it sounds, when an agency is creating a rule, don't you think

they should call small businesses and say: How will this work at your place, or will it work at all?

Fourth, let's deal with old rules. There are lots of regulations out there that are old, that become very complicated for small businesses to be able to maintain, and no one has ever gone back to look at them. Let's create a simple system so that when a rule comes out, it has to be reviewed within 10 years. That way, we have no rule that is 40, 50 years old, and no one has even touched it or looked at it to make sure that it still works, No. 1, and that it is not overcomplicating the process.

Finally, and here is something pretty straightforward, give first-time forgiveness for paperwork violations. When small businesses have a paperwork violation, they have a paperwork violation. They are not trying to break the law. They are not trying to violate regulations. They missed one. Why don't we give first-time grace to small businesses? Now, I wouldn't say that if they are violating health and safety issues. Obviously those are things they should have already taken care of. But just paperwork things—we have so many small businesses that get a fine because they missed a piece of paperwork. Again, so many small businesses don't have compliance people tracking this stuff for them all the time, and occasionally they make a mistake. This is still a government that works for them. They don't work for the government.

My simple recommendation is this: For small businesses, give them first-time paperwork forgiveness rather than a Federal compliance person showing up at their place with a fine. Let's be reasonable about this. That should be a simple, straightforward thing.

Quite frankly, these are all things small business owners have asked for. These were things even in the Obama administration. The chief counsel for the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy—this is what the Obama administration's small business advocate wanted. I don't understand how this could be a partisan issue. It is simple, straightforward, and clean. There is no hidden anything in the bill. It is trying to actually get regulatory relief and common sense back into the way we do regulations.

Over 200 trade associations representing millions of small businesses have already written me in support of this bill from all over the country—not from Oklahoma, from all over the country.

Many in this Chamber pride themselves on being the advocate for the little guy and standing up for small businesses. I would ask my colleagues if they are ready to actually put feet to those words. This is a straightforward way to do it. We talk about helping small businesses; let's actually do it. I ask my colleagues to be able to walk alongside of us and help us get this bill passed and get some regulatory relief.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

OPIOID CRISIS

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise to speak with a lot of my colleagues coming down speaking on the opiate crisis we have in all of our States.

West Virginia has been hit the hardest in the Nation right now, and I want to speak to this because it is something we must address. This has been a silent killer for far too long.

I don't know a person who I have ever met who doesn't know somebody in their immediate family, extended family, or close friends who has not been affected by either prescription drug abuse or illicit drug use. With that, here we are.

I rise with my colleagues who have been coming down—they will be coming the rest of the day—to bring attention to this national crisis that is devastating every community. Many of the Senators you are going to hear from—and have already heard from—are from States that are dealing with an increase in this opiate abuse, just like my State of West Virginia. Just like I have, they have heard from families, community leaders who are on the front lines. They are begging for solutions, funding, and they need facilities to properly combat the scourge we have right now.

Let me say to everybody who is watching, everybody who is listening in any way, shape, or form that you are hearing this: 20 years, 30 years ago, I was as guilty as everybody in the public policy arena in government, in my State government in West Virginia. If you fooled with drugs back then, we thought, well, we will put you in prison; you committed a crime. Well, guess what. We have been putting them away for 20, 30 years, and we never cured a single soul.

Finally, we have come to the realization that addiction is an illness. Any other illness gets treatment. So we need treatment, but we don't have treatment centers. Budgets are tight.

I have a cousin who is a judge. Every day he says: JOE, I sentence people for the crimes they commit every day. He says: I have never had the first person say: Hey, Judge, we don't have a prison cell or a jail cell to put this person in. But if it happens once a day, it will happen 5 or 10 times a day, if I believe someone needs to get treatment because of their addiction, they will say: Well, Judge, I am sorry. We have no place to put them. We have no treatment centers. We will find a jail cell for you, but we will not find a treatment center because we don't have them.

The States don't have the money. Counties don't have the money. Municipalities don't have the money. The Federal Government has never dedicated enough money for this. So we keep talking about everything that happens.

Last year, over 800 West Virginians died of prescription drug abuse. They died of abuse from prescription drugs, and everyone says: Well, how do people get started? I don't know. Most of them have done heavy work in West Virginia. We do mining and manufacturing. That is heavy work, and sometimes they get hurt.

I am going to read a letter later—I do every week try to come down to put real families, real faces, for you all to understand that this is a real issue.

When I have said this is a silent killer, we never talk about it. If you have somebody addicted in your family, you are kind of ashamed of it. You don't want anybody to know because they think that something is wrong with your family if someone has an addiction. They try to take care of themselves and they can't and that person doesn't get the help they need.

So when you look back at the use and the lack of a treatment, let me just tell you about the epidemic we are dealing with. Any other epidemic of this sort—and knowing it is an illness, it can be called a pandemic. Remember the Ebola concerns we had. All of the different things we were concerned about that could turn into a pandemic, we acted immediately. Well, we haven't acted immediately on this. We have had over 200,000 West Virginians die since the turn of the century. That is unbelievable, and to not do anything about it and keep our mouths shut, we have done that for far too long.

Today, 2.1 million Americans abuse or depend on their opiates. According to the CDC, Centers for Disease Control, three out of four new heroin users abuse prescription opiates before moving to heroin. I am told they move to heroin because it is cheaper, but they have already been hooked and addicted. Most of them got hooked and addicted on legal prescription drugs. That means there was some doctor who said: Here is something that is really going to help you, and they write that prescription. They think everything in a bottle is going to heal you.

In the United States of America, less than 5 percent of the world population—7.2 billion people live on planet Earth, less than 330 million in this country—4.6 percent of the world population consumes 80 percent of all the opiates produced and consumed in the world. What in the world happened to us? How did we become so pain-intolerant? How did we become so addicted?

Between 2009 and 2013, only 22 percent of Americans suffering from opiate addiction participated in any form of addiction treatment, and more and more people go without treatment every day.

Misuse and abuse of opiates cost the country an estimated $78.5 billion in 2013 just in lost productivity. So for those people who don't have compassion, don't think we should be doing these things, and you only look at the bottom line, if you are going to the bottom line, look at this bottom line: $78 billion of lost productivity, medical costs, and criminal costs.

Talk to any of your law enforcement in any community you live in and ask them: Of all the calls you have gone on, how many have you gone on that are drug-related? A minimum of 80 to 90 percent of everything that they are called in, any type of assistance, any type of a crime that is committed, it is because of drugs. Some form of drugs are involved for our police. So think about what they are doing and how it takes them away from protecting the law-abiding citizens.

I have a bill called—and we will talk about treatment—it is LifeBOAT. I am still waiting for some of my friends and fellow colleagues on the Republican side to look at this bill very seriously. All I am asking for is one penny to charge the pharmaceutical manufacturers—one penny per milligram—that will go toward treatment centers throughout America, and every State needs them.

That one penny, they said: That is a new tax. We can't vote for a new tax. I said: Wait a minute. This opiate arena is pretty profitable, and we are not going to charge people whom opiates were designed for, which are people with severe illnesses, cancer patients. Basically, this is just for opiates, no other pharmaceutical products, just opiates. That is $1.5 to $2 billion a year. Can you believe that? That one penny.

Now, when they tell me, I am not going to vote for any new tax. I say: Well, you didn't hesitate to vote for a tobacco tax. You didn't hesitate to vote for an alcohol tax.

We have more people dying of this than anything else, and I am asking for a treatment plan. I can't get one penny, not one penny.

So I am asking for everyone to consider it. I truly believe no one would lose their election over voting to fund treatment centers for people who are desperately in need. That is the LifeBOAT Act.

I want to read you a letter, and I do this every week. It is just heartbreaking, these letters, but it shows real people's lives, and it shows what it has done to their lives.

This letter is from Shadd Baisden. He writes:

My name is Shadd Baisden, and I am from Dingess, WV. I am writing to tell you my story of opioid addiction. I am an out-of-work coal miner with 9 years' experience. I was injured in the mine in 2011. I was dragged down a belt line 200 feet and messed the disks in my back, the L5, S1 in my back. This was how my addiction got started.

I was prescribed painkillers and needed surgery but felt I was too young for that. I was out of work for a year when I decided to settle my compensation claim so I could return back to work. While I was injured, the mine I worked in shut down so I had no job to go back to. I had been on painkillers the whole time I was out of work, but I stopped being prescribed after my settlement.

So when he made his settlement, basically that went away, his healthcare on that. So he had no other way of getting prescribed medicine.

He continues:

I was buying them off the street just to ease my pain. In 2013, I started using oxycodone and could not stop. I even got my wife hooked on them.

I have three daughters—11, 10, and 3 years of age. My youngest wasn't born at the time. Our addiction became so bad that we would steal things from our family just to get the drugs. I lost my license to drive. I lost my two oldest daughters because of my addiction. That is when I knew I had to have serious help.

I sought counseling and treatment. I took parenting classes, and my wife and I worked our tails off to get our girls back. We have now been clean and sober for 3 years and have custody back of all three of our girls.

I am currently out of work but do lots of odd jobs in my area because I can't afford to get my license back, and the vehicle I own was vandalized 3 months ago because I gave an officer info on a dealer not far from my home, and somehow the dealer found out and beat the windows out of my car while I was working.

I thank God every day for helping me and my wife stay clean.

I thank you for everything you do for the people of West Virginia and hope my story helps someone. I may be out of work right now, but good things will come as long as we stay clean and positive.

Now, the conclusion of this is Shadd and his wife are perfect examples of the people we can help if we made it easier for people dealing with substance abuse to get treatment. Shadd and his wife are the people I am fighting for every day. I will continue to fight for the people and families and children who have lost their way and need our help, and I am not going to stop fighting until they get it.

Every one of you all probably have a story. Every one of our young people—our pages and everybody else, everyone in the audience, whoever it may be, younger people—have probably been approached to try something, have probably been approached in their own schools to try something: Well, this is no problem. It is the hip thing to do in school.

They have recreational marijuana. A lot of people tell me they get started by experimenting, and then it moves into different things.

I don't know what it is. We don't know what our body chemistry is made up of. We don't know why some people are addicted and some people don't get addicted, but we know opiates are extremely addictive. We know that. It affects you. The only thing I can tell you is, it is something we are going to continue to fight. We are going to make people aware. We are starting education classes.

The United States of America should start educating in every class from preschool, kindergarten—you are not too young to know what this can do to you—all the way up through adulthood. We have to prevent people from getting on these horrific drugs that are killing people. Then we have to treat the people who are addicted and get them back into the workforce.

I ask all of you—and the concern we have, and I know in your beautiful State you have the same challenges we do. We all do. We are willing to fight together. This is a bipartisan effort. This is not one side and the other side taking credit or one side blaming the other side. This is one that we have to rise up as Americans—forget about Democrats and Republicans—and fight this. The U.S. Congress is responsible for fighting it and helping the people all over our country.

I yield the floor to my good friend from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from West Virginia who is fighting hard on a lot of different fronts to meet the challenge of this opioid and drug abuse epidemic that is sweeping across the country, and it is really hitting us in the rural areas in West Virginia. I always say our State is just one big small town, and both Senator MANCHIN and I have personal experience with families who have been deeply affected by this. It is destroying families, lives, and futures.

Chances are we all know someone, as I said, who has been affected, but we have been especially hard-hit in the State of West Virginia, and we have seen more than our fair share of devastating consequences: babies born exposed to drugs, families torn apart, children ripped from their parents because of their parents' habits and lifestyle, grandparents raising children when they had no real intention or didn't know that is what was going to happen.

We have the unfortunate distinction as a State of leading the Nation in drug overdose deaths per capita. Ninety-one Americans die each day because of this crisis, and far too many of them are our neighbors, our coworkers, our friends, and our children. No community is immune. That is why this all-hands-on-deck, community-oriented, coordinated, community-focused effort must move forward.

Fortunately, many individuals and organizations—and I get to meet with them regularly. It is inspiring to hear how people in the community are pulling together. They are already working hard educating—as Senator MANCHIN said, you can't start too early educating—treating, and rehabilitating people who are struggling with abuse within their families, helping them and those who are at risk of becoming addicted. From healthcare to law enforcement, we are working to tackle this crisis from all angles.

Drug courts play an important role in that fight. In order to get at the root

of the problem, we must have more recovery and treatment services, and incarceration is not always the right answer. Sometimes treatment, not the criminal justice system, is the answer.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting an incredible young woman—inspirational, really—who knows all of this very well. Her name is Chelsea Carter, and she is from Logan, WV. When she met me yesterday, she said: We met. We met 10 years ago.

I said: Really? Where did we meet?

She said: I did your nails at Spa Bliss.

I said: Oh, well, thank you for that.

But along that journey, Chelsea has had a rough, rough go. At one point, Chelsea was charged with 17 felonies due to her drug habit. She told me her drug habit began when she was 12 years old. She said she was able to continue life through high school. It appeared as though she had a normal life. She was a cheerleader, participated in school, and all the time she was getting deeper and crawling deeper into a drug-addicted hole.

After she faced the criminal justice system, she became committed to getting off drugs and getting clean the very first night she spent in jail, and she has been clean ever since. She went through the drug court system, and, basically, it has saved her life. But that is not the end of the story for Chelsea. She has a bright future ahead of her, and she has moved forward.

She was in town for the annual conference of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. She has committed her life to helping people like her who have had this situation and who have been at the bottom of the pit of hopelessness, bad health, and bad decisionmaking. She is committed to helping her fellow West Virginians crawl out of that pit, like she did, and become productive individuals. This is the world's largest conference on treatment courts and criminal justice reform.

Back home in Logan, Chelsea is the program director at Appalachian Health Services. She just got her master's degree. One of the things that struck me is that, even in a management position, she continues to counsel and treat a full load of patients, and she told me she will always do so.

Chelsea's story is an example of the progress that can be made by fully committing to fighting the drug epidemic. There are victories and programs that work. Drug court is not the only one, but it is one in the spectrum of solutions.

I am committed to the fight and to working with all of our colleagues who are speaking out today. I know many of us are committed to this. It doesn't leave a family or community untouched. I am really inspired by West Virginians like Chelsea Carter who are on the frontlines.

With that, I yield for my colleague from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank my friend from West Virginia.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

While I have an opportunity to take the floor, I want to change the subject, if I may. I want to talk about the concern I have of one of the President's priorities in the 2018 fiscal year budget. That priority is Yucca Mountain.

Specifically, the President included $120 million in his budget for the Department of Energy to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository.

As a proponent and author of the legislation called No Budget, No Pay Act, which would restore regular order to the budget and appropriations process, I am pleased to see the President did submit to Congress a detailed budget proposal.

As a small government, fiscal conservative, I hoped that this new administration would focus on budget priorities that would reduce duplicative spending and streamline programs in order to save taxpayer dollars. You can imagine my disappointment that they, instead, decided to prioritize funding to restart licensing activities for a failed proposal.

Over the past few weeks, I have outlined on the Senate floor some of the issues with Yucca Mountain, whether it is the crippling effect it would have on Nevada's economy or the public safety issues associated with transportation of this nuclear waste. I will continue to come to the floor to educate my colleagues on the many issues associated with Yucca Mountain, because, plain and simple, it is not a viable option for the long-term storage of our Nation's nuclear waste. Instead of throwing more taxpayer dollars into a failed proposal, we should be working on a real long-term solution rooted in consent-based siting.

You have heard me raise the question that many Nevadans be thinking: Why should a State with no nuclear powerplants of its own be forced, against its will, to house all of the Nation's nuclear waste?

I stand by the Department of Energy's 2010 decision to terminate the Yucca Mountain program, and I stand by its 2015 recommendation for a consent-based siting.

Yucca Mountain is dead. Let me take you through what it would take to put this failed program back on life support. Prior to the suspension of the program in 2010, the Federal Government had spent close to $15 billion on Yucca Mountain.

Now, I recognize that some of my colleagues might say: Well, the government has already spent this much on the government repository; shouldn't we complete it?

First of all, let me say that restarting the program would need $2 billion more just to complete the licensing process—$1.66 billion for the Department of Energy and $330 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

After 3 to 5 years spent on licensing, there could well be another 5 years in legal challenges, and there is no certainty that Yucca Mountain would ever be built.

Second, even if Yucca Mountain were to go forward, it would be an expensive repository project. The Department of Energy's best estimate is that another $82 billion—let me repeat that; another $82 billion—would be needed to license, litigate, build, operate, decommission, and eventually close Yucca Mountain. On top of the money that has already been spent, that adds up to more than $96 billion for what is called the total system life cycle cost.

That leads to my third point. We need to reevaluate the whole nuclear waste cost question. There is a business case to be made against Yucca Mountain. The Department of Energy's own estimates for Yucca Mountain say that the nuclear waste fund will only pay about 80 percent of the total life cycle costs, or about $77 billion. The remaining $19 billion would have to come from an annual appropriations voted by this Congress. That means more money for this project paid by taxpayers.

But it does not have to be that way. In 2012, the Department of Energy did its own cost assessment and concluded that all other costs, like transportation, being equal, walking away from Yucca Mountain and starting with a new repository site in a deep salt bed or deep shale formation would actually save between $12 billion and $27 billion over the life of the repository.

Before we spend any more taxpayer dollars on Yucca Mountain, we need to ask the Department of Energy experts to come before us and explain what they learned about repository costs in their previous studies. Beyond that, we need new cost studies on geologic disposal in repositories, studies that include the lessons learned from recent progress with repositories in Europe, and new studies that look at the nuclear waste program overall and incorporate the cost of safe on-site reactors, early removal of spent fuel from shutdown reactors, and consolidated interim storage facilities, as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

It is clear that rather than forcing the State of Nevada to accept nuclear waste at a scientifically unsound site, taxpayer dollars would be better spent identifying viable alternatives for the long-term storage of nuclear waste in areas that are willing to house it. Finding alternatives is the commonsense path forward, as well as the fiscally responsible decision.

I urge my colleagues, as we continue the budget appropriations process for this next fiscal year, to conduct oversight over the life-cycle costs of repositories and to focus on further implementing the Department of Energy's consent-based siting process, instead of wasting more taxpayer dollars on a failed proposal.

I stand ready to partner with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on this issue, and I am confident that together we can find a solution to this problem once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion on the Elwood nomination be withdrawn, and that following leader remarks on Tuesday, June 6, the Senate resume consideration of the nomination, with the time equally divided until 2:15 p.m. I further ask that at 2:15 p.m., on June 6, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Elwood 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I yield back all remaining time.

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

All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thapar nomination?

Mr. SASSE. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 137 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Cornyn	Graham
Barrasso	Cotton	Grassley
Blunt	Crapo	Hatch
Boozman	Cruz	Heller
Burr	Daines	Hoeven
Capito	Enzi	Inhofe
Cassidy	Ernst	Isakson
Cochran	Fischer	Johnson
Collins	Flake	Kennedy
Corker	Gardner	Lankford
Lee	Risch	Sullivan
McCain	Roberts	Thune
McConnell	Rounds	Tillis
Moran	Rubio	Toomey
Murkowski	Sasse	Wicker
Paul	Scott	Young
Perdue	Shelby	
Portman	Strange	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wyden
Franken	Murphy	

NOT VOTING—4

Cantwell	Schatz
Hirono	Udall

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Iowa.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, May is National Foster Care Month. I thank my colleagues for unanimously supporting the resolution recognizing May as National Foster Care Month.

National Foster Care Month has been recognized for over 20 years as a time we all celebrate the voices of foster youth and bring awareness to the challenges these young people face. During this month, organizations in Iowa—and, for that matter, all across the country—have been working to support and to recognize the young people who are in foster care.

Nationally, there are over 425,000 children in foster care. In Iowa alone, almost 4,000 kids entered foster care in 2015, the last year for statistics. I salute all of those who work tirelessly to support these children. This includes a lot of different groups but particularly foster parents, who open their hearts and homes to children who need this vital support. The group also includes social workers, advocates, and alumni of the foster care system who, as young people, have gone through a lot. They are there to inform lawmakers and the public, and they are there to fight to secure better outcomes for kids in care.

As stated in our resolution, Congress must continue to work toward real solutions for these children, who often face trauma, abuse, and neglect, both before and after they are removed from their parents' care. We must work to ensure that all children, no matter their circumstances, have a permanent, loving home and consistent, caring adults in their lives.

With legislation such as the Fostering Connections Act, passed in 2008, and the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, passed in 2011, we have made some progress. These laws provided new investments and new services to improve the outcomes for children in the foster care system.

Even after all that, our work is not done. Over 20,000 young people aged out of the foster care system in 2015, with no legal permanent connection to any family. This impacts their ability to pursue higher education, to find employment and stable housing, and, most importantly, to prepare for the future.

While in care, children experience an average of three different placements; 65 percent of the kids in foster care change schools seven or more times. We see a great amount of instability and resulting insecurity when this is what happens in the life of somebody in foster care. This constant uncertainty compounds the trauma of neglect and of abuse and makes it hard for these kids to make connections to their communities.

Through my work in the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to hear firsthand what these young people in foster care need. They need love, they need support, they need safety and permanency, and they need a family. Those last two are the first words I ever heard from kids in foster care when I first took time 25 years ago to listen to some of them. They had been shunted from one home to another home over a period of time. They said: We would like to have a mom and dad; we would like to have a home. That is what this movement is all about.

Moving forward, Congress must continue to work to find better solutions and secure better outcomes for our young people in foster care.

Once again, I thank all of my colleagues for supporting this resolution. It is important that this month—and, for that matter, all year long—we continue to support the goals of National Foster Care Month.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I wish to address the issue of the healthcare debate that has been going on since the first of the year. Now that it has passed the House of Representatives, it comes to the Senate. The Senate is working on its own bill, not working from the House bill. This is still evolving, and I hope it will evolve very, very quickly.

One of the things we face is to make sure we have accessible, affordable care for anyone who wants to buy health insurance.

I rise today, as I have in the past, to share real stories from real Iowans who have been harmed—not helped—by the Affordable Care Act. I know there are plenty of examples we can give of people who have not benefited from the Affordable Care Act. As we have found so many times, the Affordable Care Act has become the un-Affordable Care Act. The other side often talks about the benefits of ACA without mentioning the reality I am trying to bring to this debate.

There is a reason Republicans are acting to protect Americans from the loss of access to medical care. ObamaCare has broken its promises. All these promises, made over and over again, have not stood the test of time, so I would like to remind everyone of some of these promises.

The promise: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

The reality: This promise was even scrubbed from the ObamaCare website after everyone knew it was a farce.

The promise: You will be able to keep your insurance plan.

What is the reality? In the fall of 2013, between 7 and 12 million people had health insurance cancelled. ObamaCare's mandates resulted in fewer choices for people to buy affordable insurance. People were kicked off plans they liked and plans that, until ObamaCare, they could afford. This promise was dubbed the ''Lie of the Year.''

Another promise was made: Your premiums will go down by $2,500.

That is not even close. I have been quoting for a long period of time that they had gone up at least $3,500. Now, more recently, I have seen a figure of an average of $4,300. So, in reality, that $2,500 promise that premiums would go down wasn't even close.

In Iowa, premiums increased up to 43 percent in just 1 year. One farmer told me that his insurance went up from $20,000 to $32,000 in 1 year. He was able to get the premium down to $25,000 by taking advantage of an HMO, but the deductible for that plan was $15,000. You have an insurance policy, but you may never use it.

The biggest promise: You were promised access to affordable health care. The law is called the Affordable Care Act. That is the most concerning of all—the situation created by ObamaCare is far from affordable.

What is the reality? Premiums in 2017 have doubled for a majority of States using ObamaCare exchanges. In three States, premiums have tripled during ObamaCare. One Iowan from Pomeroy, IA, wrote to me and said she shopped for an ObamaCare plan and found that she would have to pay $9,000 out-of-pocket before her insurance kicks in. She told me she doesn't know where that money would come from, and of course that makes that policy too expensive to use.

For the past 7 years, ObamaCare has not been working, and it will never work for the American people. Republicans are not going to accept failure. That is why we are working so hard to put together what we have promised the people of this country for the last 7 years—to repeal and replace. Pointing out the shortcomings of affordable care, we aim for better, and that is what guides us as we continue to work on repealing and replacing this failed law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

ARCTIC COUNCIL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I often come to the floor of the U.S. Senate to discuss issues of the Arctic. Since the United States is an Arctic nation, it seems that it is only appropriate to give updates when there have been items and events that are noteworthy in this space.

Several weeks ago, we hosted in Alaska the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, an event duly of note and an event upon which I would like to spend a few moments this afternoon updating colleagues on all that took place at this ministerial and provide a little bit of a recap of the role of the United States as chairman of the Arctic Council for these past 2 years.

This opportunity today to congratulate those in the State Department, the people of Fairbanks, AK, and the Alaska Arctic Council Host Committee for a successful Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks is certainly timely.

I have also come to review the accomplishments and the challenges of the Arctic Council during the recent chairmanship by the United States and I think also to look ahead at what I hope and expect will be our Nation's continued leadership in the Arctic.

As I mentioned, for the past 2 years now, the United States has been chair of the Arctic Council. This is an international forum for the eight Arctic nations. That includes the United States, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. It also includes six permanent participant organizations that represent the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, as well as dozens of interested observer nations and international organizations.

I think it is important to recognize that while you would understand and assume that the Arctic nations are clearly interested in happenings in the Arctic, the interest in being an official observer as part of the Arctic Council has grown steadily in these recent years as nations around the world are recognizing the opportunities that are presenting themselves in this portion of the globe.

The Arctic Council was established in 1996, and it focuses its work on sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. When we speak at these council meetings, as Arctic Parliamentarians, we always refer to the Arctic as a zone of peace. It is that way now; we would like to see it remain so.

Back in April of 2015, the United States took over as chair from Canada, and at that time, the United States proposed three thematic areas that we would focus on during this 2-year chairmanship. Those three areas were improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and the third issue area was to address the impacts of climate change.

While there were many who believed that the previous administration focused most of its attention on climate change—sometimes at the expense of the other two areas and most notably the focus on economic and living conditions for the people who live and work and raise their families in the Arctic—I believe we saw a good outcome from this 2-year chairmanship.

I would like to note today and acknowledge the work of Julie Gourley as the U.S. Senior Arctic Official; the work of Ambassador David Balton as the chair of the Senior Arctic Officials; and ADM Robert Papp, who served as the U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic. All three of these individuals served to facilitate the U.S. chairmanship and worked to increase public awareness and knowledge of the Arctic. I thank them for that.

I also commend the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, which hosted the ministerial meeting. I think it is important to recognize that most assumed that when the United States hosted the ministerial, it would be in Alaska's largest city. Anchorage certainly has the ability to accommodate just about any conference, anywhere, at any time, but I think it was significant that we chose to host in a city that—while it is not above the Arctic Circle, it is getting pretty close up there.

The people of Fairbanks went all out to embrace our friends from around the world. Their efforts were matched by the tremendous work of the Alaska Arctic Council Host Committee and particularly of Nils Andreassen, who connected the Arctic Council with the host communities during its numerous meetings.

In the past, what we had seen at these Arctic Council meetings was folks would fly into an Arctic location, and more often than not, we would be in a large conference hall, typically with no windows and closed doors, and then everyone would fly out without having any real interaction with the community. They wouldn't have an opportunity to engage with the public, and sometimes it made the work of the Arctic Council a little bit of a mystery.

I think we missed some opportunities to build support for the Arctic Council and its work and also to learn and to hear from those who live in our Arctic

communities what matters are of concern to them. The Alaska Host Committee worked to break down that barrier by organizing side events. There were dozens of different side events and receptions that allowed for critical interaction.

The City of Fairbanks and the North Star Borough provided incredible hospitality. They always do that, but I think this time they went above and beyond in rolling out the red carpet to ensure the success of the meeting for all who were involved.

During the U.S. chairmanship, there were a number of successful activities that I would like to highlight briefly.

First, there was an agreement on enhancing international arctic scientific cooperation. This was signed by all eight Arctic nations at the Fairbanks ministerial. It is now the third legally binding agreement among the Arctic nations. We have already done an agreement on search and rescue and a second one on oil spill preparedness. This is now the third, focusing on scientific cooperation. This new agreement will allow scientists to more freely and assuredly work across political borders to develop scientific knowledge about the Arctic.

What I think is significant about this particular document is that the process to develop the agreement was cochaired by the United States and Russia. This demonstrates that while our nations clearly have a good number of disagreements and disputes around the world, the Arctic can be that place of cooperation. I think we demonstrated that with this particular scientific cooperation.

Another area of focus was on telecommunication. For the first time, we have assessed telecommunication infrastructure in the Arctic. For anyone who has been there or who has been to any very remote location, you know well the importance of dependable communications. Those familiar with the Arctic know that we have significant gaps. We have significant challenges in this area. Finland, which has now assumed the chairmanship, will take this issue with them and work with the private sector to do what they can to improve telecom in the Arctic.

The Arctic Council also launched an Arctic ship traffic data cooperative agreement. The intent is to have a better understanding of the ships that are operating in the Arctic.

As we all know, we are seeing sea ice recede. We are seeing shipping lanes in areas where we have not had an opportunity to have ships or any level of commerce. With this project, we are seeking to collect information from each Arctic nation about the shipping activity in the Arctic for traffic trend analysis.

This is important because we are seeing an increase in shipping levels in the U.S. Arctic—an increase by nearly 60 percent over the last 8 years. It is clearly expected to increase with every passing year, as we are seeing sea ice diminish. As we are seeing this increased volume of shipping traffic, I think it is important to keep in mind that when it comes to charting, when it comes to mapping, less than 5 percent of the U.S. Arctic has been charted to modern standards.

Again, think about what is happening. We are seeing increased shipping traffic. We still don't know as much as we need to know about the charting and the mapping, so it is vital for homeland security, for local security, and for navigational necessity that we have an accurate understanding of who is transiting when and where within the region.

I have talked with Native whaling captains, those who are engaged in a level of subsistence, particularly in the Bering Straits area. Understanding when and where and who is transiting is very important for those subsistence hunters as well.

Another item that came from the Arctic Council ministerial—and this was not a direct outcome from this meeting but the prior one—a new fund, the Algu Fund, was established to help the indigenous peoples of the Arctic more fully participate in the decision making of the Arctic Council and its working groups.

The permanent participants and the indigenous peoples who make up these representatives are a critical piece of the discussion in these significant meetings with Foreign Ministers. To have that local knowledge, to have the voices of the local people of the Arctic speaking up is important. Think about it. They don't necessarily have a formal government, a fund that can help send them to these meetings, to be part of these working groups. And so oftentimes, their participation is not present, and not because they don't wish to be but because they lack the resources.

So this Algu Fund was established. The goal is to raise $30 million for the fund, which will benefit the Aleut, the Athabaskan, Gwich'in, Sami, and over 40 Russian indigenous groups.

Of the other work that was conducted, seven new observers were added to the Arctic Council, including the country of Switzerland. There were additional organizations that were added, but we are now up to a total of 39 observers, 13 of these being from non-Arctic nations. So again, the interest in all things Arctic, regardless of where you are on the globe, is really increasing.

On the sidelines of the ministerial meeting, there were 12 mayors from Arctic communities in Alaska, Canada, Finland, Iceland, and Norway. They held their own forum to look at the challenges to local governments in the Arctic. Issues such as economic diversification with benefits to local populations, infrastructure investment, energy independence, efforts to adapt to a changing climate, and the incorporation of traditional and local knowledge in the decisionmaking were discussed. These mayors from across the region saw the value of attending the ministerial meeting, even though they were not part of the official meetings. But they also felt that it was important to ensure that the people of the Arctic, those who actually live there, work there, and raise their families there, were heard in the discussions, as well.

Even after all that I have highlighted, there are many other documents from the ministerial meeting that I could mention here, but one that I would like to draw particular attention to is the Fairbanks Declaration. This is the statement signed by all eight Arctic nations coming out of the 10th Arctic Council Ministerial. I think it is significant to note that, in these issue areas that the United States focused on—Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship, improving economic and living conditions, and addressing the impacts of climate change—the statements coming out were good, strong statements of agreement, and there was true cooperation and collaboration.

I think I would be remiss in stating that there was some speculation that, with a new administration taking over right at the end of the United States' term, there was some discussion as to this: Well, how is this declaration going to be coming about, because it is the United States that ultimately, as the chair, holds the pen there?

I know there has been a lot of discussion around this town about the administration's position on the Paris Agreement. The President is still determining how he wants to proceed there. But I do think it is noteworthy—very noteworthy—that the Fairbanks Declaration, which was signed by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, speaks directly to climate change in the Arctic. Specifically, it notes the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. But in looking specifically to the language relating to climate change, it states, and I will quote here:

> Note again that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average, note with concern that the pace and scale of continuing Arctic warming will depend on future emissions of greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants, reiterate the importance of global action to reduce both greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants to mitigate climate change.

Then, it calls for the Arctic Council to undertake additional analysis. So I think that is significant as well. It is an important recognition, and, while this administration has not yet determined where they may end up when it comes to the Paris Agreement, I think it is telling to look to this document—again, that was not only signed by the United States, but, ultimately, it was drafted by the United States—as an indicator of the realities that we face with climate change and, particularly and most noteworthy, in the U.S. Arctic, where we are seeing that impact most pronounced.

I mentioned the aspect of climate change, but the Declaration is broader

than that. It also recognizes the importance of the contributions of the Arctic indigenous peoples, the importance of healthy Arctic communities, the impact of maritime activity in the region, and the emergence of the Arctic Economic Council, which is an issue that I feel very strongly about.

We had an extraordinary Alaskan woman who was chairing the AEC throughout these past 2 years, and she did a fabulous job standing that up. Her contributions were quite remarkable.

There is the need to improve the access of Arctic communities to clean, affordable, and reliable energy sources. So, again, I would commend to anyone's reading the Fairbanks Declaration. If you are interested in Arctic issues or if you are interested in just a sense of the breadth and the depth of the issues and challenges facing the Arctic region, I think it is an important document.

With our handing the gavel now to Finland, the obvious question request is this: What happens next for the United States in the Arctic? I am encouraged by Secretary Tillerson's comments in Fairbanks that the United States will remain engaged and remain a leader on Arctic policy. That has got to be key. We have made great headway in recognizing that we are an Arctic nation. At every appropriations hearing that I have been to thus far, I think I have reserved my questions to ask about Arctic-specific issues—whether it is the status of where we are on infrastructure, such as icebreakers, or whether it is a recognition and an understanding that, with decreasing sea ice up north, you have people in ships up there, which we have never seen before. Quite honestly, we now have an area of exposure. We focus a lot on the southern border. We now have a northern border that is open. What might that mean?

We were able to query Secretary Kelly this morning about possibly partnering with Canada as we look to how we can provide for sharing of information about who is coming and who is going and knowing what we have in front of us. We will have an opportunity—again, as we move forward with legislative initiatives, appropriations, and reviewing the President's budget—to make sure that the leadership that the United States has demonstrated these past 2 years as we have been chairing the Arctic Council continues and that it continues in a strong and a prominent way.

With that, I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I would like to commend my colleague from Alaska. Closer to the Poles, you see the effect of climate change more starkly. I am glad that she spoke on this issue. She is a real champion for her State, which means recognizing that climate change is having an effect on the Arctic and on those villages up there. It will have a lot of consequences going forward.

I say thank you to Senator MURKOWSKI.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the House Republican healthcare bill and the devastating effect that it would have on people with mental illness and those affected by the Nation's opioid epidemic.

Nationwide, more than 52,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2015, the most recent year for which data are available, with 63 percent of those deaths involving an opioid. This means that drug overdose deaths now surpass the number of people who die each year from automobile accidents or from firearms.

That same year in Minnesota, we lost more than 570 people to drug overdoses. About half of those deaths were tied to prescription medication—particularly, opiate pain relievers—and another 20 percent of those deaths were associated with heroin. We saw drug overdose deaths jump 11 percentage points in Minnesota from 2014 to 2015.

The opioid epidemic knows no boundaries. It has touched people and families of all incomes, of all races, and of all ages. Some communities in Minnesota have been hit particularly hard by this crisis, including our Native American population. Not long ago, I visited the Bois Forte Indian Reservation. Bois Forte is a small, beautiful reservation up in northern Minnesota, a community where people know each other and trust each other. In fact, historically, the trust has run so deep that folks in Bois Forte didn't even lock their doors at night. But the opioid epidemic—I was told this by the Tribe chairman—and the impact it has had on the people in the reservation has changed that. Opioids are changing and destroying families and communities, and one clear sign of this is that people now are locking their doors, the chairman told me.

Right now, we need to be doing all we can to help people, families, and communities that have been devastated by opioid addiction. We must provide support for treatments and other necessary interventions, and we need to be focusing on prevention. That is why we passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act just last year, and why we followed it up with the behavioral health provisions in the 21st Century Cures Act—again, just at the end of last Congress.

Now these important advances are under threat. The so-called healthcare bill that Republicans pushed out of the House of Representatives would undermine the very programs that help people with opioid addiction. For instance, as the CBO confirmed yesterday, the bill guts Medicaid, cutting the program's budget by more than $830 billion over 10 years. These losses are compounded by the additional $610 billion in cuts to Medicaid proposed in President Trump's budget yesterday. In total, these cuts would amount to close to a 50-percent reduction in the funding for the Medicaid Program, causing at least 14 million people to lose Medicaid coverage over the next decade. Medicaid is the No. 1 payer for behavioral health services in the Nation. It covers both prevention and treatment for people at risk for or actively battling opioid addiction.

For example, Medicaid pays for about one-quarter of medication-assisted treatment for opioid and heroin addictions. Because of the Medicaid expansion, 1.3 million additional people gained access to behavioral health services, which reduced the number of low-income adults needing substance use treatment but not receiving it by 18 percent.

To further undermine coverage, the House bill would also allow States to eliminate essential health benefits. The essential health benefits are 10 key benefits that plans exchanges must offer, including maternity care, prescription drugs, and mental health and substance use disorder services. What we know is that before the ACA was passed, many people with private insurance did not have coverage for the mental health services they needed. One in three did not have coverage for substance use disorder treatment, and close to one in five did not have coverage for mental healthcare.

Now is not the time to be cutting back on those benefits. In fact, last year, the Surgeon General issued a report on addiction, which found that there are more people with substance use disorders than people with cancer. What the CBO score confirmed yesterday was that people who live in States that rollback essential health benefits, who still need the services that are no longer included in the essential health benefits would ''experience substantial increases in out-of-pocket spending on health care or would choose to forgo the services.''

The report goes on to call out the fact that out-of-pocket costs for these patients could increase by thousands of dollars a year, and the benefits would again be subject to annual and lifetime limits. Substance use disorder services are highlighted as specific benefits that CBO anticipates States will exclude first.

I want to make this clear to my colleagues and to the American people: You cannot say that you want to address our country's opioid epidemic and at the same time support this bill. Those things are in direct opposition to one another. So, to all of my colleagues who supported CARA and supported the 21st Century Cures Act, I urge you to work with us to build on the ACA so that we can effectively address the opioid epidemic ravaging our country.

My colleague on the other side of the aisle, Senator CORKER from Tennessee,

had it right when he remarked on the secret partisan process currently underway in the Senate. Earlier this week he said:

It's a very awkward process, at best. There are no experts. There's no actuaries. . . . Typically, in a hearing, you'd have people coming in and you'd also have the media opining about if a hearing took place, and X came in and made comments.

Senator CORKER is spot-on. The American people deserve an open and transparent discussion on how we can best improve healthcare in our Nation. Many Americans are struggling just to keep their heads above water, paying their bills, raising their kids, caring for their parents, and coping with health problems.

Families in Minnesota and in all of our States have been or are currently being ripped apart by opioid addiction. They need our help. They don't need a bill or a budget, for that matter, that is hastily put together for ideological reasons. They don't need policies that undercut their care and their livelihood.

Ninety-one people die every day in the United States from an opioid overdose. Only one in five people who currently need treatment for opioid use disorders is actually getting it.

American lives hang in the balance. People are counting on us to do the right thing. So let's do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join my colleagues, Senator FRANKEN and Senator WARREN, who are also here for this conversation that was kicked off earlier this afternoon by our friend and colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN.

West Virginia does not have a whole lot in common with Rhode Island. We are a coastal State. Senator MANCHIN comes from a very landlocked mountainous State. Our biggest mountain in Rhode Island is probably the Johnson landfill. But we have something in common, which is the extent to which opioid addiction and opioid overdoses have stricken our State. We have had over 200 deaths per year. In a State our size, everyone is within 2 or 3 degrees of separation of everyone else. Those 200 deaths reverberate through our whole State.

There is a small town in Rhode Island called Burrillville, up in our northwest corner. Burrillville is a very small town in Rhode Island. I went up there for a meeting about the opioid epidemic at Burrillville High School. In the previous quarter, in just 3 months, that one little town had six deaths from opioid overdoses. That is six times that the little police force had to respond, six times the funeral parlors had to handle grieving families, six times that death notices had to be published in the local paper. It felt like a battering to people in that community.

Senator MANCHIN has a pretty good idea to help make sure that we have the funding to get treatment to people before these tragedies take place. He proposes what he calls the LifeBOAT Act, which is one penny for each milligram of active opioid in a prescription drug—one penny. It is only a penny, but it would have raised about $2 billion last year. So $2 billion would save a lot of people and save a lot of lives.

Just to give you some idea of the scale, Purdue Pharma has generated estimated sales of more than $35 billion since 1995 for opioid medications. It has annual revenues of about $3 billion, mostly from OxyContin. That is just one company. So the idea of adding a penny really does not seem to me to be asking very much.

The way we operate now in the Senate, I know that asking corporations to do anything seems impossible because they have the financial whip hand over so many Senators because of the unlimited money they are allowed to spend and threaten to spend in our politics. But really, after all the lives that have been lost, after all the lives have been affected, you would expect that just out of common decency this industry would step up and say: For a penny, we are in. So let's hope they come around to that because I think it is a good plan.

TrumpCare, on the other hand, would be a disaster. So many people get their opioid treatment through Medicaid and through the expansion of Medicaid that the Affordable Care Act created. To undo that, to strip $1.4 trillion, as President Trump has proposed, out of Medicaid is inevitably going to deny people access to care.

I am not the only one saying this. Someone who works in Providence with recovering heroin addicts wrote to me. His name is Travis. He wrote to me about his clients who are receiving medication-assisted treatments. He credits their being able to come in and get the care that they get to the Affordable Care Act. He said that it is the reason he and his colleagues have been able to help recovering addicts enter effective treatment programs. It works.

Travis relates that repealing the Affordable Care Act would have what he calls a profound impact on his clients' ability to get needed addiction and recovery services.

I will turn the floor over to Senator WARREN in a minute, but I want to recognize one other person. I will not use last names. His name is Mark. He wrote to me from Rumford, RI, which is a very nice part of East Providence, RI.

This is a gentleman who became addicted to opiates at the age of 52. He had surgery, and after the surgical procedure, his doctor gave him opiates for the pain. The doctor was somewhat indiscriminate about continuing to prescribe those opioids.

Mark realized that he was addicted. He went to a recovery group in Rhode Island called CODAC, which does very good work for treatment. He went into recovery, and he succeeded for 8 years without using opioids.

As sometimes happens, family stresses, business stresses, other stresses intervene. In his case, a family stress caused a relapse, but he knew what to do. He went back to CODAC. He became sober again. Now he is back in recovery, clean and sober.

This pattern of recovery and then an occasional relapse and then back to recovery again is very often the way people who have an addiction get through it. To make sure that the treatment is there for them when they relapse can be a lifesaver.

By the way, Mark is a success. He is in the music business. He has toured around the world. The fact that CODAC was there for him on those two occasions has allowed him to achieve that success. Again, this was a 52-year-old individual whom a surgery sent into addiction.

I will close by pointing out that one of the things the CARA bill, which many of us worked so hard on, accomplished was to send the message that addiction is not a moral failing. It is a medical condition. It should be treated as a medical condition. Not only is it not a moral failing, I think many of us who have had family, loved ones, friends, or any experience with folks who are going through recovery—what we have learned is that recovery is actually a noble accomplishment. It is not an easy path, but it is a path that demands deep honesty, deep courage, deep trust, very often love. It is a path that people who are walking it can and should be proud of, and we should be proud of them for their achievements, and we should be there for them in their relapses and make sure the care that will put them back on that path is available.

I yield the floor to my terrific colleague from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for his important words and all the Senators who have come to the floor this afternoon to talk about the Republican plans to dismantle our healthcare system.

As we speak, Republicans in the Senate are busy behind closed doors working overtime to come up with a secret health plan to ram through the Senate. I guess they are afraid of how the public would react if we could see the full scope of their plans, but in the last 24 hours, we have seen new details about what they want to do. The formula is as clear as it is cruel: destroy healthcare for tens of millions of Americans, including people struggling under the weight of our national opioid crisis. Why? In order to give tax cuts to rich people.

These plans are simply unforgivable, and I say ''unforgivable'' because I cannot find any justification that makes it

OK to take away health insurance from 23 million Americans. I cannot come up with a single sliver of an argument that says it makes sense to rip away more than $800 billion from kids with complex medical needs, seniors in nursing homes, and one of the largest sources of help for people and families struggling with substance abuse disorder, all to produce tax breaks for a handful of millionaires and billionaires.

The Republican agenda is destroying healthcare in this country, and it has never been clearer. President Trump released his budget proposal this week. If the healthcare bill is a punch to the gut, his budget is a knife in the ribs. The Trump budget is about the future, and for the future, Trump says there is too much medical research. He wants to cut more than $5 billion from the NIH budget. That is the place where research is ongoing about treatments for Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, ALS. That is America's future that President Trump wants to cut by more than $5 billion.

Then there is the Republican effort to blow up our existing healthcare system. The Republican bill would open the door to discriminating against people with preexisting conditions, and there is more. Insurance companies could drop coverage for mental health and substance abuse disorders. Insurance companies could decide not to cover pregnancy or maternity care. They can drop coverage for prescription drugs. Insurance companies could, once again, impose lifetime limits on diseases like cancer and heart conditions, even for people on employer plans in States like Massachusetts that want nothing to do with the waivers the Republican bill allows.

The CBO says that out-of-pocket costs for these services that are no longer covered would rise ''thousands of dollars a year,'' but cutting out cancer patients and mamas and newborn babies and people with preexisting conditions just wasn't enough for the Republicans. President Trump used his new budget to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the Federal agency leading the fight against opioids. Tens of thousands of people are dying, and the Trump budget cuts money needed in the fight against opioids. It gets even worse.

Together, the Republican healthcare bill and the President's budget rip well over a trillion dollars out of the Medicaid Program, which provides health insurance to one in five people in this country. Medicaid funds more than half the people in nursing homes. When a new baby is born in this country, Medicaid pays for about half of those births. Seniors in nursing homes and new babies are just targets for the Republican cuts.

Then, like extra chocolate sauce drizzled over this misery sundae, the budget also cuts the Children's Health Insurance Program by 20 percent over the next decade. Children's health insurance is the program that works together with Medicaid to provide health insurance for one out of every three kids in this country. Trump and the Republicans say: Let them go sick.

What does that mean? Don't repair a hole in their hearts or fix their broken arms? Don't treat them when they get ear infections or does it just leave someone else to pay? If that is the answer, then tell us who? Who exactly is going to pay for the healthcare for these children?

I just don't get what the Republicans in Congress are thinking. I know they have people back in their home States who are begging them to keep healthcare coverage. Disease, accidents, old age, substance abuse, these misfortunes don't ask whether you are a Democrat or a Republican before they come knocking at your door. I just don't get how Republicans can turn their backs on people who will be hurt, but I understand whom the Republicans are helping.

The CBO score lays it out in black and white. The budget lets you go line by line to see just whom the Republicans do care about. The Republican healthcare bill burns down healthcare access for millions of people in this country in order to hand out tax breaks to a tiny handful of millionaires and billionaires.

The Republican budget rips away coverage for people with disabilities so that giant corporations can keep more of their giant profits. The Republican budget tosses seniors out of nursing homes and puts the brakes on Alzheimer's research so the richest people in this country can rake in millions in tax cuts. That is not puzzling; that is unforgivable.

Let's be clear about what is at stake here. A couple of weeks ago, I was at Malden Care Center, which is part of the Cambridge Health Alliance. Health providers like these in Massachusetts are on the frontlines, and they are fighting back against the opioid epidemic.

The folks at Cambridge Health Alliance told me that before the ACA, they were lucky if one out of every three people walking through their doors had health insurance. Today, after years of hard work in Massachusetts to pass bipartisan health reform and then to implement the ACA, more than 97 percent of the people in our State have healthcare. More than 9 out of 10 people coming into Cambridge Health Alliance clinics now have coverage. Because of that coverage, CHA could offer a wide range of services, including treatment for opioids. They are making headway: More lives saved, more success stories, more healthy babies.

I am not going to tell the seniors and the mamas and the people on the frontlines of the opioid crisis they have to give up those gains to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest people in this country. If Senate Republicans want to defend this indefensible budget and unforgivable healthcare bill, then they can start by coming out from behind closed doors where they are conducting secret negotiations over healthcare. They can look the American people in the eye and admit they care more about the wealthy few in this country than they do about hard-working families and people who need our help. They can be straight up, and the American people—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—can hold them accountable for what they are trying to do to our families and to our country.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Maryland.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM DAUSTER

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the Senate is an institution that remembers its giants, its lions—the Senators who have served with distinction, who negotiated critical legislative deals, who fought for their States and their constituents, and who have participated in historic debates on this Senate floor. They have statues and libraries to remember them and portraits in these halls.

The Senate has been home to many extraordinary individuals but less frequently acknowledged is the truth that no Senator operates alone. We rely on the counsel and good service of dedicated staff in both our committees and personal offices. Among those staff, there is perhaps no greater giant of the Senate than Bill Dauster, who retires this week after more than three decades of service.

With a clear-eyed understanding of the Senate, with all its features and its flaws, a dedication to progressive values and collegiality that has endeared him to Senator and staffer alike, Bill has been an asset to this institution and to all who have served with him. I am very pleased he is with us on the floor today.

Senator Harry Reid called Bill his ''utility player'' for his ability to step into any issue or complicated matter and find a solution.

I am privileged that Bill Dauster joined my staff early this year to help me set up my office and get it off to a good start in the U.S. Senate. I could not have asked for a better and more knowledgeable guy as I began my service here.

There are few major legislative battles that Bill Dauster has not joined in the past 30 years, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, and the Affordable Care Act. He worked for Senator Feingold when he stood against the so-called PATRIOT Act because of its invasion of privacy, and he helped shepherd Democratic priorities, ranging from the minimum wage to important infrastructure investments.

He has written a book on Senate procedure—and I mean literally—and he has been as much a scholar of the Senate as a participant in its daily life.

Bill is a leader of what the Washington Post once called ''the whisper brigade,'' the people, the staff who stand with their Senators, from committee hearings to floor speeches, to answer questions and offer suggestions and help make us better and more prepared.

In that capacity, Bill Dauster has mentored countless staff and always stayed accessible to answer the most basic questions. With a quote or a quip, he has brought levity to serious policy discussions. He has built a reputation as an honest broker, a brilliant dealmaker, and an incredibly generous soul.

Bill's character is shaped by his Jewish faith, which he has studied and sought to illuminate to others. He has devoted free time to analysis of the Torah on Wikipedia and many other places, crafting interpretations that are as detailed, carefully explained, and straightforward as the analysis he has provided on countless Senate bills.

Bill Dauster is a devoted family man with his equally accomplished and brilliant wife Ellen and his three children who are his pride and joy. I am very pleased that his wife Ellen and daughter Emma are with us today.

He is a science fiction fan, particularly of Star Trek, perhaps seeking stories that are more believable than modern politics.

I wish Bill a restful retirement, but given his active mind, I suspect he would sympathize with Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' maxim that leisure is ''a chance to do other jobs that demand attention.''

Instead, I will thank him for his service to the Senate and his country and wish him a joyful and fulfilling next frontier. I ask my colleagues to join me in saying: Farewell, but don't wander far.

HONORING SECOND LIEUTENANT RICHARD WILBUR COLLINS III

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I stand to pay tribute to a distinguished young man from the State of Maryland: 2LT Richard Wilbur Collins III, a brave, brilliant, passionate, selfless, and kind American hero.

Second Lieutenant Collins, a resident of Calvert County, MD, was a 23-year-old student at Bowie State University, where he was a member of the Bowie ROTC Program and was airborne-certified. On May 18, just last week, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army's intelligence branch. Second Lieutenant Collins was scheduled to graduate with a bachelor's of arts in business administration from Bowie State University earlier this week. His future could not have been brighter.

Tragically, Second Lieutenant Collins' life was cut short by a horrific act of violence that the FBI is investigating as a hate crime. We must bring the perpetrator of this evil act to justice and directly confront the racism behind it.

Second Lieutenant Collins' selfless and courageous contributions to our State and Nation will continue to have a lasting impact on those who knew and loved him and on the broader community who learned of his tragic and senseless death. At the young age of 23, Second Lieutenant Collins raised his right hand to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. He was a young man of extraordinary courage and ability and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Second Lieutenant Collins leaves behind his grieving family: his father, U.S. veteran Richard W. Collins II; his mother Dawn Collins, his sister Robin Collins, and countless friends.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Second Lieutenant Richard Wilbur Collins III and in expressing our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, as our colleagues know, just yesterday we received the Congressional Budget Office's analysis of the most recent version of the Republican health care bill, the bill that passed out of the House of Representatives, also known as TrumpCare 2.0.

I encourage all of us, every one of our colleagues, to read the CBO report and to read it carefully. For those who are interested, it can be found online at www.cbo.gov. On the front page you can link to the report, which I have here in my hand.

I think it is worth reminding our colleagues that the Congressional Budget Office is composed of professionals, budget experts, and the current Director of the Congressional Budget Office was selected by the Republican chairman of the House Budget Committee and the Republican chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. Without an umpire on budget issues, this Senate would be in absolute chaos when it comes to determining the impact of many of our major decisions, so it is very dangerous when people start attacking the umpire when it comes to these important issues that can have literally life or death implications for our constituents.

What you will find in this most recent Congressional Budget Office report is that the most recent House Republican plan is even worse than the original plan, which also was the subject of a Congressional Budget Office report. What this CBO report tells us is that, like the earlier version, this so-called health bill is really a massive transfer of wealth from working-class and middle-income Americans to the top 1 percent of the wealthiest in our country and some very powerful special interests. Its title would much more fittingly be ''wealthcare,'' not healthcare.

Let's take a look at some of the findings that are in this report that can be found online. I turn to page 4 of the report, where the Congressional Budget Office reaches the conclusion that if we adopt this House proposal, if the Senate votes for the House Republican bill, there will be 23 million fewer of our fellow Americans who will have access to affordable healthcare when it is phased in than today. So if we were to adopt this, if this becomes law, we are saying to 23 million of our fellow Americans: Sorry, we are going to take away your access to affordable healthcare. It is right there on page 4. That is because what this so-called healthcare bill does is take away some of the supports that provide access to affordable healthcare. It reduces for millions of Americans the tax credits they use for their premiums in the Affordable Care Act exchanges.

As you will find on page 3 of this report, it also cuts Medicaid by $834 billion. Now some people will say: Hey, no problem; that is just going to be sent to the States, and States are going to have more flexibility.

The Congressional Budget Office is very clear that when you are talking about Medicaid cuts of this impact, one of two things happen: Either a lot fewer people get access to affordable healthcare or States have to raise taxes on the people in their States to ensure continued access. But this notion that somehow there are all these extra funds floating around and that greater flexibility will allow fewer dollars to go further with no negative impact is a fairytale.

In fact, Medicaid already has lots of provisions for flexibility. They have a whole suite of waiver provisions. Our State of Maryland exercised lots of waivers under the Medicaid program to allow it to be creative and flexible.

This $834 billion cut we found out about yesterday with the President's budget is just the first round of cuts. They are proposing another almost $610 billion cut to Medicaid. Total cuts are $1.4 trillion to Medicaid.

I would remind my colleagues that in addition to helping working-class Americans get access to healthcare, two-thirds of Medicaid money goes to help seniors in nursing homes, and 60 percent of seniors in nursing homes use Medicaid to help pay the bills. Two-thirds of it goes to those seniors and people with disabilities.

The Congressional Budget Office is telling us that this TrumpCare 2.0, this latest version of the Republican healthcare bill, is going to result in 23 million fewer of our fellow Americans having access to healthcare. It is going to cut Medicaid, and this is just the first round, by $834 billion.

Why do this? Who is benefiting from this? Well, let's look at the very first page of the Congressional Budget Office report. It reduces revenues by $992 billion. There are cuts to Medicaid by $834 billion, and it reduces revenues coming in by $992 billion, essentially transferring revenues that are going to help tens of millions of our fellow Americans get access to healthcare and

transferring that to tax breaks. Those tax breaks go overwhelmingly to the very wealthiest Americans—to the top 1 percent, in fact.

One of the things we did when we put together the Affordable Care Act to help pay for it was—we said: You know what, we think wealthier households should have to pay a small fee on their unearned income to be devoted to the Medicare trust fund.

Everyone in the country knows when they get that pay stub, it tells them how much is taken out for Medicare—3.4 percent. We said: Look, that should not just apply to earned income from hard-working people. If you're in the top 1 percent, if you are a higher income earner, you should also be contributing some of your capital gains revenue to help strengthen Medicare. That is what we did.

Yet this bill provides all those households with a tax cut. In fact, for millionaires, the average annual tax cut as a result of this bill will be $50,000—a $50,000 tax cut to millionaires while cutting access to affordable care for 23 million of our fellow Americans.

Why all these tax cuts are in something masquerading as a healthcare bill, I don't know, but we now know certainly who benefits the most from this legislation. Beyond those top 1 percent income earners, you also have insurance companies and the pharmaceutical industry. They get some tax breaks, as well, under this legislation.

Finally, I said at the outset that this TrumpCare 2.0, the most recent Republican healthcare bill, is worse than the original one. The original one was rotten to the core. The original one had most of the provisions I am talking about. So what got added that makes this one even worse? To find that, people should look at page 5 of this report and see what happens to people in States that decide to get rid of the patient protection provisions in the Affordable Care Act.

We have heard a lot of talk about how that House bill isn't really going to hurt people with preexisting conditions like diabetes and asthma. We have heard all that, but here's what the Congressional Budget Office report says. This is what the referee, the umpire, has to say about that with respect to those States. It says: ''Community rated premiums would rise over time, and people who are less healthy,'' and then they state ''including those with preexisting conditions or newly acquired medical conditions,'' right? So people who have had any kind of preexisting condition or prior health condition that an insurance company will argue makes them a much greater risk—people who are less healthy and those with preexisting conditions ''would ultimately be unable to purchase comprehensive nongroup health insurance at premiums comparable to those under current law, if they could purchase it at all.'' They go on to say ''despite the additional funding that would be available under H.R. 1628.''

That is the House bill. Despite that additional funding to help reduce premiums, they go on, and I hope our colleagues will pay attention to this conclusion: ''As a result, the nongroup markets in those states would become unstable for people with higher-than-average expected health care costs.'' Translation: People with preexisting conditions, people who, because they had diabetes or asthma as a child or they have a congenital disease—any preexisting condition will make it much harder for them to afford any kind of coverage at all, and ultimately the nongroup markets in those States will become unstable for those people. That is why this TrumpCare 2.0, this House healthcare bill, this Republican bill, took a really rotten bill and actually made it worse.

It is not enough, colleagues, for people to make a few cosmetic changes to this, to put couple of bandaids on it in the Senate, and say ''Hey, we made this thing better'' because this is rotten to its core.

If people really want to address healthcare reform, let's work together to improve the exchanges. There are commonsense things we can do to improve the exchanges, but you don't improve the exchanges by cutting Medicaid by $834 billion. That has nothing to do with the exchanges. You don't improve the exchanges by giving a windfall tax credit to the wealthiest Americans. That has nothing to do with healthcare.

TrumpCare 2.0, this Republican healthcare bill, is rotten to the core. Let's throw it out, and let's focus on the question of fixing the exchanges. If people want to do that, we can actually get something done. But let's not pretend we are doing healthcare when really what the goal so far has been is ''wealthcare.''

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 176

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Monday, June 5, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 107, S. Res. 176, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided in the usual form; further, that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate vote on the resolution with no amendments or motions in order to the resolution or the preamble; finally, that if the resolution is agreed to, the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 66 through 93 and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Sean L. Murphy

IN THE NAVY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. John A. Okon
Capt. Michael W. Studeman

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Edward L. Anderson
Capt. Stuart P. Baker
Capt. Michael D. Bernacchi, Jr.
Capt. Frank M. Bradley
Capt. Daniel L. Cheever
Capt. Yvette M. Davids
Capt. Brian P. Fort
Capt. Peter A. Garvin
Capt. William J. Houston
Capt. Sara A. Joyner
Capt. Frederick W. Kacher
Capt. Timothy C. Kuehhas
Capt. Carl A. Lahti
Capt. Andrew J. Loiselle
Capt. Douglas G. Perry
Capt. Fred I. Pyle
Capt. Erik M. Ross
Capt. Paul J. Schlise
Capt. James P. Waters, III

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Bradford J. Shwedo

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Giovanni K. Tuck

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 3034:

To be general

Lt. Gen. James C. McConville

The following named officer for appointment as the Deputy Judge Advocate General, United States Army, and for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 3037 and 3064:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Stuart W. Risch

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Mark E. Black

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Matthew V. Baker

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Chris R. Gentry

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Robert A. Karmazin

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Marion Garcia

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Whitlock

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Miguel A. Castellanos

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Windsor S. Buzza

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Randall V. Simmons, Jr.

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Michael D. Wickman

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Carl A. Alex
Brig. Gen. Francis M. Beaudette
Brig. Gen. Christopher F. Bentley
Brig. Gen. Gary M. Brito
Brig. Gen. Patrick W. Burden
Brig. Gen. Joseph R. Calloway
Brig. Gen. Paul T. Calvert
Brig. Gen. Paul A. Chamberlain
Brig. Gen. Ronald P. Clark
Brig. Gen. Brian P. Cummings
Brig. Gen. Edwin J. Deedrick, Jr.
Brig. Gen. Rodney D. Fogg
Brig. Gen. Robin L. Fontes
Brig. Gen. Maria R. Gervais
Brig. Gen. Karen H. Gibson
Brig. Gen. David P. Glaser
Brig. Gen. William H. Graham, Jr.
Brig. Gen. James B. Jarrard
Brig. Gen. Gary W. Johnston
Brig. Gen. Mitchell L. Kilgo
Brig. Gen. Ronald Kirklin
Brig. Gen. John S. Kolasheski
Brig. Gen. Viet X. Luong
Brig. Gen. Patrick E. Matlock
Brig. Gen. Brian J. Mennes
Brig. Gen. Jeffrey L. Milhorn
Brig. Gen. James J. Mingus
Brig. Gen. Christopher J. Sharpsten
Brig. Gen. John P. Sullivan
Brig. Gen. Frank W. Tate
Brig. Gen. Daniel R. Walrath
Brig. Gen. Brian E. Winski

The following named officers for promotion in the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624, 3037, and 3064:

To be brigadier general

Col. Susan K. Arnold
Col. Joseph B. Berger, III
Col. Robert P. Huston

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Richard J. Lebel

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Todd W. Lewis

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army Medical Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624 and 3064:

To be brigadier general

Col. George N. Appenzeller
Col. Telita Crosland

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Steven R. Rudder

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Laura J. Richardson

The following named officer for appointment as the Judge Advocate General, United States Army, and for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while serving as the Judge Advocate General, under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601, 3037, and 3064:

To be lieutenant general

Brig. Gen. Charles N. Pede

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Phillip G. Sawyer

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Brian D. Beaudreault

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN382 AIR FORCE nomination of James E. Thompson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN411 AIR FORCE nomination of Johanna K. Ream, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN412 AIR FORCE nominations (118) beginning PAUL R. AGUIRRE, and ending PETER LAWRENCE ZALEWSKI, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

IN THE ARMY

PN317 ARMY nomination of Kalie K. Rott, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN318 ARMY nomination of Norma A. Hill, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN319 ARMY nomination of Frank C. Pescatello, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN320 ARMY nomination of Basim M. Younis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN321 ARMY nomination of Stanley F. Gould, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN322 ARMY nomination of Scott W. Fisher, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN323 ARMY nominations (16) beginning GARY L. BEATY, and ending MICHAEL A. M. WILSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN324 ARMY nominations (2) beginning DANIEL J. CONVEY, and ending PHILIP A. HORTON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN325 ARMY nominations (2) beginning SOPHIA DALCE, and ending BURKE LENZ, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN326 ARMY nomination of Dawn E. Elliott, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN327 ARMY nomination of D012528, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN328 ARMY nomination of Benjamin W. Hillner, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN329 ARMY nomination of Celina S. Pargo, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN330 ARMY nomination of Paul R. Ambrose, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN331 ARMY nominations (2) beginning JAMES L. DUNGCA and ending NATHAN S. LANHAM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN332 ARMY nomination of Charles R. Burnett, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN383 ARMY nomination of Pablo F. Diaz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN384 ARMY nomination of Craig A. Nazareth, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN385 ARMY nomination of Brian C. McLean, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN386 ARMY nomination of Raymond C. Casteline, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN387 ARMY nomination of Daniel J. Shank, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN388 ARMY nomination of Christopher W. Degn, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN389 ARMY nomination of Jason T. Kidder, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN390 ARMY nomination of Tito M. Villanueva, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN391 ARMY nomination of Philip J. Dacunto, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN392 ARMY nomination of Stephen R. November, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN393 ARMY nomination of Luisa Santiago, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN394 ARMY nomination of Robert J. Bonner, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 8, 2017.

PN413 ARMY nomination of Mohamad El Samad, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN414 ARMY nomination of Lana J. Bernat, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN415 ARMY nomination of Patrick K. Sullivan, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN416 ARMY nominations (207) beginning DEREK L. ADAMS, and ending JAMES M. YATES, which nominations were received by, the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN417 ARMY nominations (230) beginning RODNEY ABRAMS, and ending D010081, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN418 ARMY nominations (58) beginning CHRISTINE N. ADAMS, and ending CHARLETTE K. WOODARD, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN171 MARINE CORPS nominations (5) beginning MARK S. JIMISON, and ending SHAWN P. WONDERLICH, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 27, 2017.

PN233 MARINE CORPS nomination of Jason G. Lacis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2017.

PN235 MARINE CORPS nomination of Kevin J. Goodwin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2017.

PN341 MARINE CORPS nomination of Javier E. Vega, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN342 MARINE CORPS nomination of Sergio L. Sandoval, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN451 MARINE CORPS nomination of Michael S. Stevens, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN452 MARINE CORPS nomination of Patrick J. Mullen, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN453 MARINE CORPS nominations (45) beginning RAYMOND L. ADAMS, and ending DOUGLAS S. WOODHAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

IN THE NAVY

PN147 NAVY nomination of Susan M. McGarvey, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 27, 2017.

PN168 NAVY nomination of Sheila I. Almendras-Flaherty, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 27, 2017.

PN170 NAVY nomination of Adrian D. Ragland, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 27, 2017.

PN207 NAVY nomination of Christopher R. Desena, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2017.

PN212 NAVY nomination of Kenneth L. Demick, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2017.

PN214 NAVY nomination of Michael C. Bratley, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 4, 2017.

PN333 NAVY nomination of Evan M. Colbert, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN334 NAVY nomination of Luciana Sung, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN335 NAVY nomination of William A. Schultz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN336 NAVY nomination of William L. McCoy, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN337 NAVY nomination of Chris F. White, which as received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN338 NAVY nomination of Karl M. Kingry, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN339 NAVY nomination of Michael A. Polito, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN340 NAVY nomination of Raymond J. Carlson, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN343 NAVY nomination of Christopher M. Allen, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 24, 2017.

PN430 NAVY nomination of Aaron L. Witherspoon, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

PN437 NAVY nomination of John E. Fritz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 10, 2017.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 60, 62, and 64.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of David L. Norquist, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); Kari A. Bingen, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense; and Robert Story Karem, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Norquist, Bingen, and Karem nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

INCREASING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABILITY TO VETERANS ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 12 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 12) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Moran amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 218) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill by striking section 2, relating to reduction of benefits for senior executives and certain health care employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs convicted of a felony)

Strike Sec. 2.

The bill (S. 12), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 12

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 ''Increasing the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability to Veterans Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. ACCOUNTABILITY OF LEADERS FOR MANAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 709 the following new section:

''§ 710. Annual performance plan for political appointees

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct an annual performance plan for each political appointee of the Department that is similar to the annual performance plan conducted for an employee of the Department who is appointed as a career appointee (as that term is defined in section 3132(a)(4) of title 5) within the Senior Executive Service at the Department.

''(b) ELEMENTS OF PLAN.—Each annual performance plan conducted under subsection (a) with respect to a political appointee of the Department shall include, to the extent applicable, an assessment of whether the appointee is meeting the following goals:

''(1) Recruiting, selecting, and retaining well-qualified individuals for employment at the Department.

''(2) Engaging and motivating employees.

''(3) Training and developing employees and preparing those employees for future leadership roles within the Department.

''(4) Holding each employee of the Department that is a manager accountable for addressing issues relating to performance, in particular issues relating to the performance of employees that report to the manager.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 7 of such title is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 709 the following new item:

''710. Annual performance plan for political appointees.''.

SEC. 3. ACCOUNTABILITY OF SUPERVISORS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR HIRING WELL-QUALIFIED PEOPLE.

(a) ASSESSMENT DURING PROBATIONARY PERIOD.—

(1) DETERMINATION REQUIRED.—With respect to any employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is required to serve a probationary period in a position in the Department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require the supervisor of such employee to determine, during the 30-day period ending on the date on which the probationary period ends, whether the employee—

(A) has demonstrated successful performance; and

(B) should continue past the probationary period.

(2) LIMITATION ON EMPLOYMENT AFTER PROBATIONARY PERIOD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no employee of the Department serving a probationary period as described in paragraph (1) may complete that probationary period unless and until the supervisor of the employee, or another supervisor capable of making the requisite determination, has made an affirmative determination under such paragraph.

(B) PROBATIONARY PERIOD DEEMED COMPLETED.—

(i) NO DETERMINATION.—If no determination under paragraph (1) is made with respect to an employee before the end of the 60-day period following the end of the 30-day period specified in such paragraph, the employee shall be deemed to have completed the probationary period of the employee effective as of the end of that 60-day period.

(ii) RETROACTIVE EFFECT OF DETERMINATION.—If an affirmative determination under paragraph (1) is made with respect to an employee after the end of the 30-day period specified in such paragraph, the employee shall be deemed to have completed the probationary period of the employee effective as of the end of that 30-day period.

(3) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS REGARDING DETERMINATIONS.—Not less frequently than monthly, the Secretary shall notify the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives regarding—

(A) each instance during such month in which a supervisor did not make a determination required under paragraph (1) during the period required in such paragraph; and

(B) each such instance included in a previous notification under this paragraph for which the supervisor still has not made such a determination.

(b) SUPERVISORS.—With respect to any employee of the Department who is serving a probationary period in a supervisory position at the Department, successful performance under subsection (a) shall include demonstrating management competencies in addition to the technical skills required for such position.

(c) PERFORMANCE PLAN.—Each annual performance plan conducted for a supervisor of an employee serving a probationary period shall hold the supervisor accountable for—

(1) providing regular feedback to such employee during such period before making a determination under subsection (a) regarding the probationary status of such employee; and

(2) making a timely determination under subsection (a) regarding the probationary status of such employee.

(d) SUPERVISOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''supervisor'' has the meaning given such term in section 7103(a) of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 4. ACCOUNTABILITY OF MANAGERS FOR ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that, as a part of the annual performance plan of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is a manager, the manager is evaluated on the following:

(1) Taking action to address poor performance and misconduct among the employees that report to the manager.

(2) Taking steps to improve or sustain high levels of employee engagement.

SEC. 5. WRITTEN OPINION ON CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS AFTER TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 717. Written opinion on certain employment restrictions after terminating employment with the Department

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Before terminating employment with the Department, any official of the Department who has participated personally and substantially during the one-year period ending on the date of the termination in an acquisition by the Department that exceeds $10,000,000 shall obtain a written opinion from an appropriate ethics counselor at the Department regarding any restrictions on activities that the official may undertake on behalf of a covered contractor during the two-year period beginning on the date on which the official terminates such employment.

''(b) COVERED CONTRACTOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered contractor' means a contractor carrying out a contract entered into with the Department, including pursuant to a subcontract.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 7 of such title is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 715 the following new item:

''717. Written opinion on certain employment restrictions after leaving the Department.''.

SEC. 6. REQUIREMENT FOR CONTRACTORS OF THE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYING CERTAIN RECENTLY SEPARATED DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 8129. Requirement for contractors employing certain recently separated Department employees

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A covered contractor may not knowingly provide compensation to an individual described in subsection (b) during the two-year period beginning on the date on which the individual terminates employment with the Department unless the covered contractor determines that the individual—

''(1) has obtained the written opinion required under section 717(a) of this title; or

''(2) has requested such written opinion not later than 30 days before receiving compensation from the covered contractor.

''(b) INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this subsection is any official of

the Department who participated personally and substantially during the one-year period ending on the date of the termination individual's employment with the Department in an acquisition by the Department that exceeds $10,000,000.

''(c) COVERED CONTRACTOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered contractor' means a contractor carrying out a contract entered into with the Department, including pursuant to a subcontract.''.

(b) APPLICATION.—The requirement under section 8129(a) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to any entity that enters into a contract with the Department on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 81 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8128 the following new item:

''8129. Requirement for contractors employing certain recently separated Department employees.''.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 114 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 114) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 114) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 114

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 ''Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act''.

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AWARDS AND BONUSES AWARDED TO CERTAIN HIGH-LEVEL EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 714. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that contains, for the most recent fiscal year ending before the submittal of the report, a description of the performance awards and bonuses awarded to Regional Office Directors of the Department, Directors of Medical Centers of the Department, and Directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

''(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following with respect to each performance award or bonus awarded to an individual described in such subsection:

''(1) The amount of each award or bonus.

''(2) The job title of the individual awarded the award or bonus.

''(3) The location where the individual awarded the award or bonus works.

''(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—In this section, the term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

''(1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

''(2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 7 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 713 the following new item:

''714. Annual report on performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees.''.

DR. CHRIS KIRKPATRICK WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 57, S. 585.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 585) to provide greater whistleblower protections for Federal employees, increased awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and increased accountability and required discipline for Federal supervisors who retaliate against whistleblowers, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

S. 585

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—EMPLOYEES GENERALLY

Sec. 101. Definitions.
Sec. 102. Stays; probationary employees.
Sec. 103. Prohibited personnel practices.
Sec. 104. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers.
Sec. 105. Suicide by employees.
Sec. 106. Training for supervisors.
Sec. 107. Information on whistleblower protections.

TITLE II—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEES

Sec. 201. Prevention of unauthorized access to medical records of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 202. Outreach on availability of mental health services available to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 203. Protocols to address threats against employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 204. Comptroller General of the United States study on accountability of chiefs of police of Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

TITLE I—EMPLOYEES GENERALLY

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

In this title—

(1) the term ''agency''—

(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means an entity that is an agency, as defined under section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, without regard to whether one or more portions of title 5 of the United States Code are inapplicable to the entity; and

(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

(2) the term ''employee'' means an employee (as defined in section 2105 of title 5, United States Code) of an agency; and

(3) the term ''personnel action'' has the meaning given that term under section 2302 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 102. STAYS; PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.

(a) REQUEST BY SPECIAL COUNSEL.—Section 1214(b)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) If the Merit Systems Protection Board grants a stay under this subsection, the head of the agency employing the employee shall give priority to a request for a transfer submitted by the employee.''.

(b) PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.—Section 1221 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) If the Merit Systems Protection Board grants a stay to an employee in probationary status under subsection (c), the head of the agency employing the employee shall give priority to a request for a transfer submitted by the employee.''.

(c) STUDY REGARDING RETALIATION AGAINST PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report discussing retaliation against employees in probationary status.

SEC. 103. PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES.

Section 2302(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (13) the following:

''(14) access the medical record of another employee or an applicant for employment as a part of, or otherwise in furtherance of, any conduct described in paragraphs (1) through (13).''.

SEC. 104. DISCIPLINE OF SUPERVISORS BASED ON RETALIATION AGAINST WHISTLEBLOWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 7515. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'agency'—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means an entity that is an agency, as defined under section 2302, without regard to whether any other provision of this chapter is applicable to the entity; and

''(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

''(2) the term 'prohibited personnel action' means taking or failing to take an action in violation of paragraph (8), (9), or (14) of section 2302(b) against an employee of an agency; and

''(3) the term 'supervisor' means an employee who would be a supervisor, as defined under section 7103(a), if the entity employing the employee was an agency.

''(b) PROPOSED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the head of the agency employing a supervisor, an administrative law judge, the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Special Counsel, a judge of the United States, or the Inspector General of the agency employing a supervisor determines that the supervisor has committed a prohibited personnel action, the head of the agency employing the supervisor, in accordance with the procedures required under paragraph (2)—

''(A) for the first prohibited personnel action committed by a supervisor—

''(i) shall propose suspending the supervisor for a period of not less than 3 days; and

''(ii) may, in addition to a suspension described in clause (i), propose any other action, including a reduction in grade or pay, that the head of the agency determines appropriate; and

''(B) for the second prohibited personnel action committed by a supervisor, shall propose removing the supervisor.

''(2) PROCEDURES.—

''(A) NOTICE.—A supervisor against whom an action is proposed to be taken under paragraph (1) is entitled to written notice—

''(i) stating the specific reasons for the proposed action; and

''(ii) informing the supervisor of the right of the supervisor to review the material which is relied on to support the reasons for the proposed action.

''(B) ANSWER AND EVIDENCE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A supervisor who is notified under subparagraph (A) that the supervisor is the subject of a proposed action under paragraph (1) is entitled to 14 days following such notification to answer and furnish evidence in support of the answer.

''(ii) NO EVIDENCE FURNISHED; INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.—After the end of the 14-day period described in clause (i), if a supervisor does not furnish evidence as described in clause (i) or if the head of the agency determines that such evidence is not sufficient to reverse the proposed action, the head of the agency shall carry out the action.

''(C) SCOPE OF PROCEDURES.—An action carried out under this section—

''(i) except as provided in clause (ii), shall be subject to the same requirements and procedures (including regarding appeals) as an action under section 7503, 7513, or 7543; and

''(ii) shall not be subject to—

''(I) paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 7503(b);

''(II) paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b) and subsection (c) of section 7513; or

''(III) paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b) and subsection (c) of section 7543.

''(3) DELEGATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (B), the head of an agency may delegate any authority or responsibility under this subsection.

''(B) NONDELEGABILITY OF DETERMINATION REGARDING PROHIBITED PERSONNEL ACTION.—If the head of an agency is responsible for determining whether a supervisor has committed a prohibited personnel action for purposes of paragraph (1), the head of the agency may not delegate that responsibility.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''7515. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers.''.

SEC. 105. SUICIDE BY EMPLOYEES.

(a) REFERRAL.—The head of an agency shall refer to the Special Counsel, along with any information known to the agency regarding the circumstances described in paragraphs (2) and (3), any instance in which the head of the agency has information indicating—

(1) an employee of the agency committed suicide;

(2) prior to the death of the employee, the employee made any disclosure of information which reasonably evidences—

(A) any violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or

(B) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; and

(3) after a disclosure described in paragraph (2), a personnel action was taken against the employee.

(b) OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL REVIEW.—For any referral to the Special Counsel under subsection (a), the Special Counsel shall—

(1) examine whether any personnel action was taken because of any disclosure of information described in subsection (a)(2); and

(2) take any action the Special Counsel determines appropriate under subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 106. TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS.

In consultation with the Special Counsel and the Inspector General of the agency (or senior ethics official of the agency for an agency without an Inspector General), the head of each agency shall provide training regarding how to respond to complaints alleging a violation of whistleblower protections (as defined in section 2307 of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 107) available to employees of the agency—

(1) to employees appointed to supervisory positions in the agency who have not previously served as a supervisor; and

(2) on an annual basis, to all employees of the agency serving in a supervisory position.

SEC. 107. INFORMATION ON WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS.

(a) EXISTING PROVISION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (c); and

(B) by redesignating subsections (d), (e), and (f) as subsections (c), (d), and (e), respectively.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 4505a(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(B) Section 5755(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(C) Section 110(b)(2) of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 (5 U.S.C. 2302 note) is amended by striking ''section [2303(f)(1)] *2302(f)(1)* or (2)'' and inserting ''section [2303(e)(1)] *2302(e)(1)* or (2)''.

[(D) Section 704 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 344) is amended by striking ''2302(c)'' each place it appears and inserting ''2307''.]

([E]*D*) Section 1217(d)(3) of the Panama Canal Act of 1979 (22 U.S.C. 3657(d)(3)) is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

([F]*E*) Section 1233(b) of the Panama Canal Act of 1979 (22 U.S.C. 3673(b)) is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(b) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—Chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 2307. Information on whistleblower protections

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'agency'—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), has the meaning given that term in section 2302; and

''(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

''(2) the term 'new employee' means an individual—

''(A) appointed to a position as an employee of an agency on or after the date of enactment of the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017; and

''(B) who has not previously served as an employee; and

''(3) the term 'whistleblower protections' means the protections against and remedies for a prohibited personnel practice described in paragraph (8), subparagraph (A)(i), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (9), or paragraph (14) of section 2302(b).

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEAD OF AGENCY.—The head of each agency shall be responsible for the prevention of prohibited personnel practices, for the compliance with and enforcement of applicable civil service laws, rules, and regulations, and other aspects of personnel management, and for ensuring (in consultation with the Special Counsel and the Inspector General of the agency) that employees of the agency are informed of the rights and remedies available to them under this chapter and chapter 12, including—

''(1) information regarding whistleblower protections available to new employees during the probationary period;

''(2) the role of the Office of Special Counsel and the Merit Systems Protection Board with regard to whistleblower protections; and

''(3) how to make a lawful disclosure of information that is specifically required by law or Executive order to be kept classified in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs to the Special Counsel, the Inspector General of an agency, Congress, or other agency employee designated to receive such disclosures.

''(c) TIMING.—The head of each agency shall ensure that the information required to be provided under subsection (b) is provided to each new employee of the agency not later than 6 months after the date the new employee begins performing service as an employee.

''(d) INFORMATION ONLINE.—The head of each agency shall make available information regarding whistleblower protections applicable to employees of the agency on the public website of the agency, and on any online portal that is made available only to employees of the agency if one exists.

''(e) DELEGEES.—Any employee to whom the head of an agency delegates authority for personnel management, or for any aspect thereof, shall, within the limits of the scope of the delegation, be responsible for the activities described in subsection (b).''.

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''2307. Information on whistleblower protections.''.

TITLE II—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEES

SEC. 201. PREVENTION OF UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO MEDICAL RECORDS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) develop a plan to prevent access to the medical records of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs by employees of the Department who are not authorized to access such records;

(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the plan developed under subparagraph (A); and

(C) upon request, provide a briefing to the appropriate committees of Congress with respect to the plan developed under subparagraph (A).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed assessment of strategic goals of the Department for the prevention of unauthorized access to the medical records of employees of the Department.

(B) A list of circumstances in which an employee of the Department who is not a health care provider or an assistant to a health care provider would be authorized to access the medical records of another employee of the Department.

(C) Steps that the Secretary will take to acquire new or implement existing technology to prevent an employee of the Department from accessing the medical records of another employee of the Department without a specific need to access such records.

(D) Steps the Secretary will take, including plans to issue new regulations, as necessary, to ensure that an employee of the Department may not access the medical records of another employee of the Department for the purpose of retrieving demographic information if that demographic information is available to the employee in another location or through another format.

(E) A proposed timetable for the implementation of such plan.

(F) An estimate of the costs associated with implementing such plan.

(b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 202. OUTREACH ON AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a program of outreach to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to inform those employees of any mental health services, including telemedicine options, that are available to them.

SEC. 203. PROTOCOLS TO ADDRESS THREATS AGAINST EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure protocols are in effect to address threats from individuals receiving health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs directed towards employees of the Department who are providing such health care.

SEC. 204. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY ON ACCOUNTABILITY OF CHIEFS OF POLICE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to assess the reporting, staffing, accountability, and chain of command structure of the Department of Veterans Affairs police officers at medical centers of the Department.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be considered and agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendments were agreed to.

The bill (S. 585), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 585

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—EMPLOYEES GENERALLY

Sec. 101. Definitions.
Sec. 102. Stays; probationary employees.
Sec. 103. Prohibited personnel practices.
Sec. 104. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers.
Sec. 105. Suicide by employees.
Sec. 106. Training for supervisors.
Sec. 107. Information on whistleblower protections.

TITLE II—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEES

Sec. 201. Prevention of unauthorized access to medical records of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 202. Outreach on availability of mental health services available to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 203. Protocols to address threats against employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 204. Comptroller General of the United States study on accountability of chiefs of police of Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

TITLE I—EMPLOYEES GENERALLY

SEC. 101. DEFINITIONS.

In this title—

(1) the term ''agency''—

(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means an entity that is an agency, as defined under section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, without regard to whether one or more portions of title 5 of the United States Code are inapplicable to the entity; and

(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

(2) the term ''employee'' means an employee (as defined in section 2105 of title 5, United States Code) of an agency; and

(3) the term ''personnel action'' has the meaning given that term under section 2302 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 102. STAYS; PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.

(a) REQUEST BY SPECIAL COUNSEL.—Section 1214(b)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) If the Merit Systems Protection Board grants a stay under this subsection, the head of the agency employing the employee shall give priority to a request for a transfer submitted by the employee.''.

(b) PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.—Section 1221 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) If the Merit Systems Protection Board grants a stay to an employee in probationary status under subsection (c), the head of the agency employing the employee shall give priority to a request for a transfer submitted by the employee.''.

(c) STUDY REGARDING RETALIATION AGAINST PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report discussing retaliation against employees in probationary status.

SEC. 103. PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES.

Section 2302(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (13) the following:

''(14) access the medical record of another employee or an applicant for employment as a part of, or otherwise in furtherance of, any conduct described in paragraphs (1) through (13).''.

SEC. 104. DISCIPLINE OF SUPERVISORS BASED ON RETALIATION AGAINST WHISTLEBLOWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 7515. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'agency'—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), means an entity that is an agency, as defined under section 2302, without regard to whether any other provision of this chapter is applicable to the entity; and

''(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

''(2) the term 'prohibited personnel action' means taking or failing to take an action in violation of paragraph (8), (9), or (14) of section 2302(b) against an employee of an agency; and

''(3) the term 'supervisor' means an employee who would be a supervisor, as defined under section 7103(a), if the entity employing the employee was an agency.

''(b) PROPOSED DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If the head of the agency employing a supervisor, an administrative law judge, the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Special Counsel, a judge of the United States, or the Inspector General of the agency employing a supervisor determines that the supervisor has committed a prohibited personnel action, the head of the agency employing the supervisor, in accordance with the procedures required under paragraph (2)—

''(A) for the first prohibited personnel action committed by a supervisor—

''(i) shall propose suspending the supervisor for a period of not less than 3 days; and

''(ii) may, in addition to a suspension described in clause (i), propose any other action, including a reduction in grade or pay, that the head of the agency determines appropriate; and

''(B) for the second prohibited personnel action committed by a supervisor, shall propose removing the supervisor.

''(2) PROCEDURES.—

''(A) NOTICE.—A supervisor against whom an action is proposed to be taken under paragraph (1) is entitled to written notice—

''(i) stating the specific reasons for the proposed action; and

''(ii) informing the supervisor of the right of the supervisor to review the material which is relied on to support the reasons for the proposed action.

''(B) ANSWER AND EVIDENCE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A supervisor who is notified under subparagraph (A) that the supervisor is the subject of a proposed action under paragraph (1) is entitled to 14 days following such notification to answer and furnish evidence in support of the answer.

''(ii) NO EVIDENCE FURNISHED; INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.—After the end of the 14-day period described in clause (i), if a supervisor does not furnish evidence as described in clause (i) or if the head of the agency determines that such evidence is not sufficient to reverse the proposed action, the head of the agency shall carry out the action.

''(C) SCOPE OF PROCEDURES.—An action carried out under this section—

''(i) except as provided in clause (ii), shall be subject to the same requirements and procedures (including regarding appeals) as an action under section 7503, 7513, or 7543; and

''(ii) shall not be subject to—

''(I) paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 7503(b);

''(II) paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b) and subsection (c) of section 7513; or

''(III) paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b) and subsection (c) of section 7543.

''(3) DELEGATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (B), the head of an agency may delegate any authority or responsibility under this subsection.

''(B) NONDELEGABILITY OF DETERMINATION REGARDING PROHIBITED PERSONNEL ACTION.—If the head of an agency is responsible for determining whether a supervisor has committed a prohibited personnel action for purposes of paragraph (1), the head of the agency may not delegate that responsibility.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''7515. Discipline of supervisors based on retaliation against whistleblowers.''.

SEC. 105. SUICIDE BY EMPLOYEES.

(a) REFERRAL.—The head of an agency shall refer to the Special Counsel, along with any information known to the agency regarding the circumstances described in paragraphs (2) and (3), any instance in which the head of the agency has information indicating—

(1) an employee of the agency committed suicide;

(2) prior to the death of the employee, the employee made any disclosure of information which reasonably evidences—

(A) any violation of any law, rule, or regulation; or

(B) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; and

(3) after a disclosure described in paragraph (2), a personnel action was taken against the employee.

(b) OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL REVIEW.—For any referral to the Special Counsel under subsection (a), the Special Counsel shall—

(1) examine whether any personnel action was taken because of any disclosure of information described in subsection (a)(2); and

(2) take any action the Special Counsel determines appropriate under subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 106. TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS.

In consultation with the Special Counsel and the Inspector General of the agency (or senior ethics official of the agency for an agency without an Inspector General), the head of each agency shall provide training regarding how to respond to complaints alleging a violation of whistleblower protections (as defined in section 2307 of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 107) available to employees of the agency—

(1) to employees appointed to supervisory positions in the agency who have not previously served as a supervisor; and

(2) on an annual basis, to all employees of the agency serving in a supervisory position.

SEC. 107. INFORMATION ON WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS.

(a) EXISTING PROVISION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking subsection (c); and

(B) by redesignating subsections (d), (e), and (f) as subsections (c), (d), and (e), respectively.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 4505a(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(B) Section 5755(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(C) Section 110(b)(2) of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 (5 U.S.C. 2302 note) is amended by striking ''section 2302(f)(1) or (2)'' and inserting ''section 2302(e)(1) or (2)''.

(D) Section 1217(d)(3) of the Panama Canal Act of 1979 (22 U.S.C. 3657(d)(3)) is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(E) Section 1233(b) of the Panama Canal Act of 1979 (22 U.S.C. 3673(b)) is amended by striking ''section 2302(d)'' and inserting ''section 2302(c)''.

(b) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—Chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 2307. Information on whistleblower protections

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'agency'—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), has the meaning given that term in section 2302; and

''(B) does not include any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4));

''(2) the term 'new employee' means an individual—

''(A) appointed to a position as an employee of an agency on or after the date of enactment of the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017; and

''(B) who has not previously served as an employee; and

''(3) the term 'whistleblower protections' means the protections against and remedies for a prohibited personnel practice described in paragraph (8), subparagraph (A)(i), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (9), or paragraph (14) of section 2302(b).

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEAD OF AGENCY.—The head of each agency shall be responsible for the prevention of prohibited personnel practices, for the compliance with and enforcement of applicable civil service laws, rules, and regulations, and other aspects of personnel management, and for ensuring (in consultation with the Special Counsel and the Inspector General of the agency) that employees of the agency are informed of the rights and remedies available to them under this chapter and chapter 12, including—

''(1) information regarding whistleblower protections available to new employees during the probationary period;

''(2) the role of the Office of Special Counsel and the Merit Systems Protection Board with regard to whistleblower protections; and

''(3) how to make a lawful disclosure of information that is specifically required by law or Executive order to be kept classified in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs to the Special Counsel, the Inspector General of an agency, Congress, or other agency employee designated to receive such disclosures.

''(c) TIMING.—The head of each agency shall ensure that the information required to be provided under subsection (b) is provided to each new employee of the agency not later than 6 months after the date the new employee begins performing service as an employee.

''(d) INFORMATION ONLINE.—The head of each agency shall make available information regarding whistleblower protections applicable to employees of the agency on the public website of the agency, and on any online portal that is made available only to employees of the agency if one exists.

''(e) DELEGEES.—Any employee to whom the head of an agency delegates authority for personnel management, or for any aspect thereof, shall, within the limits of the scope of the delegation, be responsible for the activities described in subsection (b).''.

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''2307. Information on whistleblower protections.''.

TITLE II—DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEES

SEC. 201. PREVENTION OF UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO MEDICAL RECORDS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) develop a plan to prevent access to the medical records of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs by employees of the Department who are not authorized to access such records;

(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the plan developed under subparagraph (A); and

(C) upon request, provide a briefing to the appropriate committees of Congress with respect to the plan developed under subparagraph (A).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed assessment of strategic goals of the Department for the prevention of unauthorized access to the medical records of employees of the Department.

(B) A list of circumstances in which an employee of the Department who is not a health care provider or an assistant to a health care

provider would be authorized to access the medical records of another employee of the Department.

(C) Steps that the Secretary will take to acquire new or implement existing technology to prevent an employee of the Department from accessing the medical records of another employee of the Department without a specific need to access such records.

(D) Steps the Secretary will take, including plans to issue new regulations, as necessary, to ensure that an employee of the Department may not access the medical records of another employee of the Department for the purpose of retrieving demographic information if that demographic information is available to the employee in another location or through another format.

(E) A proposed timetable for the implementation of such plan.

(F) An estimate of the costs associated with implementing such plan.

(b) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 202. OUTREACH ON AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a program of outreach to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to inform those employees of any mental health services, including telemedicine options, that are available to them.

SEC. 203. PROTOCOLS TO ADDRESS THREATS AGAINST EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure protocols are in effect to address threats from individuals receiving health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs directed towards employees of the Department who are providing such health care.

SEC. 204. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY ON ACCOUNTABILITY OF CHIEFS OF POLICE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to assess the reporting, staffing, accountability, and chain of command structure of the Department of Veterans Affairs police officers at medical centers of the Department.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1094

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of the Elwood nomination, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 1094, the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability Act; that the committee-reported substitute be adopted, and that there then be 3 hours of debate, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO ALASKA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD SERVICEMEMBERS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week I have been coming down to the Senate floor to honor an individual who is serving in my great State of Alaska, who is helping to make our State, his or her local community, or even our country a better place. We call these individuals our Alaskan of the Week.

Alaska carries a mystique. We all know that. I am a little biased, but it does, rightfully so. It is a beautiful State. We all think it is the most beautiful State in the world. I encourage everybody who is watching from the Gallery or on TV to make sure they take at least one trip to Alaska sometime in their life. You will love it. It will be the trip of a lifetime.

But Alaska is much more than just a beautiful State. It is actually a State that is critically important to America—critically important to our country. We have abundant natural resources: fish, metals, minerals, and oil and gas. They are resources that help feed our country, help build our country, and help power our country.

Further, given today's threats, we are also the most strategically located State in the country. In fact, General Billy Mitchell, father of the Air Force, said in testimony to the Congress in the 1930s that Alaska was ''the most important strategic place in the world,'' which could control Asia, North America, and Europe. He said that whoever controls Alaska controls the world.

In Alaska, we are the hub of combat airpower for the Asia-Pacific and the rest of the world. We are also a vital expeditionary platform, with some of the Army's best trained troops, who can deploy anywhere in the world on a moment's notice. Importantly, we are the cornerstone of our country's missile defense system.

What makes this military triad truly exceptional is the Arctic-tough women and men in uniform supporting each of these pillars of America's military might in Alaska, who work day and night to ensure that our country is safe.

Following Armed Forces Day a few days ago, where we honor all of those who currently serve in the military—and we are all going to be celebrating in a few days Memorial Day to honor those who gave their lives serving our country—I recognize a group of proud Alaskans who help protect our country. These individuals were recently awarded the 2017 Alaska Missile Defender of the Year award from the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance. Today, they are our Alaskans of the Week.

These are National Guard servicemembers from the Alaska Army and Air National Guard who have demonstrated leadership, excellence, and selfless commitment in their operation of the U.S. Ground-based Midcourse Defense system, at Fort Greely, and the Early Warning Radar system at Clear Air Force Station in Alaska, over the past year. Essentially, these are the men and women who keep our country safe with America's most sophisticated missile defense system. So I would like to read their names on the Senate floor.

Base defenders of the year from the 213th Space Warning Squadron at Clear Air Force Station: SSgt Jonathan Rivera-Calderon and SSgt Stanislav Barilov.

Missile defenders of the year from the 213th Space Warning Squadron at Clear Air Force Station: Capt. Erik Haugen and TSgt Mark Lockwood.

Base defenders of the year from Fort Greely: SGT Nathan Williams and SGT Travis Hall.

Best crew winners from the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Delta Crew: MAJ Michael Long, CPT Anthony Montoya, 1LT Rachel Simmons, SSG Caroline Domenech, and SGT Jose Aponte.

These Alaskan missile defenders continue to stand ready and excel as they protect our country and our citizens from an increasingly diverse set of national security threats. They are just a few of the 300 men and women missile defenders in interior Alaska who, every day, protect the entire United States. They like to call themselves the ''300 protecting the 300 million.'' I think of them as modern-day Spartans, the 300 Spartans who fought alongside King Leonidas to protect Greece in 480 BC. That is who they are, modern-day Spartans.

The mission of these men and women is to protect the entire country from a rogue missile threat—whether from North Korea, Iran, or another country—that could hit any city in America. This is what they do 365 days a year, 24/7. They are on call on Christmas, New Year's, and Super Bowl Sunday. They are tough, well-trained, and they are committed patriots of America.

We face a dizzying array of threats across the globe. But the one that keeps not only me but many Members of the Senate and our military up at night right now is the threat from North Korea. There is no doubt that North Korea and the leader of that country are intent on obtaining and nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile that can range our entire country. Recent unclassified briefings on this issue have said it is no longer a matter of if but when North Korea is going to have this capability.

To protect us from this impending threat, this advancing threat, a number of us introduced a bill this past week to enhance our missile defense system across the country. While Alaska's missile defenders currently keep us safe, like many in our military they need more training and better technology so these brave men and women

can do their job and continue to keep America safe in the future.

Leading up to Memorial Day, I want to make sure to thank all who have served and continue to serve our Nation in uniform. I especially honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and, of course, their families. I also want to make sure I recognize Alaska's missile defenders. While millions of Americans will be outside this weekend, having a barbecue and celebrating Memorial Day, every American in this country can rest assured that these brave missile defenders in Alaska, men and women like the Spartans of old, stand watch to defend our freedoms. They are doing it today and they will do it on Memorial Day, just like they do every day of the year.

That is why all of them, in my view, merit the award of Alaskans of the Week.

TRIBUTE TO WADE QUIGLEY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize another Alaskan, one who happens to be right here in the Senate Chamber, Senate Page Wade Quigley. I think we should call him the Junior Alaskan of the Week.

Wade is from Girdwood, AK. He is actually right here, getting a little red in the face. I think he is slightly embarrassed. Girdwood was originally called Glacier City, for the ice-capped mountains surrounding the town. About a 45-minute drive from Anchorage, it is a very, very special place. My wife Julie and I and our three daughters love Girdwood. We spend a lot of time there skiing and enjoying the outdoors.

Wade is now 16 years old. When I was told that this morning, I was a little surprised. He is much more mature than 16. He will be entering his senior year at South Anchorage High School, the school that my daughter Laurel attends, next fall.

Like a true Alaskan, Wade takes full advantage of our State's abundant natural resources, teaching skiing in the winter and commercial fishing for pink salmon during the summers in Kodiak, AK.

In DC, Wade has been doing a great job serving in the U.S. Senate as a page. According to those who supervise him, as well as his fellow pages, Wade is eager to take any opportunity to talk or learn about his State. The esteemed Laura Dove herself has referred to Wade as ''Alaska's best ambassador.'' I thought that is what Senator MURKOWSKI and I were supposed to be. It is a grand compliment. Others say he has a heart for public service, humor, and kindness. He is extremely well-liked throughout this building.

In just 2 weeks, Wade and all the pages will complete their service as Senate pages. By the way, it is very, very hard work. They are up at 5 o'clock a.m., studying at 6 o'clock a.m., classes until 9 o'clock, and then working in the Senate until the wee hours. I thank Wade and all the Senate pages for their service to the Senate, to their States, to their country.

Wade's energy and upbeat outlook will be missed in this body. Even though he is leaving us in the Senate, Wade hopes to continue his service to his country by attending the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Whatever his final path is, I am sure he will bring to it the same work ethic and the same love for his country and for Alaska and, I believe now, after 6 months, for the U.S. Senate.

Wade, to you and all the pages who have done such a great job, thank you, and, yes, thank you for being the Junior Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues to discuss the heroin, fentanyl, and opioid crisis that has devastated communities across our Nation. I want to thank the Senator from West Virginia for giving us the floor today and for his continued leadership in working to combat this crisis. It is going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach, with Members of both parties and at all levels of government working with those on the frontlines to find solutions.

We recently received near final information on the number of lives lost last year and the specific substances involved in New Hampshire as a result of this crisis. What is clear is that the threat continues to evolve and grow. In 2016 alone, there were 477 confirmed overdose deaths in New Hampshire. That is an increase from 439 deaths in 2015 and 326 in 2014. Already this year, there have been 73 confirmed overdose deaths in my State, with another 86 suspected cases awaiting final toxicology results.

In recent months, we have seen new deadly challenges that are emerging. A few weeks ago, I met with members of the Drug Enforcement Agency in New Hampshire. Among the topics we discussed was the spread of a dangerous synthetic drug, carfentanil. Carfentanil is 100 times stronger than even fentanyl. It is killing people faster, and we are seeing its deadly use rising in New Hampshire. We have seen six confirmed deaths from carfentanil in the past few weeks.

During my meeting with the DEA, I heard from those on the frontlines about the dangerous impacts it has on their lives as well. Carfentanil and other fentanyl compounds are so dangerous that they can put first responders at risk if they are exposed.

It is clear that we must do more to support those struggling and those on the frontlines to stem and ultimately reverse the tide of this crisis. We need more resources to address this problem because people are dying. What we cannot do is institute policies that would make matters worse.

I am encouraged that the Trump administration has discussed the severity of this crisis, but their actions so far don't match their words. The President's budget that was announced this week would have devastating consequences on efforts to combat this crisis. This budget includes hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It also cuts the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program. This is a program that provides key support to law enforcement officials on the frontlines.

I am particularly disturbed by this administration's continued attacks on Medicaid. Medicaid has been critical to ensuring that Granite Staters struggling with addiction have access to treatment and recovery services. The drastic cuts to Medicaid in the President's budget proposal go above and beyond even the devastating cuts included in the dangerous TrumpCare bill that passed through the House of Representatives. This budget proposes cutting $610 billion to Medicaid, which is on top of the $839 billion cut in TrumpCare. TrumpCare also ends Medicaid expansion, which experts have said is the No. 1 tool we have in combating this crisis.

TrumpCare undermines the requirement that insurance companies must cover mental health and substance use disorder services. According to yesterday's CBO report, this could lead to out-of-pocket costs totaling thousands of dollars for people seeking these services. In the midst of this crisis, we need to be strengthening prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts and giving stronger support to those on the frontlines, but these recent actions by this administration show that President Trump is failing to live up to his own words on this deadly epidemic. And cuts to programs that help people in the throes of addiction are irresponsible, unacceptable, and unconscionable.

I am grateful to many of my colleagues for reaching across the aisle to propose policies to address this epidemic. This is an issue that rises above partisanship, and this is work we need to be doing because the lives of the people of our States depend upon it. I am going to continue to work with my colleagues on solutions, while standing firm against proposals that would pull us backward.

I again thank Senator MANCHIN for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO RON HINDLE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to deliver a difficult speech. My senior communications adviser, Ron Hindle, is retiring after more than 30 years in the U.S. Senate. If you do some quick math, you will realize that Ron has been part of the Senate longer than I have. I came here in January of 1997 and quickly learned Ron would be an indispensable part of my team. Previously, he had worked for my predecessor, Al Simpson. That meant he knew Wyoming, and he knew how to communicate with Wyomingites.

I am so glad I hired Ron when I came to DC. He has written some of the best speeches I have given over the past 20 years. When Ron told me he was retiring, I went back and looked at a few of his remarks between tears.

When my longtime State director retired, Ron wrote:

There is an old saying we all heard before: Good help is hard to find. Here is my experience: Good help is not only hard to find, it is also impossible to replace.

That was true about Robin, and it is equally true of Ron. In a speech to the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, Ron called the library card ''our passport to adventure.'' For a speech to the Young Entrepreneurs Academy, Ron referred to books, ''especially biographies and autobiographies—as 'How To' manuals for success.'' When I spoke to my grandson's graduating fifth grade class, Ron wrote me an example comparing the Supreme Court to grandparents: ''If they say no, there is no one else to turn to.''

I hope this sampling of Ron's work can convey why he has been an important part of my team. He has a way with words that few people have and, more importantly, he knows what I want to say and how I want to say it. Ron does more than help me with speeches. If there is a student in Wyoming who has achieved an important goal, Ron helps me with a laudatory note. When an organization like Daughters of the American Revolution has their annual convention, Ron works on the statement commemorating that event. When a Wyoming business celebrates an important anniversary, Ron has helped me congratulate that success.

My staff and I will miss Ron, not only for the help he gives us but for the person he is. He is kind, considerate, and generous. He is also willing to lend a helping hand in everything we do, from hosting our holiday cookie party to organizing trivia, and building games for our staff planning sessions. This isn't goodbye, as Ron will remain my neighbor and my friend.

Today I want to celebrate all that Ron has done for me, for my office, for Wyoming, and for America. It is appropriate for me to once again quote Ron in describing the word ''celebrate'' to Wyoming Cowboy Challenge Academy graduates, Ron wrote:

Celebrating is much more than the things we do—it's the feelings we get from the great accomplishments of our life. It is the joy and happiness that comes from the heart when we have reached one of our goals. It's the sense of satisfaction we feel that comes from the knowledge that we have taken on a difficult challenge and mastered it. It is the increase in self-confidence and self-esteem that comes from learning to trust in ourselves to make the right choices and the right decisions.

Ron, Diana joins me in celebrating you today. You have been a great example of the importance of public service, and your legacy will continue in my office and in Wyoming as business owners, students, and others reread the words you wrote over more than 30 years. I thank you for devoting so much of your life to making my office a better place to work and, more importantly, Wyoming a better place to live. Thanks for all you have done for all of us and America. I wish you the best.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PARIS AGREEMENT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion in the media over the last couple of weeks about what President Trump is going to do and should do with the Paris climate agreement. We know all about this agreement. It was entered into by President Obama in December of 2015 at the U.N. annual party that they hold, the 21st annual Conference of Parties meeting.

Let me explain what this is. It was 21 years ago they decided—the United Nations had always been quite offended every time something happened that they were doing in the United Nations that was not in the best interest of the United States. Several of us would call and threaten to withhold some of our funds supporting the United Nations. Of course, the United Nations has always wanted to be independent. They wanted to not be accountable to anyone so consequently they put together these parties. The best way for them to do that is if they could somehow be funded independently and not be accountable to the various countries—not just the United States but any of the rest of them.

So they hold this meeting in December of every year, and they hold it in very exotic places. Everybody gets really excited. They have 192 countries come in. What they are trying to do is get them all to limit their CO_2 emissions. Of course, they all come in because 99 percent of the 192 countries are ones who want to get money out of this deal. I ran into a friend of mine from Benin, West Africa. This was several years ago. I said: Why are you here? You are not really going to agree with this stuff. He said: No, this is where the money is. This is the biggest party of the year.

One of the worst things that ever happened at their big party was—they headed to South America someplace, I don't remember where—when they ran out of caviar. They have these big meetings every year.

Well, the last one I went to was December 2009. It was in Copenhagen. You might remember that was just after President Obama was elected. He and his administration were pledging to the 192 countries that we were going to pass a form of cap and trade. Well, they all went to Copenhagen—NANCY PELOSI, Hillary, John Kerry, Barack Obama—they all went there and told them we were going to pass cap and trade here in the United States so they all needed to follow form. This is interesting because of the 192 countries he was talking to, most of them didn't even know our form of government. They didn't know that we had a Senate that had to confirm these things or that we even had a legislature. They assumed that was going to happen.

I remember, right after they left, I went to Copenhagen. I had to go in the morning and get back in time for votes all in 1 day. I did that. At that time, they termed me as the ''one-man truth squad.'' I told them under no circumstances—this is 2009—were we going to pass any kind of cap and trade in this country. I was right. They were shocked over there because they assumed if the President said we are going to do it, that we are going to do it. The legislation was estimated at that time to cost between $300 and $400 billion—that is per year—to implement. It never came to a vote because the Democrats knew they had at that time—keep in mind this is 2009—they had control of the White House, they had control of the House and Senate, and they had, at that time, 60 votes in the Senate, but they couldn't get the votes because it was too expensive.

So many people thought it was the first time we would consider cap and trade, but it wasn't. We had been working on that for years. They first tried it in 2003. In 2003, we had a bill for the U.S. Senate. I remember being down here—because at that time I was chairman of the Subcommittee on the Environment and Public Works. They had that jurisdiction. So I was down here to try to make sure that thing wasn't going to pass. Sure enough, it didn't. We defeated it, 43 to 55. Then the same group tried it again in 2005. At that time, they only got 38 votes, and that failed. Then, in 2008, Senators John Kerry and Joe Lieberman tried it again. Of course, at that time, it failed again. Now, that is a far cry from the 60 votes necessary in order to get something like that to pass. We have been looking at that with various forms of legislation for quite a number of years.

After suffering those embarrassing defeats in the Senate, President Obama

sought to do by regulation what he couldn't do through legislation. That is how we got the Clean Power Plan. I think it is important to think back where we got to this point. There has also been an implementation cost, by their own admission, some $300 billion a year, and it made it impossible at that time for us in the United States to build a new coal-fired powerplant.

It is interesting. Some people say: Why do you go back so often to Oklahoma? I said: Well, I like to talk to real people. I can remember being at Shattuck, OK. I bet the Chair doesn't know where Shattuck is. It is in Western Oklahoma.

A guy said: Now, explain this to me.

This was actually during the Obama administration.

He said: If we in the United States are dependent upon fossil fuels—that is, coal, oil and gas, and nuclear—to produce 89 percent of the power it takes to run this machine called America, and if President Obama is successful in doing away with coal, oil and gas, and nuclear, then how do we run this machine called America?

For that reason, the President decided he was going to do this with regulations.

I ask unanimous consent that this list of all of the regulations—47 of them—we have been able to do away with in the first 100 days be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

A few weeks ago, he signed an Executive order instructing the EPA to unwind the United States from this regulation. That is exactly what my friend, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, is working to accomplish right now.

While the President has disavowed the Paris Agreement, he has not pulled out as of this time. He has been kind of busy doing other things.

I understand there are a lot of competing voices on this front. Many people don't believe the Paris Agreement is binding. While that is true, to a certain degree, it is kind of shortsighted.

I am speaking today because I believe the President should make a clean exit from the Paris Agreement and avoid a lot of confusion. There are two key reasons I want to do that.

The first one, reason No. 1, is that if we remain in the agreement, we are putting ourselves at significant litigation risk.

The Paris Agreement commits the United States to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent by 2025. This is interesting because in the Paris Agreement that took place, the President at that time, President Obama, was getting just a little bit panicky. He had already gone to seven of these and had been unable to pass any kind of an agreement that would accomplish his goal of putting coal, oil, and gas out of existence. So this agreement that he made, he made unilaterally, saying: I agree on behalf of the United States of America that we will reduce our emissions of CO_2 by between 26 and 28 percent by 2025.

Well, we all know that the environmental community wants to do whatever it possibly can to regulate carbon. There is a reason for this. You might wonder why this is. There is a professor named Richard Lindzen. Richard Lindzen is a professor at MIT and is one of the top professors in this discipline. He said: If you control carbon, you control life.

It makes it a bureaucrat's dream. So yes, in fact, that is what he was trying to do. That is all they want. So if we stay in the Paris Agreement, environmentalist groups—radical groups—would be able to sue the EPA to force it to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under section 115 of the Clean Air Act. Section 115 of the Clean Air Act is entitled ''International Air Pollution.'' This section is triggered when a country asserts that our pollution is harming them, establishing an endangerment finding, and when there is a reciprocal agreement between our countries and those countries that have such a regulation.

It is not difficult to imagine that if we remain in the Paris Agreement, the environmentalists, NGOs, led by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, and others, will file lawsuits against the EPA as it takes legal steps to deregulate the Clean Power Plan.

While there has not been an internal endangerment finding, the environmentalists would be working to force the issue. Further, they would make the case that the reciprocal requirements of section 115 of the Clean Air Act are met by the Paris climate agreement. Even though it is not binding at the international level, the environmentalists could, with a sympathetic judge, make a case that the administration has made the reciprocal agreement by staying in Paris. It would sound good. It is not too hard to find a sympathetic judge nowadays. This is something they have been planning to do all along. They built this back door into the agreement as the Obama administration was actually writing it.

You ask, why would certain lawsuits be filed? A former general counsel at the Sierra Club, David Bookbinder, said that section 115 of the Clean Air Act is—these are his words—''the silver bullet de jour of the enviros, and they are dead serious about this,'' meaning that they believe the Paris Agreement clearly states that it meets the reciprocity test established by section 115 of the Clean Air Act.

If you have noticed, the environmental groups have been very silent about whether the administration should stay in the agreement. We all know they want us to stay in the agreement, but why be so quiet at this time? Because we have not heard from them. Well, the reason is, I think the environmental groups who are trying to accomplish this see that there is real progress being made to convince the President to stay in the Paris Agreement, which means they could have their wish of greenhouse gas regulations. If we stay in the agreement, they could sue the EPA and force regulations under section 115. So they have been very quiet. They don't want President Trump to know they will also benefit if we stay in the agreement. Because of this, they are allowing people to believe that nothing will happen by staying in the agreement. I have heard this from Republicans and Democrats.

It really does not make too much difference, because for ratification, the votes are not there, and everybody knows it. In the meantime, you are subject to the lawsuits. So they just don't want us to know it as well. Could it be that a Republican President would give them the tools they need to force greenhouse gas regulations even without meaning to? It is a possibility. This is why the President needs to make a clean exit from the agreement.

If the President stays in the Paris agreement, he will be putting at risk our ability to accomplish his campaign goals; namely, ending the war on fossil fuels and rescinding the Clean Power Plan. He has already taken the Executive steps he needs on this front. The EPA is currently on solid legal footing. But we must not limit the effectiveness of these key steps by remaining in the Paris Agreement.

So that is reason No. 1. Reason No. 1 is that if we remain in the agreement, we are subjecting ourselves to all of the lawsuits that will be out there.

The other reason, the second reason I will mention, is that even if we pull out of the agreement, we will still have a seat at the table.

I have heard the statement quite often, in fact, by some people in the Trump administration—they say: We don't want to pull out of it because we want to maintain a seat at the table. As they have these meetings every December, we want to be there so we can express what America really is planning to do and is not planning to do.

But let's keep in mind that the seat at the table was established way back in 1992. That was when they had the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNFCCC. This is the 1992 treaty that supports all the big parties that meet every December that are held in the exotic locations I mentioned. That group was the foundation of the Paris Agreement and the foundation of the Copenhagen discussion in 2009.

Now, 2009 is when they had the event in Copenhagen. That is the one where all the people went and told them that we were going to pass cap and trade, which we were not going to pass cap and trade, and we didn't. Further, it was the foundation of the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, which was the first agreement that sought to set binding international greenhouse regulations.

The Senate demonstrated its intent to defeat that with the Byrd-Hagel resolution. Let's remember what that was. The Berg-Hagel resolution—by

Senators Byrd and Hagel—was right here in this Chamber. They said they were going to oppose the ratification of any treaty that does one of two things—either it is harmful economically to the United States of America, or that countries that are developing countries, such as China, are not a part of it.

Well, that was the case. So the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 was a natural follow-on from that decision that was made. So even if President Trump removes the United States as a signatory to the Paris Agreement, we will continue to have a seat at the table and the President will have the ability to negotiate further deals. That is already done. That was the done, and it is inescapable. It was done back in 1992. We have been a party to that protocol. We have been ever since then and we will continue to be regardless of whether the President pulls out of the Paris Agreement.

In the event the President does decide to stay in the Paris Agreement, he will need the Senate for ratification because the Paris Agreement meets seven out of eight criteria established by the State Department to determine what constitutes a treaty. An agreement need meet only one of these, and this meets seven. So it would have to come in for ratification. If the President does not exit, the Paris Agreement will be considered as a treaty.

It is in the best interests of the Nation and the President's agenda to make a clean exit from this agreement. That is why we sent a letter, which was sent out this morning by about 25 Members of the Senate, encouraging the President to pull out of the agreement. It is the best way to get everything he wants: a complete end to the war on fossil fuels—which has been ongoing since the day Barrack Obama went into power—without the risk of any further future litigation mandating that the EPA establish new greenhouse gas regulations, and a decent seat at the table for the United States, which we all agree that we want. If for some reason he decides not to withdraw, he will have to submit it to the Senate as a treaty, and it would be defeated.

Let me mention two other things which I think are important and which I want to include in the RECORD at this time.

You know, we have been talking about the Paris Agreement. The far left has been trying to get a forum of cap and trade ever since Kyoto in 1997. They have tried to do it through legislation, tried over and over again, as I mentioned. They could not do it, so they tried to do it through regulation.

You might wonder, what was it way back in the beginning—what were the motives for this in the very first place? I carry this. I think it is very important to realize what people were saying about it.

The former Minister of the European Union—her name was Margot Wallstrom. She said: ''Kyoto is about the economy, about leveling the playing field for big business worldwide.''

Then along came Jacques Chirac. He said during a speech at the Hague in November of 2000 that Kyoto represents ''the first component of an authentic global governance.''

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper once dismissed UN's Kyoto Protocol as a ''socialist scheme.''

Then Christiana Figueres, who was actually at Paris at the time this thing was put together, said that ''the real goal is to change the economic development model for redistribution of wealth among nations.''

Those are some of the original comments people have forgotten about.

The last thing I will mention, because I think it is significant, is that I remember going to Copenhagen. At that time, the person who was the head of the EPA—an appointment by the President at that time—was Lisa Jackson. Lisa Jackson—actually, we became pretty good friends at that time. She had one problem: She had a hard time saying things that were not true. I asked her a question right before we left. I said: I have a feeling that once I leave town, once I go to Copenhagen, you are going to come up with an endangerment finding.

This was live on the record, by the way, in the committee I was chairing. She kind of smiled, so I knew it was true.

I said: Now, if you come up with an endangerment finding, it has to be based on science. What science would you rely on?

She said: Well, on the IPCC.

That is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Now, I wouldn't say as luck would have it, but it is kind of coincidental that right after she made that statement was when the big scandal that was referred to as ''Climategate'' came along. They discovered that the scientists who were with IPCC were not getting the results they wanted. So they rigged the science, and they were caught doing it with emails. So there wasn't any question as to what they were trying to do. So that totally diffused the effectiveness and the legitimacy of the IPCC.

In fact, Christopher Booker of the UK Telegraph said: ''This is the worst scientific scandal of our generation.''

So when people keep saying that science is settled, that is where it all came from—the IPCC.

Clive Crook of the Financial Times said:

> The closed-mindedness of these supposed men of science, their willingness to go to any length to defend a preconceived message, is surprising even to me. The stink of intellectual corruption is overpowering.

Well, I assumed at the time that that would end their providing the science and justification for passing what would have been the largest tax increase in the history of this country.

So, anyway, back to the issue here, several of us feel that to avoid all of this from happening, the best way to do it is to have this President, when he gets back from his trip, do what he campaigned on and pull out of the Paris Agreement, and I anticipate that he will do that.

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

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTIONS PASSED

SEC Rule requiring oil and gas companies to disclose their ''playbooks'' on how to win deals. Inhofe-CRA—first signed since 2001; Stream Buffer Zone rule that blocks coal mining; Education rule mandating federal standards for evaluating teacher performance; Education rule establishing national school board; Interior rule that blocked Alaska-control of hunting & fishing; Social Security rule that put seniors with ''representative payees'' on gun-ban list; OSHA rule that changed paperwork violation statute of limitations from 6-months to 5-years.

Defense rule that blocked contractors from getting deals if suspected (not convicted) of employment-law violations; Labor rule blocking drug-testing of unemployment beneficiaries; BLM rule blocking oil and gas development on federal lands. Federal Communications Commission rule that would have established 2nd regime of privacy rules in addition to Federal Trade Commission; HHS rule that would make it easier for states to fund Planned Parenthood; Department of Labor (DOL) rule forcing private sector employees onto goverment run retirement plans; DOL rule allowing states to bypass protections on retirement plans.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Regulatory reform: requires 2 regulations be repealed for each new regulation; WOTUS: directs EPA to rescind Waters of the United States Act; Energy: repeals clean power plan, other harmful regulations . . . ending War on Fossil Fuels; Mexico City: reinstates ban of fed funds going to NGOs that do abortions; Hiring Freeze: freezes federal hiring (exempted military); Military: rebuilds military; Approves Keystone XL pipeline; Approves Dakota Access pipeline.

Permit Streamlining: expedites infrastructure and manufacturing project permits; Immigration: 90 day suspension on visas for visitors from Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan,Yemen. 20 day suspension of U.S. Refugee Admission Program; Sanctuary Cities: blocks federal Department of Justice grants to sanctuary cities; Dodd-Frank: demands review of Dodd-Frank banking regulations and demanding roll-back; Shrink government: directs federal agencies to reorganize to reduce waste and duplication; Trade: evaluates policies to reduce trade deficit; Opioids: fed task force to address opioid drug crisis; Fiduciary rule: delays implementation of bad DOJ rule; Religious Liberty: Eases enforcement of Johnson Amendment and grants other protections for religious freedom; Offshore drilling: revises Obama-era offshore drilling restrictions and orders a review of limits on drilling locations; National Monuments: Directs a review of national monument designations.

Improves accountability and whistleblower protections for VA employees; Affirms local control of school policies and examines Department of Ed regulations; Reviews agricultural regulations; Reviews use of H–1B visas; Top-to-bottom audit of Executive Branch; Moves Historically Black Colleges and Universities offices from Department of Ed to White House; Obamacare: directs federal agencies to ease burdens of ACA; Establishes American Technology Council; Establishes office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy;

Identifies and reduces tax regulatory burdens; ''Hire America, Buy America''; Establishes a collection and enforcement of antidumping and countervailing duties and violations of Trade and Customs laws; Creates an order of succession within DOJ; Revokes federal contracting executive orders.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, this weekend we will mark the beginning of the Memorial Day remembrances that we do every year. Memorial Day, of course, is on Monday, but many activities will begin even today and tomorrow to honor those who have died in the defense of our country. These men and women had families, they had dreams for the future, and they had their whole lives ahead of them. But they did something extraordinary.

I remember that a few years ago I had the opportunity to be at the American cemetery in Normandy. At the end of the tour of that cemetery, the guide had us sit down on a ledge with the English Channel to our back and those 8,000 graves in front of us that we had just looked at and had talked about the sacrifices made. Then he flipped open his computer and, at that exact same spot, on the 20th anniversary of the D-day, General Eisenhower—former President Eisenhower—in 1964 was talking to Walter Cronkite. He said to Walter Cronkite: You know, Walter, my son John graduated from West Point on D-day, and over the last 20 years, I have watched him and his wife raise their family and have the experiences they have had, and, he said, many times I have thought about these young men and the life they didn't get to lead because of what they were asked to do.

Particularly, you had the person sitting there 20 years later who ultimately was the person who asked them to do what they were asked to do, and you understand that that is the kind of decision he thought about. It is the kind of sacrifice we should think about as we think about those who didn't get to pursue their dreams and didn't get to see the family they had grown up with or have the family they would have liked to have had because they laid down their lives so that we could take care of our families, so that we could realize our dreams, so that we could enjoy the freedoms that our Nation is truly blessed with and that make us truly extraordinary in our belief and our defense of freedom, not only for ourselves but for people everywhere.

We are grateful for all that these people have done, and this is a time of year that we particularly set aside to honor those fallen heroes—the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the marines, the people in the National Guard and the Coast Guard and the Reserve—called up and losing their lives in that cause.

Also, it is good for us to remember those who served and who were willing to make that sacrifice, if necessary, and often have their own burdens they carry from their service. Maybe that burden was just simply losing those years when others were already at a civilian job that they would only be able to go to later.

I am honored to represent nearly 500,000 Missouri veterans. As a member of the bipartisan Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus, I am committed to helping our veterans find good-paying jobs as civilians. We took an important step in that direction recently when President Trump signed the Honoring Investment in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act, or the HIRE Vets Act. I believe it may have been the first bill the Senate passed. I was pleased to be the principal sponsor of that bill, and it was the underlying bill on the continuing resolution that funded the government on April 17, and so it became law.

It addresses the fact that transferring from military to civilian life represents a number of challenges. It represents challenges for our servicemembers, and that transfer can be a difficult personal decision to make, but it is also difficult to navigate the civilian employment market and to find out who is recognizing the skills and the lessons learned by veterans and who may not be quite at the forefront of that.

The HIRE Vets Act helps to facilitate that transition by providing veterans more information on employers that offer benefits and opportunities geared toward hiring veterans. Many employers say they are veteran friendly, and many employers are veteran friendly, but there has really been no standard that anyone could look at to determine whether that was true or not—no standard for what employers aspire to do at their workplace or no standard that future veterans and employees can seek out.

This would be much like a LEED standard on energy efficiency. If you have that standard on your building or at your workplace, people know exactly what that means. This bill asks the Department of Labor to establish a similar kind of standard for those who are the best, for those who are nearly as good, and for those who are almost as good as them to see what people are doing—a tiered recognition of employers to see what they are doing to welcome, encourage, recognize, and promote veterans.

Some of the criteria that could go into that evaluation would include the percentage of new hires at your company who are veterans, the percentage of the overall workforce that is made up of veterans, what type of training and leadership activities are made available that are designed to maximize what a veteran uniquely has learned as a veteran, and what other benefits and resources are offered—things such as tuition assistance, things that encourage veterans to go ahead and get one other category of training or more.

Creating a national standard will help veterans narrow down their employment options and focus their job search efforts on the companies that recognize the value of their military service and what that value will bring to their new workplace, and also companies that will provide a long-term career path where those skills are used and appreciated. So this is a step in the right direction.

I have talked to the Secretary of Labor just this week, who said they intend to have this plan up and running by the end of this year, quicker than they were required to do but certainly not quicker than we hoped they would be able to do. So this is going to be a priority at the office of the Secretary of Labor, as veterans should be a priority for our society.

Today, we have the most powerful military in the world, but we really need to recognize—and I think we do recognize—that behind that military stands supporting families. Families are the backbone of the military today. They provide the kind of support that servicemembers need. They provide the encouragement for the difficult challenges of going from one post to another and one job to another. I think there are ways we can recognize those families and what they do in a better way.

I was able this year again to introduce the Military Family Stability Act. Military families have changed over the years. Our military stays in service longer. The skill levels they acquire are more valuable than might have been the case in the past. As the military gets more technical, having invested the time and training on someone in service is a more significant investment than it may have been at another time. Our policies that affect military families haven't kept pace with our investment in people who are serving.

According to a study by the Military Officers Association of America, 90 percent of military spouses who are women are either unemployed or underemployed. More than half of those people cite concerns about their spouse's service as a deterrent to their prospective employers: having to leave quickly without notice, not getting the ability to transfer from one State to another, or when their training or licensing has happened in the State they were living in.

Too often, military spouses have to end up sacrificing their own career. I think, in any case, we would understand there is some sacrifice here when you are moving from place to place, but there doesn't need to be a needless sacrifice.

So the Military Family Stability Act would allow families to address a problem. I consistently hear from military spouses and people serving in the military who talk about the challenges

their spouses face in Missouri and across the Nation.

An ill-timed move takes a child needlessly out of school a month early or makes a child start a school year a month late or prevents a husband or wife from being able to commit to a 9-month teaching contract or start a graduate program on time because the move they had anticipated happening is delayed. I have had people come and testify on exactly those two specific things and others that made a big difference in their family and their family's enthusiasm about the service they were jointly giving to the country.

For many families, if you make that move early, the family has to absorb the move. I think there is a better way to do this. I think we can increase stability in military families. This bill enables the servicemember or family to either move early or remain at their current duty station for up to 6 months while the spouse or the serving parent begins a new assignment. Now, for that to happen—the spouse moving early to the new assignment—the servicemember moving early or staying a little bit later has to absorb their single serviceperson expenses for staying. But as to the much more significant expenses, the family goes at a reasonable time when it is better for the family to go.

I am proud that this bill has garnered widespread support from numerous military family and veteran service organizations, including the National Military Family Association, the Military Officers Association of America, and others.

I am also pleased that at this moment, as we reintroduce the bill, Senator GILLIBRAND and I, Secretary Mattis—a former marine and decorated General, one of our most distinguished officers, who has seen the impact on families as he served—staff members at the Department of Defense, Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and his staff have been working with us to iron out the details on a bill that they all support and agree will help our military men and women and their families.

So the HIRE Vets Act and the Military Family Stability Act are bipartisan. They are commonsense measures that really get us closer to our goal of ensuring that we provide the support for servicemembers and veterans who have defended us.

We will also continue our oversight on the Veterans' Administration to ensure that those who have served receive more choices and that their healthcare benefits and other benefits they have earned are benefits that they will receive. There is really no reason they can't receive many of those benefits where they would prefer to go as opposed to where the government has previously thought were the only options. Veterans' choice is important. They chose to serve. We can now give them more choice than we have in the past to decide what works for them and their families.

So as we approach Memorial Day, I know that all the Members of the Senate are appreciative of those who served and the families who served alongside them. I look forward not only to honoring veterans between now and next Monday but between next Monday and a year from next Monday, continuing to do those things we can to be sure that those who serve and those who have served are fully appreciated for their service.

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

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, there has been a rare outburst of bipartisanship in the Senate this week. It is somewhat amazing, and I think it should be celebrated because Democrats and Republicans agree that the administration's new budget is a complete disaster. It has fallen with a bipartisan thud here in our Chamber.

I think there is a reason for that. Throughout the campaign and now as President, President Trump has made a lot of promises. He has promised a balanced budget. He has promised no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. He has promised the best healthcare for everyone at the lowest cost. He has promised massive new tax cuts. He has promised a great wall paid for by Mexico.

Skeptics, including myself, have awaited this budget to see the hard choices, the details, and the math that could make sense of those promises. After all of those words—and there were a lot of them—and all of those promises, we now have a budget, and it makes no sense.

Let's walk through a few of the numbers. Every year, our country collects on average about 18 percent of our gross domestic product in taxes—the equivalent of about 18 percent of our gross domestic product in taxes, and every year we spend just over 21 percent of the GDP. That gap is why our national debt continues to grow. Instead of closing the gap, where you have spending here and revenue here—instead of closing that gap, the President's budget proposes further tax cuts, bringing down the share of the GDP we are collecting and increasing defense spending while promising to balance the budget.

Just this morning, President Trump sent his Secretary of the Treasury to Congress to explain how all this adds up. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it. The only way the math in this budget works, the only way that the gap closes, is by assuming that magically our economy will grow faster than any serious economist in the country predicts and that, as a result of that outside growth, the government would take in an extra $2 trillion in taxes. That is the plan. That is the $2 trillion assumption about the finances of our country and the potential burden of the next generation of Americans, some of whom are sitting here with us today.

Even if you accept that math—which I don't—but even if you accept that math, we have another problem. The administration's budget also proposes massive tax cuts that it claims will not add to our debt because of the same $2 trillion in new tax revenues. As has been pointed out, that is double-counting, plain and simple, the kind that would cause any college freshman in America to fail his or her accounting exam. This would be like depositing the same paycheck at two different banks and claiming that your salary had doubled, then increasing your spending on groceries, travel, housing, and everything else as if it were actually true that your income would be double. You would go broke, and that is what is going to happen here.

It is no wonder that a Republican Congressman said that this budget was like building a house on what he called ''a sandy foundation.'' The administration's only hope of getting this through is if Americans, including some of the President's strongest supporters, ignore the math and ignore the fact that his proposal actually grows our national debt, cuts Social Security, cuts Medicaid, and savages countless programs that protect vulnerable Americans and invest in our future.

On Medicaid in particular, a lot of us are scratching our heads at the math, let alone the real world pain that would result, should this proposal become law.

The healthcare bill, which passed on the floor of the House—and I said about that bill that even if I think about the townhall meetings I have had in Colorado, where people object most strenuously and most strongly to what is called ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act, if you set out to design a bill less responsive to the people in my townhall who opposed ObamaCare—if you set out to draft a bill less responsive, you couldn't do a better job than they did in the House of Representatives.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his work on healthcare because I can actually recognize the concerns of my constituents in his fine work as opposed to what we have seen in the House.

One of the things that are so disturbing about that bill is that they are slashing Medicaid by around $830 billion. That is 20 percent of the Medicaid Program that has been cut in that House budget. This new budget would gut the program by another $600 billion. Combined, that would cut Medicaid nearly in half by 2026—in half. That means millions more Americans. This is why the CBO—the Congressional Budget Office—told us that 23

million Americans would lose their health insurance as a result of the bill—because it would mean that the minute all of this happened, people would struggle to get quality healthcare services.

In addition to the 23 million who are going to lose it because of the plan the Republican majority passed in the House, in my home State of Colorado—and I do not think it is very different from a lot of places in this regard—half of the people who are on Medicaid are kids. Are they supposed to go to work, or do we want them in school and having the benefit of a healthcare program?

Do we expect seniors in long-term care to go back to work? There are millions of Americans who are living in nursing homes, having spent their entire life savings for the privilege of being in long-term care or in nursing homes that are paid for by Medicaid. What are they supposed to do? Are we going to empty out the nursing homes in the United States?

I think, to some extent or another—I always get into trouble with my staff every time I say this, but I am going to say this again here—every one of us in this Senate is a conservative if ''conservative'' means to protect the institutions of our government and to think carefully before we leap. There is nothing conservative about this proposal on Medicaid. It is a radical proposal—a 20-percent Medicaid cut. We have not seen anything like that in our history.

What is amazing about this budget is not just that the math does not add up but that its targets are shockingly clear: rural communities, vulnerable Americans, vital investments in our future. This budget slams communities that are already hurting in our economy. Farmers would face a 21-percent cut to the Department of Agriculture, meaning less help to fight erosion, protect water quality, and improve irrigation. The budget eliminates the TIGER Grant Program entirely, which builds roads, bridges, and train stations all across the country. It cuts the maintenance budget for the U.S. Forest Service by over 70 percent, making it harder to maintain the trails and facilities that support rural outdoor economies.

I invite anybody here and I would welcome anybody to come visit Colorado. That is not a hardship; it is a beautiful place. See the condition that our national forests are in and the work that needs to be done and the conditions under which employees of the Forest Service are being asked to do their jobs. It is not right. It is not fair.

This budget eliminates essential air service which helps connect our most remote areas. Besides water, it is probably the most important lifeblood of our rural communities. It cuts assistance to State and volunteer fire departments, exposing our mountain towns to even greater risk. This is a horrible budget for rural America—horrible.

This budget also turns its back on families who are struggling the most. It eliminates support to heat low-income homes through the winter. That is the reason Democrats and Republicans do not support this budget. It cuts safety inspections for coal miners, while devastating support to fight pollution and clean up toxic sites that disproportionately harm poor communities. It cuts assistance to the homeless and community development block grants—ends it—which promote affordable housing and economic development in low-income areas. It slashes food stamps by 25 percent. It is like the Grinch himself wrote this budget. Nearly half of those who benefit from that program are children—poor children.

This budget not only ignores our duty to ensure that kids in poverty do not go hungry, it also fails to invest in their future. This budget cuts education funding by $9 billion. It slashes afterschool and summer programs for low-income children. It cuts funds to help teachers become better teachers. It cuts programs to help students work their way through college.

There is not anybody in America who thinks it is right that we are bankrupting families and students because of the high cost of college, which is something that their parents and grandparents did not have to endure because of choices we made then that we are not making today.

Who in his right mind thinks an answer to that is to cut work-study programs? Yet that is in the budget. It takes aim at our next generation. The budget targets next-generation research and technology that we need in order to compete in the 21st century. It slashes funds to the National Science Foundation.

Do you want a reason as to why Republicans and Democrats do not support this budget—why we have bipartisan opposition for it? It is that it cuts the NIH, the National Institutes of Health, by $8 billion even though its research supported over 330,000 jobs and $60 billion in economic activity just last year. It cuts research for low-cost, clean energy even though experts predict nearly $8 trillion of global investment in renewable energy over the next 25 years. It devastates the Department of Energy's loan program that spurs private investment and pays for itself.

Believe me, I have worked in every level of government. I have been in the private sector, too, and I know there is waste in every level of government. There is waste in the Federal Government. There are programs that make no sense, and there are decisions we make that make no sense. We need to strive every day to become better stewards of taxpayer dollars. I do not think we do a good enough job in this place of oversight, of how taxpayer dollars are being used. Yet this budget does not target waste, and this budget does not target fraud and abuse; it targets who we are as a nation and what we hope for, for the next generation.

In these times, the American dream is not something we can take for granted. It is the product of choices our forbearers have made and choices we have made—choices to invest in the future, to look out for one another and ensure that all Americans have opportunities to make the most of their God-given potential.

Budgets are more than just dollars and cents; they answer important questions about our vision for the future and our values as Americans. In that sense, it is worth considering how this budget would affect the everyday lives of Americans—of the people who come to our townhalls or the people who are too busy working, trying to provide for their families, to be able to go to our townhalls.

If this budget were to pass, a working mom might lose healthcare for herself and have to worry that her aging mother might not be far behind. She might have to cut back hours at work to pick up her kid whose afterschool program was just canceled. Driving home, she will wonder whether her child's weeklong cough has anything to do with the air he is breathing or the water he is drinking or whether that dinner was the last of the groceries for the month even though it is only the 25th.

These are the choices our constituents are going to face, and that is not the future we want. It is not an America we would choose for our kids.

(Mr. BLUNT assumed the Chair.)

I am wrapping up here. I know my colleague from Louisiana is here.

The most expensive thing for us to do is to give up on working people, our kids, and on urban and rural communities that are too often forgotten by people in Washington. That, I am afraid, is what this budget does—it gives up. In a sober analysis on real solutions to our problems and our basic commitment to each other, we are as fellow citizens bound by a common destiny, but this does not meet the test.

I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats, together, to write a budget that actually reflects the will of the American people. I look forward to working with the Presiding Officer and my colleague from Louisiana, who is doing such good work on healthcare.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado for his kind words.

I rise to speak about our Republican effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. I always kind of chuckle when I say the ''Affordable Care Act,'' as I have a friend back home whose quote for his insurance was $39,000 for 1 year. That is the un-Affordable Care Act.

A family member from San Francisco whose policy was $20,000 for 1 year had a $6,000 deductible for each person. I think her husband actually voted for BERNIE SANDERS, but she is like: The heck with this because I cannot afford it.

Then there is another fellow here in Washington, DC, who is an insurance consultant. If anybody can get a good deal, an insurance consultant should be able to. He says:

My family premium is $24,000 a year with a family deductible of $13,000. We will pay $37,000 before we receive benefit from our insurance policy.

That is unsustainable.

President Trump saw that during the campaign. He said over and over again—kind of his four pledges, if you will—that he wished to maintain coverage, lower premiums, get rid of those mandates that Americans hate in ObamaCare, and care for those with preexisting conditions. This is what he said over and over. It is a great pledge.

He actually said something else as well: He said he wanted to make healthcare easy. Now we have an approach to do this. Some people call it auto enrollment, but I call it making it easy. In this way, we can increase coverage and achieve the goals of President Trump's to lower the premiums. We are using something that is already used in Medicare and 401(k) plans. Again, we make it easy to enroll. Let me elaborate on this.

People argue that we have to have a mandate because without a mandate, people will lose coverage, and if people lose coverage, only the sick enroll and healthcare expenses increase. I think the Senate actually has an opportunity to do something better. We can make it easy. Under this, we can imagine that someone is eligible to be enrolled in our program unless he calls us up and says he does not want to be.

This is what we do in Medicare. When we—when I, when you, when any of us—turn 65, we are automatically enrolled in Medicare. I turned 65, and I am on Medicare. It is not a mandate. I can call them up and say that I do not want to. You have never heard anybody complain about it. It is just called making it easy.

Similarly, when a Fortune 500 company puts in a 401(k) plan, it has learned that if it asks somebody to sign all of the forms, and they can opt into its 401(k) retirement plan, it gets about 65 percent participation, but if they say: You are in unless you call us up and tell us you do not want to be—if they make it totally easy, they get 95 percent participation in that 401(k) program.

We know both from Medicare and from business that if you make enrollment easy, you have 95 percent participation. Now, that is so good in the setting of this because if we have all of those enrolled who are eligible to join the ObamaCare replace plan, we make that insurance pool large.

We call it a pool for a reason. If you pour a cup of water into an ocean, it does nothing to the level of the ocean. Similarly, if you have one person who is ill who is in a big pool of otherwise healthy people, it does nothing to the expense because the expense of that one person's illness is spread over many. So by making enrollment easy—fulfilling President Trump's pledge—just like the ocean with one cup of water, that one person who is sick, the expense spread out over many, the impact on any one person's premium is nil.

By the way, there is a lot of conservative support for this sort of concept. First let me just say that coverage is important. If we pretend that people having coverage is not important, it is just not true. I am a physician. I can tell my colleagues there are many conversations I have had where someone who was poorly insured or uninsured might need some critical medicine or critical procedure and we had to work, scramble, do everything we could to get her the coverage she needed to have sometimes a lifesaving procedure.

Rich Lowry is a conservative columnist for the National Review. He had a column saying that the worst argument against replacing the Affordable Care Act is that coverage is not important. Coverage is important.

If we go on toward this kind of concept—make healthcare enrollment easy; you are in unless you are out—Jim Capretta, Joe Antos, and Stuart Butler have all spoken about using this concept. Nina Owcharenko and Bob Moffit of the Heritage Foundation wrote in Senator JOHN MCCAIN's Presidential plan in 2008 that it would be accompanied by a system of automatic enrollment of health insurance, either at the workplace—and then they go on. But they were praising the Presidential candidate's—but now Senator JOHN MCCAIN's—employment of let's make it easy to enroll.

By the way, President Trump kind of emphasized this. Just before he was inaugurated on January 15, he gave an interview to the Washington Post and he was talking about his proposed healthcare law. We have already mentioned the components that he said were in it. He wanted all covered, caring for those with preexisting conditions, getting rid of the mandates, and lowering premiums, but he added this: People under his law ''can expect to have great healthcare. It will be in a much more simplified form. Much less expensive, and much better.''

I like that: simplified.

Under ObamaCare, we have like 16 pages online that people have to fill out with all their W–2s with them in order to find out if they are eligible. The patients I saw in a hospital for the uninsured where median income may have been $16,000, people lived in perhaps public housing, they took public transportation to the public library in order to log on because they did not have a home computer, much less internet. That is not simple. That is why enrollment numbers are lower for lower incomes. We make it easy.

Let me just emphasize one more time: If we can get that bigger pool of people, premiums fall. So for my family member in San Francisco who can't afford that premium, if we get that pool bigger, premiums fall. Similarly for the insurance consultant here or my friends back home in Louisiana, if we can make that pool bigger by making enrollment easier, their premiums will fall.

I will just say that I call myself a kitchen table conservative. All those conservative families who voted for Donald Trump, who sit down at their kitchen table and they know they can't afford a $20,000 premium and already they are struggling with their car note, their house note; they have given up sending their kids to a private school; they are doing whatever they can to make ends meet. Under the un-Affordable Care Act, they are required to pay so much. When they heard President Trump say that he would lower their premiums, they saw that as a lifeline for their family budget. Their vote for President Trump was a cry for help: Help us with insurance premiums we cannot afford.

Now, as a kitchen table conservative myself, to those families who voted for Republican candidates over the last several elections but who absolutely know they need help with their health insurance, we have a solution for them.

But let me pause for a second. You don't have to be a conservative to care for this solution. In fact, people on the left have actually endorsed this concept as well.

I will end by saying this. As we come up with a replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act, it will not be a Republican solution and it will not be a Democratic solution. At its best, it will be an American solution—an American solution for that family at the kitchen table, struggling to pay their premiums, who can't do so now but know that they need coverage. In so doing, if we can fulfill President Trump's campaign pledges to cover all, caring for those with preexisting conditions, eliminating mandates, and lowering premiums by making enrollment easy through something called auto enrollment, we will have done our job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM DAUSTER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have two words for Bill Dauster: Thank you.

Thank you, Bill Dauster, for your brilliant mind and unwearying service to the U.S. Senate, to the American people, and to America's most noble ideals.

Thank you for your good humor, and thank you for your endless supply of good ideas.

The Senate is going to miss you.

In Steven Spielberg's Movie ''Lincoln,'' with Daniel Day-Lewis, there is a scene in which President Lincoln is talking with Congressman Thaddeus Stephens of Pennsylvania, played by Tommy Lee Jones.

Thaddeus Stephens was one of the most righteous, uncompromising abolitionists in all of American history—and thank goodness for him.

In the movie, he tells President Lincoln that there is no use in appealing to the moral decency of slaveholders and their allies to end slavery and racial discrimination.

The reason, he says, is that ''the inner compass that should direct the soul toward justice has ossified''—become utterly useless—''through tolerating the evil of slavery.''

President Lincoln's reply was so wise. He said, ''A compass, I learnt when I was surveying, . . . it'll point you True North from where you'e standing, but it's got no advice about the swamps and desert and chasm that you'll encounter along the way.''

He went on to say,''If in pursuit of your destination, you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp, what's the use of knowing True North?''

There is a lesson in that story for all of us.

Passing laws in our democracy requires more than passion and more than clever speeches.

Passing laws requires legislative skill. It requires mastery of parliamentary procedure and arcane rules. That is how we avoid the ''swamps and desert and chasms'' that President Lincoln spoke of.

Bill Dauster knows more about the rules of the Senate than probably anyone since Senator Robert C. Byrd. That has made him something of a legend in the Senate, on both sides of the aisle.

But what makes him even more admirable is the reason that Bill Dauster has mastered the mechanics of lawmaking.

Bill has worked for a lot of big names in American politics, but it is dignity and justice and fairness for the little guy that has always driven him.

In 30-plus years, he left the Senate only twice, for brief stretches. Once was to be President Bill Clinton's deputy assistant for economic policy during the golden years of a budget surplus. The other time was in 1998 and 1999, to work on the Presidential exploratory committee of Senator Paul Wellstone.

Paul Wellstone used to say: ''I didn't come to the Senate to fight for the Rockefellers. They have enough lobbyists. I'm here to fight for the little feller.''

That could be Bill Dauster's motto too.

Bill Dauster has the rare sort of vision in which no one is invisible, no one is so small that they are undeserving of respect.

Bill isn't the only dedicated public servant in his family. His equally brilliant wife, Ellen Weintraub, has served as a commissioner on the Federal Election Commission since 2002.

They are the parents of three grown children, Matthew, Natanya, and Emma.

We thank the entire Dauster-Weintraub family for sharing Bill with us.

Somehow, even with the obligations of work and family, Bill has found the time to be something of a Talmudic scholar.

So let me end with this thought, from the ancient Taludic sage, Rabbi Tarfon, who wrote, ''Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.''

For 30 years, Bill Dauster has helped this Senate pass laws that have made life more just and more merciful for untold multitudes, in America and around the world. Although he is leaving the Senate, I know he wil never abandon that work.

THE PRESIDENT IN SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while the Office of Management and Budget was putting the finishing touches on its Orwellian-themed ''A New Foundation for American Greatness,'' the President's fiscal year 2018 budget, which proposes to eliminate or drastically reduce funding for a vast array of critical programs on which the American people—including the most vulnerable among us—depend, the Trump family was being feted by one of the world's wealthiest and repressive regimes.

Not only has the Saudi family used its vast oil wealth to promote an extremist ideology, including in madrassas and mosques in South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, its grip on power is made possible through corruption and the systematic denial of fundamental rights, including the brutal oppression of women and girls, human trafficking, and the exploitation of foreign labor.

After criticizing the Saudis during the Presidential campaign, earlier this week, President Trump and his family basked in the opulent glow of Saudi family royalty. According to press reports, just prior to their arrival, the President's son-in-law finalized a $110 billion sale of American weapons to the Saudis; yet neither the President nor his advisers, who danced with Saudi sheiks in a grand palace, voiced any concern that Saudi Arabia is a police state whose citizens have no opportunity to change their government, where criticism of the Royal family is not tolerated, and where arbitrary arrest and torture are common, nor with the Saudis' repeated misuse of U.S. military equipment against innocent civilians in Yemen.

In fact, standing next to the Saudi Foreign Minister at a joint press conference, Secretary Tillerson rightly called on the Iranian Government to restore freedom of speech and assembly for its people so they can ''live the life that they deserve.'' But do the Saudi people not deserve such rights? He made no such appeal to the Saudi monarchy.

Secretary of State Tillerson has also made clear that the values and individual rights that Americans have long believed are what makes the United States the great country that it is and which are in fact universal values enshrined not only in our Bill of Rights, but also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will take a back seat to our ''national security and economic interests.'' In that sense, the administration is modeling itself after China and Russia, which, given President Trump's admiration for ''strong'' leaders like President Putin and Secretary Tillerson's background as he head of the world's largest oil company, should surprise no one.

According to a press report, Secretary of Commerce Ross found it ''fascinating'' that there were no protests during the President's visit to Saudi Arabia. ''Not one guy with a bad placard,'' he said, apparently oblivious to the fact that protests are prohibited and any protester would have been immediately arrested.

I know I am not the only one here who finds it hard to fathom that a President who has condemned terrorism, as he should, says virtually nothing about the Saudi royal family's own support for extremism that breeds terrorism, and nothing about the Saudi regime's gross mistreatment of its own citizens. In fact, the President's daughter, who purports to speak on behalf of the White House, publicly praised the Saudi regime's progress on women's rights, ignoring the fact that every woman she met with—none of whom were women's rights activists—required the permission of a male relative to participate.

America's values, including the defense of human rights, are a source of our strength, our durability, and our leadership in the world. I have no qualms with a President of the United States visiting Saudi Arabia. In fact, I support it. What I don't support, however, is the President agreeing to a massive sale of weapons to a regime that, with the exception of its antipathy toward Iran, shares little in common with the United States. Saudi Arabia has been a supporter of terrorism. Its armed forces have committed war crimes in Yemen. Saudi Arabia ranks among the world's worse violators of human rights—even below Iran. The message to the Saudi regime and the Saudi people from President Trump and his family is that these issues are no longer important enough to even mention.

Those of us who have been working on protecting and promoting U.S. national security interests since long before this administration took office know better. It is not possible to effectively separate our values, like the protection of individual freedoms and other human rights, and our national security and economic interests. They are inextricably linked, and we will all pay the price if we ignore that reality.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, my wife Marcelle and I know and respect Jacqueline Mars. She joined the Washington National Opera's board of trustees in 2003. She was elected as chairman of the board of the Washington National Opera in 2011 and oversaw WNO's affiliation with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Some of the highlights during her tenure as chair have been the acclaimed production of American Ring—The Ring of the Nibelung; M&M's Opera in the Outfield; the Holiday Family Opera; and the American Opera Initiative. Marcelle tells me that, in recognition and appreciation of all of her tireless efforts and enormous contribution and support of the Washington National Opera, the Board of Trustees of the Washington National Opera have unanimously approved that Jacqueline Mars will now be recognized as chairman of the board of trustees emeritus of the Washington National Opera.

I ask unanimous consent that this resolution be printer in the RECORD.

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

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

The Board of Trustees of the Washington National Opera (the ''Board'') does hereby adopt the following resolutions:

Whereas, the Board recognizes the extraordinary achievements of Jacqueline Badger Mars as Trustee and Chairman of the Washington National Opera;

Whereas, in her years as Chairman, Jacqueline Badger Mars has provided wise, farsighted, and creative leadership in guiding the Washington National Opera from the challenges it faced in effectuating its historic affiliation with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, through its successful and acclaimed production of Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen cycle of operas—perhaps the most ambitious project that can be undertaken in the opera world, to its commissioning and introduction of new works by new composers and librettists as part of the American Opera Initiative;

Whereas, Jacqueline Badger Mars's service as Chairman has included numerous other highlights and accomplishments; and

Whereas, the Board wishes to recognize its deep appreciation to Jacqueline Badger Mars for her untiring efforts and enormous contribution to and support of the Washington National Opera and the operatic art form generally, and for her friendship over the years, now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That Jacqueline Badger Mars shall hereinafter be recognized as Chairman of the Board of Trustees Emeritus of the Washington National Opera; and further

Resolved, That this resolution shall be effective May 15, 2017.

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to remind my colleagues that today is National Missing Children's Day.

President Reagan highlighted the importance of making child safety a priority when he established May 25 as National Missing Children's Day for the first time in 1983. On this day, we pause to remember those children who have gone missing and honor those who are dedicated to their rescue.

According to the FBI, hundreds of thousands of children are reported missing each year. Most of these cases are closed within hours, thanks to the quick actions of families, communities, and law enforcement personnel, but there also are children, like Lyric Cook and Elizabeth Collins, who never make it home safely.

Ten-year-old Lyric and 8-year-old Elizabeth disappeared in 2012 while taking a bike ride near their grandmother's house in Evansdale, IA. Their bodies were found in the woods nearby later that year. Almost 5 years have passed since their lives were cut short, but the perpetrator has yet to be identified.

My heart goes out to their grieving families and the families of all the other children who have lost their lives in similar tragedies. These child abduction and murder cases are a reminder of the need to promptly pass legislation to extend the key programs authorized by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act. The Senate passed such a bill by a vote of 89 to 0 in the 114th Congress. Another measure that would make a difference in the lives of missing children is Kevin and Avonte's Law. Last year, the Senate unanimously passed this legislation, which is named in honor of two boys with autism who died after wandering from safety. This bill, which I cosponsored, promotes the use of technology to help locate children with autism and related conditions who may be susceptible to wandering away from safety. It also supports training for first responders and other community officials to help prevent and respond to these cases.

A related bill passed the other Chamber by a wide margin late last year. I am currently working with the sponsor of that companion bill, Congressman CHRIS SMITH, to resolve the differences between our two bills. Congressman SMITH and I intend to reintroduce an updated version of Kevin and Avonte's Law in each Chamber in the coming weeks.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that I will soon introduce legislation, known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017. The bill I am developing includes several provisions to help in the fight against child exploitation. First, it promotes training of school resource officers, to ensure that they can better detect and respond to child trafficking cases. Second, it updates the authorization for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Third, it extends and updates some of the key programs that were established under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

In closing, the feeling of dread and helplessness that families must feel when a child goes missing is unimaginable. To help prevent similar tragedies in the future, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these important pieces of legislation.

ASIAN PACIFIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and celebrate the many contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, AAPI. The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is diverse and draws from a variety of distinct cultures, each of which has strengthened this country—providing leaders, innovators, scientists, activists, artists, and citizens.

As we take the time to recognize Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and their heritage, it would be negligent to forget that this year marks 75 years since President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. He signed Executive Order 9066 in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor and authorized the Department of War—today known as the Department of Defense—to establish ''military zones.'' The military had complete authority over these zones, including control over who entered and who was permitted to leave. The military zones became internment camps. In total, some 75,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry and 45,000 Japanese nationals were imprisoned in these camps across the country.

At the time, many attempted to justify the internment camps by citing Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. They cited the need to protect our homeland from potential espionage. They cited the fact that Japan was our wartime enemy. They cited the likelihood that the next attack would come from someone ''looking like'' the enemy.

What they failed to explain was why no internment camps were established for Americans of German ancestry—or Italian ancestry. Japan was not our only wartime enemy; yet Japanese Americans were the only ones thrust into imprisonment under the guise of ''national security.''

It is not difficult to guess why. Japanese Americans were targeted because their heritage was thought to be easier to perceive. Of course, in many cases, the U.S. Department of War did not draw distinctions between Americans of Japanese ancestry and Americans of other Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry. If you were thought to look like the enemy, you were a target—full stop—and were at risk of being imprisoned illegally by the American Government.

This is one of the darkest periods in our history. We must not forget it. We cannot forget the tens of thousands of innocent families who were stripped of their basic human and legal rights and

property, racially profiled, and degraded. We cannot forget that ''national security'' was then—and is now—a poor justification for racial profiling and a transparent attempt to sanction and institutionalize racism.

These are lessons the Asian American and Pacific Islander community has carried for generations, all while making our country stronger and more inclusive. The AAPI experiences—when we take the time to hear them—force us to engage in self-reflection, to be more aware of our own biases, and more cautious of our own impulses.

As the former chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, I have worked hard to stay mindful of the needs and concerns of the AAPI community. I have learned that, while we have come a very long way over the past 75 years, the AAPI community still battles nativism that portrays its members as something other than ''real'' Americans. They still bear the burden and pain of discrimination, and they still struggle to have their voice and their perspective heard during the great debates of our time.

The changes Republicans are seeking on healthcare, for example, would have far-reaching consequences for the AAPI community. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have one of the highest incidences of Hepatitis A. In fact, in 2013, they had the highest Hepatitis A rates out of any ethnic group in the country. In 2015, tuberculosis was 30 times more common among Asian Americans than among any other group. Both Hepatitis A and tuberculosis would be considered preexisting conditions—conditions that would have made many Asian American and Pacific Islanders uninsurable before President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law and conditions that would result in sky-high premiums under the misguided American Health Care Act.

By comparison, the Affordable Care Act has reduced the uninsured rate for minority communities by at least 35 percent. It also expanded Medicaid, allowing over 250,000 more Maryland beneficiaries to access an array of mental health services like therapy, psychiatric rehabilitation, and many others. The Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion had similar positive impacts for mental health services across the country, which affects Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders directly as they continue to work tirelessly to reduce suicide rates. For these reasons, when we think of healthcare, we must consider the human cost our policies inflict on every community—on every American.

Likewise, immigration bans based on country of origin, race, or religion are awakening newfound fear that minority communities will be targeted once more, that racial profiling will rear its ugly head again, licensed and sanctioned by the Federal Government. The AAPI community's concern is warranted; people's fear is understandable. Each Member of Congress must realize that caring about the mistakes of our past means working with purpose and with conviction to prevent them from happening again in the present. We must use our votes where our values need defending and our voices where there is silence.

As we move forward through Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and beyond, I implore every member of this Chamber to remember that the best way to honor that heritage is to respect the community bearing it. Hearing their experiences, carrying their lessons with us into the policy arena, and considering their needs and fears as our own, these are the substantive ways by which we can truly honor Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage. I am committed to honoring it accordingly and join every American of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage in celebrating this month as their own.

JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month. As a proud Jewish American, I am honored to have the opportunity to acknowledge our heritage and the ways by which it has helped shape this country. The list is a long one, but this year, I want to focus on Mendes Cohen, whose legacy serves as a microcosm of our community.

Mendes Cohen was born in Richmond, VA, in May of 1796 to Israel and Judith Solomon Cohen, both of whom were immigrants. Mendes's father came from Germany, and his mother came from England. His father died when Mendes was just 12 years old. The event was a tragedy, of course, for Mendes, his six siblings, and his mother, who moved the family to Baltimore for a fresh start shortly thereafter.

Mendes grew up not far from where I grew up; he was raised not unlike I was raised. He believed in the value of public service. He believed in serving his country and working for the good of his community. He held fast to an ideology based on tolerance, equality, and fraternity. It was precisely this ideology that led him to fighting in the War of 1812 at Ft. McHenry. After the war, he and his brother Jacob began lobbying to change Maryland's constitution so that Jews could run for public office. In 1826, he was successful, and by 1847, he was a delegate in the Maryland General Assembly. He carried his love of country and belief in public service with him throughout the remainder of his life, going on to serve as a delegate to the State Peace Convention during the Civil War.

Mendes was, simply put, a historic marvel. He was a forward thinker, an activist, a consummate public servant, and a proud Jew. He broke down the single greatest barrier to Jewish entry into public life and opened the door for Jews—including me—to pursue public service. Today, as I stand in this Chamber as a U.S. Senator from Maryland, I am struck by the impact of Mendes Cohen's legacy. If I were able to speak to him now, I would tell him: thank you. Thank you for paving the way for me to have it all: my faith, my family, my heritage, and my career in public service. If Mendes were able to speak now, I imagine he would tell us that his work is unfinished. He would encourage us to continue carrying the torch of public engagement and civil service. He would remind us that path toward progress, by its very definition, has no endpoint.

These values underpin the broader Jewish community in Maryland and across the country. We learned early in our own history that the tide of oppression and bigotry can rise quickly and that, when it floods one shore, it floods them all. We learned that, when it comes for one community, it spares none. We learned that we must be our own stewards—that pluralism and equality demand constant guardians and that, when prejudice threatens them, nothing but our own tenacity can fend it off.

That tenacity is needed now more than ever, as we are confronted by resurgent anti-Semitism in every corner of the world—even here, at home. In the past few months, we have witnessed hate speech targeted at the Jewish community on social media, the ostracism and vilification of Jewish students on college campuses, and attacks against Jewish businesses and synagogues; yet it is precisely because the Jewish community has endured generations of persecution that promoting tolerance, equality, and inclusion has become a central tenant of Jewish American culture.

Jewish Americans participated in the abolitionist movement in the 19th century. They joined the ranks of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the Civil Rights movement. The partnership between Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington resulted in the construction of thousands of schools for African-American children in the South throughout the 20th Century.

Jewish Americans are proud of their history promoting such causes. They are proud of their faith and their heritage, but they are also proud to profess their support of other people's faiths and heritage. They are proud to be guardians of a free and pluralistic society; they are proud to weave love out of millennia of knowing hate. That is the story of Jewish Americans. From Mendes Cohen to the American Jewish community's defense of diversity and inclusion today, every chapter we write, though unique, shares the same theme: progress—progress and equality.

Jewish Americans have, therefore, helped make the United States the force for human and equal rights that it is today, but each day, we face challenges to those ideals, challenges that

have felt increasingly ominous in recent months; yet this country will remain a beacon for the oppressed and the downtrodden. That beacon will stay lit due, in no small part, to the continued activism and conviction of the Jewish American community. This month, we thank them for that service, as we remind ourselves that our work goes on.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to honor our brave men and women in law enforcement. During National Police Week, we commemorate the conviction and compassion they bring to their jobs every day, as well as the difficult choices and the sacrifices they make. From members of local police departments, to rapid transit officers, to court bailiffs, public safety officers risk their lives to keep our families and communities safe. That is a fact that we can never forget and a reality that confronts public safety officers and their families every day. This is a time to reflect on what law enforcement officers do for our communities, to thank those who serve us, and to pay special recognition to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

It is in that spirit, and with a heavy heart, that I rise to honor seven Michigan law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty in 2016. These men gave everything to their communities, their families, the State of Michigan, and their country. Across Michigan, our hearts have been shattered by their deaths, and our grief and gratitude go out to their families. Let us take one moment to honor their lifetimes of service: Myron Jarrett, Police Officer, Detroit Police Department; Ronald Kienzle, Court Officer, Berrien County Trial Court; Kevin Miller, Sergeant, Detroit Police Department; Collin Rose, Wayne State University Police Department; Kenneth Steil, Sergeant, Detroit Police Department; Michael Winter, Posse Deputy, Branch County Sheriff's Office; and Joseph Zangaro, Security Supervisor, Berrien County Trial Court.

The deaths of these officers were only some of the devastating tragedies that have shaken communities in Michigan and across this country. In these difficult times, we must always acknowledge each other's sacrifices, walk in one another's shoes, and feel the compassion in each other's hearts. This is what our law enforcement officers strive to do for us, and what we can do for them. During National Police Week and every day, we must continue to support our law enforcement officers, and we must work to ensure that they and their communities have the resources they need to live safely and serve the highest ideals of this Nation.

HONORING TROOPER THOMAS CLARDY

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to honor the memory of Trooper Thomas Clardy, who was killed in the line of duty on March 16, 2016.

Last week, the country observed National Police Week, a week in honor of the brave law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty, and on Monday, we will observe Memorial Day, a day we honor the heroic men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. Thomas Clardy, an officer and a veteran, is one of those brave people to whom our Nation owes a debt of gratitude.

Born and raised in Park City, UT, Trooper Clardy spent his adult life in service to his country, his community, and his family. After graduating from high school, Trooper Clardy spent 2 years in the U.S. Army before transferring to the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served 11 years.

Following his honorable discharge from the Marines, Trooper Clardy began a long and esteemed career in service to his community. He graduated from the Massachusetts State Trooper Academy in 2005 and was a valued member of the Massachusetts State Police until his untimely death.

Trooper Clardy was a dedicated and loving husband to his wife, Reisa, and father to his seven children. Thanksgiving was a sacred holiday for Trooper Clardy. He spent it, without fail, surrounded by friends and loved ones, enjoying football with the kids and spending quality time with the family he loved so much.

Today we honor his service and sacrifice. May his memory continue to challenge and inspire us.

HONORING OFFICER RONALD TARENTINO

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to honor the memory of Officer Ronald Tarentino, who was killed in the line of duty on May 22, 2016.

Last week, the country observed National Police Week, a week in honor of the brave law enforcement officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community. Officer Ronald Tarentino was one of those brave officers.

Officer Tarentino was born in Medford and raised in Medford and Tewksbury, MA. The son of a police officer, he followed his father's example when he joined the police force, spending 7 years in the Leicester Police Department before transferring to the Auburn Police Department, where he served until his untimely death 2 years later.

I had the honor of attending the wake of Officer Tarentino and was moved by the stories of his selfless dedication to those around him. Officer Tarentino was the coworker everyone loved. His passion for his work was easily apparent to anyone who knew him. He came into work with a smile and made friends with all of his colleagues. Outside of work, he enjoyed fishing, hunting, and archery and was a member of the Massachusetts Police Association, the Auburn Elks, and Mustangs or Massachusetts.

Most of all, Officer Tarentino was a loving husband and a father of three. Today we honor his service and sacrifice. May his memory continue to challenge and inspire us.

RECOGNIZING THE 555TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY BATTALION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes today and share with my colleagues an extraordinary piece of our country's World War II and civil rights history: the story of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion—or the Triple Nickles, as they would come to be called.

The 555th was officially activated in December 1943 at Fort Benning, GA, and began as a company of Black officers and enlisted men. Seventeen soldiers graduated Army jump school the following February, earning a coveted Parachutist Badge—their ''wings.'' The Army transferred the unit after several months to Camp Mackall, NC, and, in November 1944, redesignated it Company A of the newly activated 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

Although the 555th did not serve overseas during World War II, it performed an important role in defending the American homeland. In 1944 and 1945, the Japanese launched roughly 9,000 ''balloon bombs,'' explosives attached to paper balloons that rode the jetstream current across the Pacific Ocean and over the contiguous United States.

One of these balloon bombs exploded in Oregon, killing a pregnant woman and five children in what historians regard as the only American World War II combat causalities to occur in the contiguous United States.

The members of the 555th boarded a train westward to Oregon on a secret mission to help defend Americans living in the Pacific Northwest and the natural timber resources deemed vital to the war effort.

The incident in Oregon was one of more than 275 documented balloon bomb related incidents as far east as Detroit, MI, south into Texas, and north into Canada and Alaska.

Japanese balloon bombs, of course, had the potential not only to wound or kill but also to set forests ablaze in the western United States. Putting those fires out and dealing with their aftermath could divert the Nation's focus on the war effort and dampen American morale.

The Triple Nickles arrived in Oregon in 1945 and were sent out to Pendleton Air Field, then still an active military base. They were assigned to work with

the U.S. Forest Service and received specialized training as smokejumpers and on the handling of unexploded balloon bombs.

As part of Operation Firefly, the 555th made some 1,200 jumps and fought more than 35 fires in Oregon, Washington, and other western States between July and October 1945.

Smokejumping is no easy feat; it is dirty, sweaty, and dangerous work, but because of the 555th's dedication and professionalism, the unit only ever sustained one fatality: Malvin Brown tragically fell to his death in the Umpqua National Forest about 45 miles northwest of Crater Lake. His death is regarded as the first smokejumper death in U.S. history.

Make no mistake about it, Malvin Brown and the other soldiers of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion are heroes. They were the first Black paratroopers ever to serve in the U.S. Military, which they did with honor and distinction. They are also the only military unit in history to work as smokejumpers.

The soldiers of the 555th faced painful discrimination and blatant racism on a daily basis. They were barred from the store on base while at Fort Benning, GA, even though German and Italian prisoners were allow to enter. Even after the Triple Nickles arrived in Oregon, they found most restaurants and bars would not serve them.

The Army sent the 555th to Fort Bragg, NC, following the Japanese surrender and, in December 1947, integrated the unit into the famed 82nd Airborne Division—making the 82nd the Army's first racially integrated division.

On June 3, 2017, the State of Oregon will commemorate the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion's remarkable history and important contributions to the country with the installation of an Oregon State historic marker at the Smokejumper Museum in Cave Junction.

It is my true honor to share their story today with my colleagues and to express my profound gratitude to all the Triple Nickles for their service.

75th ANNIVERSARY OF ALEUTIAN ISLANDS CAMPAIGN AND ALEUT EVACUATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as we approach Memorial Day, we remember the men and women who sacrificed their lives in devotion to the causes of liberty, freedom, and democracy. As such, I would like to take the opportunity to speak about one event in our Nation's history that had a profound impact on my great State of Alaska. June 3 marks the 75th anniversary of the Aleutian Islands Campaign of the Second World War.

This ''Forgotten Battle'' began with the bombing of Dutch Harbor and subsequent invasions of Adak, Kiska, and Attu, AK by the navy of Imperial Japan. For the Allied forces, this campaign resulted in 1,481 casualties, 640 missing, and 3,416 wounded, but perhaps what is even less known, is the impact this conflict had on the Aleut—Unangan/Unangas—peoples of Alaska.

In the months of June and July of 1942, Aleut communities were damaged, homes and personal possessions rummaged through or destroyed by Allied forces, and more than 881 Aleut civilian residents of the Pribilof Islands and the Aleutian Islands west of Unimak Island were relocated to temporary camps in Southeast Alaska. Forty-two residents of Attu were taken to Japan in September 1943, where they spent the rest of the war as prisoners, and nearly half of them died, mainly of hunger and malnutrition.

The campaign ultimately ended in an Allied victory with the Japanese withdrawal from the Aleutians in 1943, but the effects are still felt by those communities and peoples who were impacted.

Today, before the Senate, I would like to take a moment to honor the sacrifices of our servicemembers, including the 25 Aleut who joined the Armed Forces and the three who participated in the U.S. invasion to recapture Attu and later received Bronze Stars for their valor. I want to also honor the civilians, the Aleut evacuees, and Attuan prisoners of war whose communities, culture, languages, and lives were forever affected.

From June 2 to 4, 2017, a memorial ceremony will take place in Alaska to honor and acknowledge the evacuees, their descendants, and veterans of this ''Forgotten Battle,'' both living and deceased.

REMEMBERING CECILIA ZARATE-LAUN

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of Cecilia Zarate-Laun. Her passing leaves Wisconsin without one of its greatest advocates for justice and peace, and I am proud to pay tribute to this extraordinary woman.

Cecilia was born in Santander Province of Colombia. She was the oldest of five sisters and attended school in Bucaramanga and at the National University of Colombia. Following the completion of her studies, she took a position as a professor of nutrition, a job that led to her arrival in Madison, WI for graduate school.

Cecilia received a scholarship to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison for her master's degree. While studying in Madison, Cecilia met her beloved husband, Jack. After completion of graduate school, Cecilia returned to Colombia, working as a nutritionist for the Colombian Government's National Nutrition Plan. In 1976, she married John ''Jack'' Laun and the following year returned to the United States.

In 1987, extended civil war in Colombia inspired Cecilia and Jack to cofound the Colombia Support Network CSN, a grassroots human rights organization based in Madison, WI. Cecilia's work with CSN was her pride and joy. As CSN program director, Cecilia worked tirelessly to connect Americans to Colombian communities affected by the war. She was inspired to help establish new chapters of CSN in locations ranging from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to central New York, connecting these communities through a ''sister cities'' program to rural Colombian communities facing violence during the Colombian civil war.

She led over 50 delegations of citizens, journalists, and public officials to Colombia so they could fully understand the effect of the civil war. After working with Cecilia and CSN to establish a sister community relationship between Dane County, WI and San José de Apartadó, Colombia, I had the honor to accompany her on one of those delegations in 1993.

In addition to her public service through CSN, Cecilia was a member of the national board of directors of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was also a member of the Latin American Subcommittee of the American Friends Service Committee—Quakers—served on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, and, in October of 2015, received the Global Citizen of the Year Award from the Madison Chapter of the United Nations Association.

Regardless of the cause or project, Cecilia approached everything with unparalleled strength, courage, and a sense of selflessness. She approached her battle with cancer with the same attitude. Over the last 4 years, while Cecilia fought against her disease, she continued to fight for others. Her strength was truly amazing.

While Cecilia is greatly missed by her family, friends, and community, she leaves behind a legacy for future leaders to emulate. She will always be remembered for her courageous effort to fight for those who could not fight for themselves.

Cecilia had an incredibly big heart and an unwavering commitment to others. I am fortunate to have been able to call her my friend.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL H. BENNETT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Judge Michael H. Bennett. Judge Bennett will be retiring in May 2017 after serving 28 years as an immigration judge.

Former Oregon Governor Tom McCall once said, ''Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are people who say, 'This is my community, and it is my responsibility to make it better.''' Judge Bennett truly is a hero, for he has devoted much of his life to making the United States and his community better.

Judge MICHAEL BENNETt began his career as a general attorney for the

legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service in El Centro, CA. He also worked as an Assistant Attorney General and Assistant Public Defender for the Government of American Samoa. Judge Bennett was appointed as an immigration judge in El Centro, CA, in 1989.

In Oregon, we were fortunate to have Judge Bennett assigned to our immigration court in 1998. During his tenure, Judge Bennett has served as an impartial adjudicator who is known for his fair and compassionate decisions. He has gained the respect of his colleagues, fellow attorneys, and the public for his intricate knowledge of immigration law. Further, Judge Bennett has created a positive work environment in the Portland immigration court that is commendable and should be recognized.

Judge Bennett comes from a long line of public servants, including his grandparents and parents. His grandfather served in the U.S. Navy and fought in WWII. Judge Bennett's father also served in the U.S. Navy and eventually earned his Ph.D. and became a teacher. Judge Bennett and his wife, Sivai, have continued to dedicate themselves to making Oregon a better place through their public service.

It is an honor to recognize Judge Michael H. Bennett for his service to the United States, to Oregon, and to his community.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAINE DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the Maine Dental Association was incorporated in 1867 with 22 members. Today I wish to recognize the MDA and its more than 700 members for 150 years of dedication to their profession and to the people of our State.

The remarkable advancements in dentistry over the years were accompanied by a greater understanding of the link between oral health and overall health. As doctors who specialize in oral medicine, the dentists of the MDA are a central part of Maine's healthcare sector. Expanding access to healthcare, including oral healthcare, is among the most important issues facing our society. Maine is a large, rural State with a strong network of dental clinics supported by MDA members. In addition, the MDA sponsors the Donated Dental Services Program that provides free comprehensive care to our disabled, aged, and medically compromised citizens in need.

Access to oral healthcare in Maine took a major step forward on May 20, 2017, when the University of New England College of Dental Medicine held a commencement ceremony for its first graduating class. The MDA has been a strong supporter of this first dental college in northern New England since the college was founded in 2013, and many of the 62 graduates who earned doctor of dental medicine degrees performed clinical rotations in communities throughout the State under the guidance of MDA members. I visited the Portland UNE clinic and was delighted to learn of the plans of many students to practice in Maine where their services are very much needed. From preventing and treating oral health problems to educating parents and caregivers, MDA members also play an essential role in the health, safety, and well-being of Maine children.

Throughout our State, members of the Maine Dental Association provide vital healthcare with expertise, commitment, and compassion. It is a pleasure to congratulate the MDA for 150 years of accomplishments and contributions benefiting the people of Maine.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF CASE IH AGRICULTURE AND FARM EQUIPMENT

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Case IH Agriculture and Farm Equipment and to recognize its outstanding commitment and contribution to Wisconsin's economy.

Mr. Jerome Increase Case, born in 1819 in western New York, was well acquainted with agricultural equipment even as a young man. Case provided threshing services to local farms and realized at the young age of 16 that farming techniques needed improvement after witnessing a demonstration of an early threshing machine that could thresh more in one hour than a man could all day. After settling in Wisconsin in the early 1840s, Case build his first thresher-separator in Rochester, WI, but when the town refused to let Case draw electricity from the local mill, Case loaded his invention into a wagon and headed to Racine, WI.

The J.I. Case Threshing Machine Company was founded in 1842 at a time when Racine's tallest building was the local grain elevator. By 1848, the company was Racine's largest employer. As a true pioneer in the field of agricultural equipment, J.I. Case manufactured the first steam engine tractor in 1869. The Old No. 1 is still on display at the Smithsonian Institution. Although it was mounted on wheels, it was still drawn by horses. The first self-propelled steam engine followed in 1876.

Case machines were first transported beyond U.S. borders in 1871 and won first prize at the Paris Exposition. By 1886, Case became the largest producer of steam engines in the world.

During World War II, the company's plants manufactured aircraft wings, aircraft towing tractors, artillery shells, and doors for the Sherman tank. In fact, the company's 1942 centennial was celebrated 7 years late because of the war.

In 1985, Case IH became the Nation's second-largest farm equipment manufacturer after J.I. Case purchased the agricultural division of International Harvest and the business legacies of two major equipment companies were united under one company. In 1999, Case IH merged with New Holland Ag to form a parent company, CNH Global, although equipment was still produced under the Case IH name. Since the merger, Case has remained at the forefront of the farming industry, seeking new ways to adapt to the changing trends. In 2010, Case IH created the world's first tractor to meet the tier 4 emissions requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency. Case IH Agriculture and Farm Equipment currently works with more than 4,900 dealers and distributes products in more than 160 countries.

As one of Wisconsin's founding manufacturers, Case has been a major contributor to Wisconsin's farming legacy. Over the past 175 years, this proud company has provided jobs for countless Wisconsin families and economic growth for the State I am so proud to represent.

I offer my sincere congratulations to Case leadership and workers as they celebrate 175 years of business, and I wish them the very best for many more years of success in Racine and around the world.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO HARRY SIMMONS, JR.

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Harry Simmons, Jr., of Yazoo City, MS, for his service and contributions to the State of Mississippi while serving as the 81st president of the Delta Council.

Since its founding in 1935, Delta Council has grown to be a widely respected economic development organization representing the business, professional, and agricultural interests of the Mississippi Delta region. I am grateful to Delta Council for its continuous role in meeting the economic and quality of life challenges in this unique part of our country.

Harry Simmons's tenure as council president began in May 2016. In leading the council, he has been a notably strong advocate for Federal flood control, farm support, and infrastructure improvements in the Delta region.

A Yazoo County native, Mr. Simmons graduated from Yazoo City High School and earned an agricultural economics degree from Mississippi State University. He has had a strong career as a catfish and row-crop producer. Mr. Simmons, with his daughter Katy and son-in-law Andy Prosser, jointly manage both his farm operation and highly successful catfish processing operation, Simmons Farm Raised Catfish. His processing facility employs more than 200 people in Yazoo County, and his farming operation consists of catfish, corn, soybeans, and cotton production.

In addition to his leadership in Delta Council, Mr. Simmons has served as chairman of the Catfish Institute, president of Catfish Farmers of America, and on the boards of both the

Yazoo Planters Cotton Gin and Yazoo County Development Foundations. He also served our State and Nation as a commissioned officer in the Mississippi National Guard.

I am pleased to join the people throughout my State in commending Harry Simmons, Jr., and sharing our appreciation with his wife, Shirley, and their children, Emily and Katy, and grandson, Miller, as the 82nd annual meeting of the Delta Council membership convenes in June.●

RECONIZING JEROME D. MACK MIDDLE SCHOOL

● Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, today I am honored to congratulate the Jerome D. Mack Middle School, in Las Vegas, NV, for earning the School Innovation and Change Award, SICA. On June 1, 2017, a representative of the National Principals Leadership Institute will join with Mack Middle School to recognize this achievement formally to a gathering of 700 parents, students, and teachers.

This award recognizes Mack Middle School's principals, teachers, staff, and students for their efforts to embrace new and innovative strategies for educational improvement. To win this award, Mack Middle School submitted a competitive application to the National Principal Leadership Institute that included a school profile, a school changes story, documents supporting those changes, a reflection of innovation, a sustainability plan for how a $10,000 award would be used, and a description of community building.

Earning this award is no easy feat. In its improvement efforts, Mack Middle School has seen many upgrades in technology and pedagogy that mark demonstrable change. Every student now receives a laptop computer, and all assignments are completed on a virtual classroom portal. Students are taught to critically self-assess their own abilities and have learned to improve their skills to new levels of mastery. Their principal is a nationally board certified teacher and a nationally accredited principal mentor. Ten of their teachers attend national board certification classes, and approximately 390 of their students will earn high school credits this year. All this to say Mack Middle School is more than deserving of this award.

Moreover, these changes have positively affected the campus dynamic as teachers are excited about their work and students take charge of their education plans. More community center than a school, Mack Middle School has become a hub where parents and students alike partake in use of the school's athletic fields and even the school's Wi-Fi signal. In an area that is too often marred by high crime and poverty, the school stands as a beacon of what is possible when teachers are engaged in their community and where parents take an active role in their students' lives. Mack Middle School is an inspiration for East Las Vegas and the greater Nevada community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jerome D. Mack Middle School for their hard work, innovative approaches to education, and their efforts to improve educational outcomes for students in East Las Vegas.●

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM ''BILL'' AUSMUS

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing William ''Bill'' Ausmus of Hardin, a World War II Army veteran who celebrated his 100th birthday earlier this month. Bill has been involved with a variety of community organizations in Big Horn County for many years, helping countless Montanans along the way. His accomplishments are something we can all celebrate.

After his World War II military service concluded, Bill spent almost seven decades serving in his local American Legion Post 8 and remained in an active capacity with the post into his nineties. His professional vocation was serving as the Big Horn County surveyor and, for a time, the assessor. These vital positions afforded him the opportunity to interact with and provide useful help to many in his local community. Bill developed a reputation for accuracy and customer service in his professional work. He was also integral in the formation of his local Methodist Church and is known for his volunteerism and generous donations to community projects and causes.

The longevity of his many endeavors and willingness to help others along the way serves as an inspiration to us all. When looking back through the history of Big Horn County during the past century, it is clear that Bill has been key contributor. Congratulations, Bill, on your recent 100th birthday, and thank you for your service.●

TRIBUTE TO CLAIRE ALISON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Claire Alison, an intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Claire is a graduate of El Camino Real Charter High School in Los Angeles, CA. Currently, she is attending California State University, Northridge, where she is majoring in history. Claire is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of her experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Claire Alison for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH SCHARTZ

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Joseph Schartz, an intern in my Washington, DC office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Joseph is a graduate of South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, having earned a degree in journalism. Currently, he is attending the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, where he is pursuing his master's in public policy. Joseph is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of his experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Joseph Schartz for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:34 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 467. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes.

H.R. 624. An act to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on Federal documents sent by mail, and for other purposes.

H.R. 953. An act to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1293. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees.

H.R. 2052. An act to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 14. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 11:58 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 375. An act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) announced that on May 24, 2017, he had signed the following enrolled bill, which was previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

H.R. 366. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 467. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 953. An act to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 1293. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2052. An act to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images; to the Committee on Armed Services.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 624. An act to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on Federal documents sent by mail and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 512. A bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy (Rept. No. 115–86).

S. 692. A bill to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance (Rept. No. 115–87).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 176. A resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

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.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Scott P. Brown, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Independent State of Samoa.

Nominee: Scott Philip Brown.

Post: Ambassador New Zealand and the Independent State of Samoa.

Nominate: April 25, 2017.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: $250, 6/23/14, McFadden for Senate; $250, 8/27/15, Friends of Kelly Ayotte Committee.

Contributions as Chairman of the Peoples Seat PAC, Fiscal Responsibility PAC Converted to SCOTT PAC (attached hereto as Attachment ''1'' Incorporated herein as Attachment ''1'')

2. Spouse: Gail M. Brown, None.

3. Children and Spouses: Ayla M. Brown, none; Arianna S. Brown-Hendry, none.

4. Parents: Judith A. Brown, none; C. Bruce Brown—Deceased.

5. Grandparents: Bertha C. Rugg—Deceased; Philip N. Rugg—Deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Bruce W. Brown—estranged, no contact or information available.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Lee Ann Riley, none; Robyn. L. Brown, none.

8. Attachment ''1'': All PAC's including Fiscal Responsibilty PAC, S. Brown, Chair—

Recipient name, Disburse date, amount:

Mike Sullivan for U.S. Senate Committee, 4/11/2013, $875.00.

Friends of John Thune, 5/10/2013, $500.00.

Gabriel Gomez for Senate, 5/10/2013, $1,000.00.

Kirk for Senate, 5/10/2013, $1,000.00.

New Hampshire Republican State Committee, 10/24/2013, $5,000.00.

New Hampshire Republican State Committee, 10/24/2013, $5,000.00.

Scott County Republican Central, 11/11/2013, $500.00.

The Addivinola Committee, 11/20/2013, $1,000.00.

Friends of Frank Guinta, 11/21/2013, $1,000.00.

Texans for Senator Cornyn Inc., 11/21/2013, $2,500.00.

Daugaard for South Dakota, 11/21/2013, $1,500.00.

Tisei Congressional Committee, 12/9/2013, $1,000.00.

Hampstead Town Republican Committee, 12/9/2013, $500.00.

Pat Roberts for US Senate Inc, 1/8/2014, $2,500.00.

Massachusetts Citizens for Jobs, 1/8/2014, $5,000.00.

New Hampshire Republican State Committee, 2/24/2014, $5,000.00.

Collins for Senator, 3/11/2014, $2,500.00.

Friends of Frank Guinta, 3/11/2014, $4,000.00.

Friends of John McCain Inc, 3/11/2014, $5,000.00.

Friends of John Thune, 3/11/2014, $5,000.00.

Friends of Kelly Ayotte, 3/11/2014, $5,000.00.

Committee To Elect House Republicans, 3/11/2014, $1,000.00.

New Hampshire Republican State Committee, 3/11/2014, $5,000.00.

Senate Republican Majority PAC, 3/11/2014, $5,000.00.

Belknap County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Carroll County NH Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Cheshire County Republican Party, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Committee To Elect House Republicans, 3/13/2014, $4,000.00.

Concord Republican City Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Coos County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Derry Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Grafton County Republican Committee of New Hampshire, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Hillsborough County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Manchester Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Merrimack Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Nashua Republican City Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Rockingham County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Strafford County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

Sullivan County Republican Committee, 3/13/2014, $1,000.00.

New Hampshire for Scott Brown, 3/26/2014, $5,000.00.

New Hampshire for Scott Brown, 3/26/2014, $5,000.00.

Merrimack County Republican Committee, 3/26/2014, $1,000.00.

Debicella for Congress, 4/22/2014, $1,000.00.

Friends of Kelly Ayotte, 4/23/2014, $2,500.00.

Rockingham County Republican Committee, 5/5/2014, $1,000.00.

Grafton County GOP, 5/19/2014, $400.00.

New Hampshire Sheriff's Association, 6/9/2014, $500.00.

Bedford Republican Committee, 8/12/2014, $210.00.

Hillsborough County Republican Committee, 9/5/2014, $200.00.

Friends of Kelly Ayotte Inc., 4/27/2015, $2,500.00.

Georgians for Isakson, 6/23/2015, $2,500.00.

Friends of John McCain, 6/25/2015, $2,000.00.

Fiscal Responsibility PAC, 6/30/2015, $4,837.00.

Kasich for America, 8/27/2015, $1,000.00.

NH Republican Party Federal, 8/31/2015, $5,000.00.

Ron Johnson for Senate, 8/31/2015, $2,500.00.

Jasper for NH Committee, 9/23/2015, $1,000.00.

Carly for President, 9/25/2015, $1,000.00.

Friends of Pat Toomey, 9/25/2015, $5,000.00.

Huckabee for President, Inc., 9/25/2015, $1,000.00.

JEB 2016, Inc., 9/25/2015, $1,000.00.
Ted Gatsas for Mayor, 9/25/2015, $1,000.00.
Portman for Senate Committee, 9/28/2015, $5,000.00.
Chris Christie for President, Inc., 9/29/2015, $1,000.00.
Pataki for President, Inc., 9/30/2015, $1,000.00.
Friends of Kelly Ayotte, Inc., 10/6/2015, $2,500.00.
New Hampshire Republican Club, 10/21/2015, $500.00.
August Wolf for Senate, 10/29/2015, $1,000.00.
Marco Rubio for President, 11/5/2015, $1,000.00.
USA Triathalon Foundation, 11/5/2015, $1,500.00.
Kirk for Senate, 11/9/2015, $5,000.00.
Lindsey Graham 2016 Committee, 11/10/2015, $1,000.00.
Chris Sununu for NH Governor, 11/17/2015, $2,500.00.
Friends for Joe Heck, 11/23/2015, $5,000.00.
Murkowski Committee, 12/3/2015, $2,500.00.
Friends of Kelly Ayotte, Inc., 1/5/2016, $4,900.00.
Cruz for President, 1/11/2016, $1,000.00.
Friends of Joe Kenney Comm., 3/1/2016, $250.00.
McCain for Senate, 3/10/2016, $3,000.00.
Burr, Richard M, 4/12/2016, $1,000.00.
Chris Sununu for NH Governor, 5/31/2016, $2,500.00.
Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., 6/8/2016, $2,500.00.
America Rising PAC, 6/17/2016, $5,000.00.
Mass. Victory Committee, 6/17/2016, $500.00.
Friends of John McCain, 8/30/2016, $1,000.00.
Friends of JEB Bradley for State Senate, 9/1/2016, $500.00.
Friends of Dan Innis, 9/22/2016, $1,000.00.
Friends of Andy Sanborn, 10/14/2016, $500.00.
Gannon for Senate, 10/25/2016, $250.00.
Committee To Elect House Republicans, 10/27/2016, $2,500.00.
Friends of Chris Sununu, 10/31/2016, $1,000.00.
Friends of Chris Sununu, 2/2/2017, $7,000.00.
Edwards for Congress Committee, 4/6/2017, $2,700.00.
Handel for Congress, Inc., 4/21/2017, $2,000.00.
America Rising PAC, 4/21/2017, $10,000.00.
New Hampshire Republican State Committee Federal, 4/21/2017, $1,000.00.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

*Foreign Service nominations beginning with Fred Aziz and ending with Nathalie Scharf, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 25, 2017.

*Foreign Service nominations beginning with David Gossack and ending with Pamela Ward, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 25, 2017.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1229. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for Move America bonds and Move America credits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 1230. A bill to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. UDALL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1231. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections, to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for automatic voter registration; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. KING (for himself and Mr. PAUL):

S. 1232. A bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to exempt from inspection the slaughter of animals and the preparation of carcasses conducted at a custom slaughter facility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1233. A bill to improve the efficiency and reliability of rail transportation by reforming the Surface Transportation Board, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 1234. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 to provide for expedited project implementation relating to the comprehensive Everglades restoration plan; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1235. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1236. A bill to require the Attorney General to designate Human Trafficking Coordinators for Federal judicial districts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1237. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to clarify the rule allowing discharge as a nonpriority claim of governmental claims arising from the disposition of farm assets under chapter 12 bankruptcies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1238. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and make permanent the exclusion for benefits provided to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1239. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules applicable to length of service award plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1240. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to establish an Office of Public Participation and Consumer Advocacy; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1241. A bill to improve the prohibitions on money laundering, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. CARDIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1242. A bill to provide for increases in the Federal minimum wage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1243. A bill to require sexual assault prevention and response training for all individuals enlisted in the Armed Forces under a delayed entry program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. MURKOWSKI)):

S. 1244. A bill to extend the authorization of appropriations for additional funds for the essential air service program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. FRANKEN:

S. 1245. A bill to award career pathways innovation grants to local educational agencies and consortia of local educational agencies, to provide technical assistance within the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to administer the grants and support the local educational agencies with the preparation of grant applications and management of grant funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. DURBIN)):

S. 1246. A bill to increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1247. A bill to provide for loan repayment for teachers in high-need schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1248. A bill to amend title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1249. A bill to authorize additional district court judgeships for the northern, middle, and southern districts of Florida; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1250. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to improve the recruitment and retention of employees in the Indian Health Service, restore accountability in the Indian Health Service, improve health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER:

S. 1251. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to establish a pilot program for providing portable benefits to eligible workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1252. A bill to reclassify certain low-level felonies as misdemeanors, to eliminate the increased penalties for cocaine offenses where the cocaine involved is cocaine base, to reinvest in our communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1253. A bill to improve the coordination and use of geospatial data; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1254. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the small employer health insurance credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 1255. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to credit individuals serving as caregivers of dependent relatives with deemed wages for up to five years of such service, and to support State medical training programs for caregivers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RISCH, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 1256. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a ''Ghost Army'' that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1257. A bill to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 1258. A bill to require States to report to the Attorney General certain information regarding use of force incidents involving law enforcement officers and civilians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 1259. A bill to improve and extend agricultural commodity programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 1260. A bill to authorize the exchange of certain Federal land located in Gulf Islands National Seashore for certain non-Federal land in Jackson County, Mississippi, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 1261. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay the reasonable costs of urgent care provided to certain veterans, to establish cost-sharing amounts for veterans receiving care at an emergency room of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 1262. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 1263. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to prohibit oil-, gas-, and methane hydrate-related seismic activities in the North Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Straits of Florida planning areas of the outer Continental Shelf, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1264. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to allow the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to exempt certain depository institutions from certain legal requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1265. A bill to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to provide for the expansion of emergency planning zones and the development of plans for dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1266. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. HATCH, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 1267. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to convey to a State all right, title, and interest in and to a percentage of the amount of royalties and other amounts required to be paid to the State under that Act with respect to public land and deposits in the State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1268. A bill to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to allow States to provide foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse and to reauthorize grants to improve the well-being of families affected by substance abuse; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1269. A bill to require the Office of Pipeline Safety to consult with the Environmental Protection Agency or the Coast Guard in the event the Federal on-scene coordinator has concerns about the ability of a pipeline operator to respond to a worst case discharge; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MERKLEY)):

S. 1270. A bill to direct the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to carry out programs and activities to ensure that Federal science agencies and institutions of higher education receiving Federal research and development funding are fully engaging their entire talent pool, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 1271. A bill to designate certain mountain peaks in the State of Colorado as ''Fowler Peak'' and ''Boskoff Peak''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 1272. A bill to preserve State, local, and tribal authorities and private property rights with respect to unmanned aircraft systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 1273. A bill to amend chapter 329 of title 49, United States Code, relating to average fuel economy standards for automobiles; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 1274. A bill to direct the President to establish an interagency mechanism to coordinate United States development programs and private sector investment activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HOEVEN:

S. 1275. A bill to improve the housing conditions and promote useful land uses within tribal communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. TILLIS, and Mrs. ERNST):

S. 1276. A bill to require the Attorney General to make a determination as to whether cannabidiol should be a controlled substance and listed in a schedule under the Controlled Substances Act and to expand research on the potential medical benefits of cannabidiol and other marihuana components; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 1277. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a high technology education pilot program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. KAINE, Mr.

MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1278. A bill to provide for the admission of the State of Washington, D.C. into the Union; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRAPO:

S. 1279. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs through the use of non-Department health care providers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1280. A bill to help keep law enforcement officers and communities safer by making grants to purchase body worn cameras for use by State, local, and tribal law enforcement officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 1281. A bill to establish a bug bounty pilot program within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1282. A bill to redesignate certain clinics of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Montana; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 1283. A bill to authorize the award of a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who were exposed to ionizing radiation as a result of participation in the testing of nuclear weapons or under other circumstances; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1284. A bill to raise the consolidated assets threshold under the small bank holding company policy statement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 1285. A bill to allow the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to lease or transfer certain lands; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. KING):

S. 1286. A bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. PAUL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DAINES, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 1287. A bill to allow United States citizens and legal residents to travel between the United States and Cuba; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1288. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to allow preservation leasing as a form of compensatory mitigation for discharges of dredged or fill material affecting Indian land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1289. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to exempt Indian tribes from compensatory mitigation requirements in connection with certain discharges of dredged or fill material, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. FRANKEN):

S.J. Res. 42. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the proposed export to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of certain defense articles; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S.J. Res. 43. A joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and associated persons or forces, that are engaged in hostilities against the United States, the Armed Forces, or its other personnel; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. KAINE):

S. Res. 179. A resolution expressing support for the designation of June 2, 2017, as ''National Gun Violence Awareness Day'' and June 2017 as ''National Gun Violence Awareness Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. Res. 180. A resolution condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Ms. HARRIS):

S. Res. 181. A resolution designating the week of May 21 through May 27, 2017, as ''National Public Works Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 182. A resolution designating May 2017 as ''Melanoma Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. HELLER)):

S. Res. 183. A resolution recognizing the significance of May 2017 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 54

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 54, a bill to prohibit the creation of an immigration-related registry program that classifies people on the basis of religion, race, age, gender, ethnicity, national origin, nationality, or citizenship.

S. 97

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 97, a bill 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, and for other purposes.

S. 231

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 231, a bill to implement equal protection under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States for the right to life of each born and preborn human person.

S. 263

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 263, a bill to facilitate efficient State implementation of ground-level ozone standards, and for other purposes.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 299, a bill to require the appropriation of funds to use a fee, fine, penalty, or proceeds from a settlement received by a Federal agency, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against providers of health services that are not involved in abortion.

S. 341

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 341, a bill to provide for

congressional oversight of actions to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 369

At the request of Mr. CASEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 369, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in awarding a contract for the procurement of goods or services, to give a preference to offerors that employ veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 413

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 413, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit prescription drug plan sponsors and MA–PD organizations under the Medicare program from retroactively reducing payment on clean claims submitted by pharmacies.

S. 424

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 424, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to include certain Federal positions within the definition of law enforcement officer for retirement purposes, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 474

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 474, a bill to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens.

S. 515

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 515, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 568, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 692

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 692, a bill to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export Administration Act of 1979 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. CORKER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors 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. 822

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants, and for other purposes.

S. 872

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 872, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 910

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 910, a bill to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities who need long-term services and supports, and for other purposes.

S. 981

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 981, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy efficiency materials pilot program.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1035

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1035, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 with respect to the scope of employee pension benefit plans.

S. 1057

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1057, a bill to amend the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 to address harmful algal blooms, and for other purposes.

S. 1092

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1092, a bill to protect the right of

law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions.

S. 1094

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1094, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1122

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1122, a bill to amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to clarify when the time period for the issuance of citations under such Act begins and to require a rule to clarify that an employer's duty to make and maintain accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses is an ongoing obligation.

S. 1151

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1151, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable credit for working family caregivers.

S. 1169

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1169, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with an option to provide medical assistance to individuals between the ages of 22 and 64 for inpatient services to treat substance use disorders at certain facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1191

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1191, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for other purposes.

S. 1196

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1196, a bill to expand the capacity and capability of the ballistic missile defense system of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1227

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1227, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 106

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 106, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.

S. RES. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 139, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 168

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 168, a resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

S. RES. 174

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 174, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service.

S. RES. 176

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 176, a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 176, supra.

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 176, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1237. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to clarify the rule allowing discharge as a nonpriority claim of governmental claims arising from the disposition of farm assets under chapter 12 bankruptcies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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. 1237

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 ''Family Farmer Bankruptcy Clarification Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION OF RULE ALLOWING DISCHARGE TO GOVERNMENTAL CLAIMS ARISING FROM THE DISPOSITION OF FARM ASSETS UNDER CHAPTER 12 BANKRUPTCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1232. Claim by a governmental unit based on the disposition of property used in a farming operation

''(a) Any unsecured claim of a governmental unit against the debtor or the estate that arises before the filing of the petition, or that arises after the filing of the petition and before the debtor's discharge under section 1228, as a result of the sale, transfer, exchange, or other disposition of any property used in the debtor's farming operation—

''(1) shall be treated as an unsecured claim arising before the date on which the petition is filed;

''(2) shall not be entitled to priority under section 507;

''(3) shall be provided for under a plan; and

''(4) shall be discharged in accordance with section 1228.

''(b) For purposes of applying sections 1225(a)(4), 1228(b)(2), and 1229(b)(1) to a claim described in subsection (a) of this section, the amount that would be paid on such claim if the estate of the debtor were liquidated in a case under chapter 7 of this title shall be the amount that would be paid by the estate in a chapter 7 case if the claim were an unsecured claim arising before the date on which the petition was filed and were not entitled to priority under section 507.

''(c) For purposes of applying sections 523(a), 1228(a)(2), and 1228(c)(2) to a claim described in subsection (a) of this section, the claim shall not be treated as a claim of a kind specified in section 523(a)(1).

''(d)(1) A governmental unit may file a proof of claim for a claim described in subsection (a) that arises after the date on which the petition is filed.

''(2) If a debtor files a tax return after the filing of the petition for a period in which a claim described in subsection (a) arises, and the claim relates to the tax return, the debtor shall serve notice of the claim on the governmental unit charged with the responsibility for the collection of the tax at the address and in the manner designated in section 505(b)(1). Notice under this paragraph shall state that the debtor has filed a petition under this chapter, state the name and location of the court in which the case under this chapter is pending, state the amount of the claim, and include a copy of the filed tax return and documentation supporting the calculation of the claim.

''(3) If notice of a claim has been served on the governmental unit in accordance with paragraph (2), the governmental unit may file a proof of claim not later than 180 days after the date on which such notice was served. If the governmental unit has not filed a timely proof of the claim, the debtor or trustee may file proof of the claim that is consistent with the notice served under paragraph (2). If a proof of claim is filed by the debtor or trustee under this paragraph, the governmental unit may not amend the proof of claim.

''(4) A claim filed under this subsection shall be determined and shall be allowed under subsection (a), (b), or (c) of section 502, or disallowed under subsection (d) or (e) of section 502, in the same manner as if the claim had arisen immediately before the date of the filing of the petition.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 11, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in section 1222(a)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by striking ''unless—'' and all that follows through ''the holder'' and inserting ''unless the holder'';

(ii) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) subject to section 1232, provide for the treatment of any claim by a governmental unit of a kind described in section 1232(a).'';

(B) in section 1228—

(i) in subsection (a)—

(I) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(aa) by inserting a comma after ''all debts provided for by the plan''; and

(bb) by inserting a comma after ''allowed under section 503 of this title''; and

(II) in paragraph (2), by striking ''the kind'' and all that follows and inserting ''a kind specified in section 523(a) of this title, except as provided in section 1232(c).''; and

(ii) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting '', except as provided in section 1232(c)'' before the period at the end; and

(C) in section 1229(a)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) provide for the payment of a claim described in section 1232(a) that arose after the date on which the petition was filed.''.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 12 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''1232. Claim by a governmental unit based on the disposition of property used in a farming operation.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any bankruptcy case that—

(1) is pending on the date of enactment of this Act and relating to which an order of discharge under section 1228 of title 11, United States Code, has not been entered; or

(2) commences on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce, along with Senator FRANKEN, the Family Farmer Bankruptcy Clarification Act of 2017. I thank Senator FRANKEN for supporting and working with me, since the 112th Congress, on this important bill to help our Nation's family farmers.

This bipartisan bill addresses the 2012 United States Supreme Court case Hall v. United States. In a 5–4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled a provision that I authored in the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act did not accomplish what we in Congress intended. The Family Farmer Bankruptcy Clarification Act of 2017 corrects this unfortunate result and restores Congress's original intent. The bill clarifies that bankrupt family farmers reorganizing their debts, under chapter 12 of the bankruptcy code, may treat capital gains taxes owed to the government, arising from the sale of farm assets during the bankruptcy, as general unsecured claims. This bill will give family farmers a chance to reorganize successfully and remove the Internal Revenue Service's veto power over a plan's confirmation.

Congress created chapter 12 in 1986 as a temporary measure to provide a specialized bankruptcy process for family farmers. In 2005, Congress made chapter 12 a permanent part of the bankruptcy code. Between 1986 and 2005, we learned what worked and did not work for family farmers reorganizing under chapter 12. In particular, family farmers faced serious problems when they needed to sell land to fund their reorganization plan. For example, a family farmer might sell portions of the farm in order to generate cash and pay creditors. Unfortunately, in most of these cases, the family farmer is selling land with a low cost basis, because it has likely been held in the family for a very long time. As a result, the family farmer gets hit with a substantial capital gains tax, which is owed to the Internal Revenue Service.

Under the bankruptcy code's priorities structure for claims, taxes owed to the IRS must be paid in full, unless the IRS agrees otherwise. This creates problems for the family farmer who needs cash to pay creditors and reorganize. Since the IRS has the ability to require full payment, it essentially holds veto power over the confirmation of a family farmer's chapter 12 plan. In many instances, the effect is that a family farmer will not be able to have a plan confirmed. This is a harsh result and does not make sense if the goal is to give family farmers a fresh start. Recognizing this problem, Congress amended the bankruptcy code in 2005 to provide that in these limited and particular situations, the taxes owed to the IRS would be stripped of their priority and treated as general unsecured debt. This removed the government's veto power over plan confirmation and paved the way for family farmers to reorganize under chapter 12.

Unfortunately, in Hall v. United States, the Supreme Court ruled that despite Congress's express goal of helping family farmers, the language we used failed to accomplish the intended result. To be clear, the Hall case was about statutory interpretation. There is no question about what Congress was trying to do; rather, the question is, ''Did Congress use the correct language?'' My goal, along with others at the time, was to relieve family farmers from having their reorganization plans fail because of certain tax liabilities owed to the government. Justice Breyer noted this point in his dissent: ''Congress was concerned about the effect on the farmer of collecting capital gains tax debts that arose during (and were connected with) the Chapter 12 proceedings themselves. . . . The majority does not deny the importance of Congress' objective. Rather, it feels compelled to hold that Congress put the Amendment in the wrong place.'' Hall v. United States, 132 S.Ct. 1882, 1897 (2012) (Breyer, J., dissenting) (internal citations and quotations omitted).

As a result of the Hall case, family farmers facing bankruptcy now find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. The rules have changed and must be corrected in order to provide certainty and clarity in the law. The Family Farmer Bankruptcy Clarification Act of 2017 does this and provides the help needed for family farmers.

This bill adds a new section 1232 to the bankruptcy code. This new section, along with other conforming changes, gives guidance and certainty to debtors, practitioners, and courts as to how these claims are to be treated during bankruptcy. I'm pleased that the bill we're introducing today will help family farmers who are facing hard times.

In the wake of the Hall decision, this bill ensures that what Congress sought to do in 2005 actually occurs. The Family Farmer Bankruptcy Clarification Act of 2017 provides the help that may one day be needed for the hard working family farmers across our great Nation.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1238. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and make permanent the exclusion for benefits provided to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1239. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules applicable to length of service award plans; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce two bills that will benefit the brave women and men who volunteer at our local firehouses: the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act and the Volunteer Firefighters' Length of Service Award Program Cap Adjustment Priority Act. I am pleased to be joined by my friend and colleague from Maryland, Senator CARDIN, in reintroducing this bipartisan legislation.

Across our nation, volunteer firefighters play a critical role in helping to ensure the safety of our communities and the well-being of our neighbors. The State of Maine, for example, has approximately 11,000 firefighters in more than 400 departments. Because Maine is a largely rural state, more than 90 percent of those firefighters are volunteers.

Without these public-spirited citizens, many communities would be unable to provide emergency services protection at all, while others would be forced to raise local taxes to pay salaries and benefits for full- or part-time

staff. Often, communities seek to recruit and retain volunteers by offering modest benefits. The bills we are introducing today would support these efforts by helping to ensure that nominal benefits to volunteers are not treated as regular employee compensation.

The Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act would allow communities to provide volunteer firefighters and EMS workers with up to $600 per year of property tax reductions or other incentives, without those benefits being subject to federal income tax and withholding. This would ease the administrative burden that local departments sometimes face when they reward their volunteers. We also want to help first responders save for retirement. For years, local and state governments have provided their volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel with different forms of benefits, including Length of Service Award Programs, commonly known as LOSAPs. These are pension-like benefits for volunteer emergency responders.

Our second bill, the LOSAP Cap Act, would help communities recruit and retain volunteer firefighters by increasing the annual cap on contributions to their retirement accounts to $6,000, and allowing for adjustments for inflation.

As we begin the complicated process of reforming our nation's tax code, I believe we should take care to protect those who serve this country with such bravery. That is why Senator CARDIN and I have introduced these bills today, and I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting them.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 1262. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1262

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 ''Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. EXCEPTIONS TO DISCHARGE.

Section 523(a)(8) of title 11, United States Code, is amended by striking ''dependents, for'' and all that follows through the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''dependents, for an educational benefit overpayment or loan made, insured, or guaranteed by a governmental unit or made under any program funded in whole or in part by a governmental unit or an obligation to repay funds received from a governmental unit as an educational benefit, scholarship, or stipend;''.

Mr. DURBIN. Today I am reintroducing the Fairness for Struggling Students Act. This bill takes an important step toward addressing the student debt crisis in America. It would once again treat private student loans like nearly all other forms of private unsecured debt and permit these loans to be discharged in bankruptcy.

Student loan debt has reached an astronomical $1.4 trillion—more than double what it was in 2008. Student loan debt is now the second largest form of consumer debt in America, after only mortgage debt. The balance of student loan debt is larger than credit card and auto loan debt. Currently, around 44 million borrowers hold student loan debt, with an average balance of roughly $30,000.

This past weekend, the New York Times published an editorial that clearly and concisely describes the student debt crisis that we face. The editorial is titled ''Student Debt's Grip on the Economy,'' and I ask consent to place it into the RECORD. As the editorial points out, ''student debt has become a drag on graduates' hopes and a threat to economic growth.''

This editorial reports that as college costs have continued to increase, wages have not kept pace. Students continue to take out larger amounts in loans to afford the rising costs of college. This crushing student loan debt has forced young people to delay making important life decisions like getting married and economic investments such as home ownership. We are also seeing an increase in the wealth gap between college graduates with student debt and those without student debt. The burdens of student debt are threatening the notion that being college-educated is enough to get ahead. As the editorial notes, ''the fallout from these burdens, afflicting those who are supposedly best prepared to face and shape the future, is not only a personal financial issue but also a social and economic one.''

These burdens are even more significant for students who have taken out private student loans. Federal student loans have fixed, affordable interest rates, and a variety of consumer protections including forbearance in times of economic hardship and manageable repayment options. Private loans, on the other hand, frequently have high, variable interest rates, and they lack the repayment options and protections that federal loans offer. In 2013, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau reported that the outstanding private student loan debt in America was $165 billion, at least $8 billion of which was then in default. As it turns out, many students were steered into costly private student loans by for-profit colleges, often when the students still had eligibility for lower-cost federal loans.

One of those students is a woman named Marta, from Chicago, who wrote to me about her story and asked me to only use her first name. Marta came to the United States from Poland in 1994 with her family, hoping for a better life. She is a U.S. citizen now, and has a family of her own. As an aspiring designer, Marta wanted to enroll in a college that would help launch her career. So after meeting a recruiter at a college fair from the now-closing, for-profit Harrington College of Art and Design, she enrolled in the fall of 2004. At the urging of the recruiter, she signed the enrollment paperwork and began courses. Being the first in her family to attend college, she did not know the difference between private and federal student loans. The recruiter assured her that the paperwork was just part of the normal college enrollment process.

It was only after she graduated that Marta learned that in signing the paperwork the recruiter gave her, she had taken out a combination of federal student loans and much riskier and more expensive private student loans. She now has over $120,000 in student debt, the majority of which is in private student loans. The monthly payments are overwhelming and Marta worries about what this crushing debt means for her family's future. Thanks to high-interest rates, her private loans continue to grow despite doing her best to make her payments.

Marta enrolled in college to get a good career and widen her future opportunities. But she has been left with enormous debt from a failed for-profit college. And now she is struggling and needs a fair chance to get back on her feet. There are stories like Marta's in every corner of America. And it's time to do something about it.

Today I am reintroducing the Fairness for Struggling Students Act. This bill would restore the bankruptcy code's pre-2005 treatment of private student loans.

Since 2005, private student loans have enjoyed a privileged status under the bankruptcy code: they cannot be discharged in bankruptcy except in extremely limited circumstances. Only a few other types of private unsecured debt cannot be discharged in bankruptcy—criminal fines, child support, back taxes and alimony. In contrast, nearly all types of private unsecured debt, including credit card and medical debt, are dischargeable in bankruptcy.

Congress had no good reason to make private student loans non-dischargeable in 2005. It was a provision that was quietly slipped into a broader bankruptcy reform bill with little debate and no justification. There was no evidence that private student loan borrowers had abused the bankruptcy system to avoid repayment before 2005. But, since the law changed in 2005, lenders have been incentivized to extend expensive private student loans to students that the students cannot repay and that they can never escape. This is overwhelming for students and an impairment on our overall economy.

The Fairness for Struggling Students Act will make important relief available to students being crushed by private student loan debt, and will discourage private lenders from extending risky loans.

This bill is supported by a large coalition of educational, student, civil rights and consumer organizations including the American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Association of University Women, American Council on Education, American Federation of Teachers, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Center for Responsible Lending, Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Demos, Empire Justice Center, NAACP, National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients), National Association of College Admission Counseling, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, National Consumers League, Public Citizen, The Institute for College Access and Success, UNCF, and Young Invincibles.

I want to thank the cosponsors of this bill, Senators WHITEHOUSE, FRANKEN, BLUMENTHAL, HIRONO, WARREN, REED, WYDEN, BALDWIN, HASSAN, KAINE, and MURPHY for their support, and I hope more of my colleagues will join us.

This is just one step of what we need to do to get control of the student debt crisis in our country. But it is a critical step, and it is long overdue. Let's give struggling students a fair chance,

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By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 1264. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to allow the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to exempt certain depository institutions from certain legal requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I wish to introduce the Community Bank Sensible Regulation Act of 2017, a bill that would allow financial regulators to exempt community banks from unnecessary and unduly burdensome requirements, if doing so is in the public interest. My bill would provide this authority to the FDIC, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Federal Reserve and would apply to financial institutions with less than $10 billion in assets.

The aim of my legislation is to allow the financial regulators to exempt community banks from highly complex regulations designed to protect our financial system from systemic risks that would arise from the failure of larger banks. All banks, large and small, should be well-capitalized and properly regulated, but that does not mean that our financial regulators must impose a ''one size fits all'' regulatory regime across the board without regard to the risks posed to the financial system by banks with fundamentally different business models and of vastly different sizes.

Some regulations that are appropriate or essential for larger banks may make no sense when applied to community banks. For example, current law requires community banks to demonstrate that they are in compliance with the Volcker Rule—which restricts proprietary trading and hedge fund investments by banks—even though community banks rarely engage in such trading. Even so, community banks must shoulder the burden of complying with this complex regulation. My bill would allow the regulators to exempt community banks from the Volcker Rule.

As the GAO has noted, smaller banks are ''disproportionately affected by increased regulation, because they are less able to absorb additional costs.'' These costs are significant. According to industry representatives, the cost of complying with regulations absorbs 12 percent of total bank operating expenses, and is two-and-a-half times greater for small banks than for large banks.

The cost of regulation puts community banks at a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis larger banks. Over the past two decades, the share of the U.S. banking industry represented by community banks has declined from 40 percent to just 18 percent. Over the same period, the share of the market represented by the five largest banks has grown from roughly 18 percent to 46 percent. I am concerned that unnecessary regulation will accelerate these trends, and ironically, contribute to the further consolidation of the banking industry into a handful of ''too big to fail'' banks.

Community banks play an essential role in meeting the credit needs of their customers, particularly small businesses, homeowners, and farmers. Although community banks represent just 18 percent of total banking assets, they are responsible for half of our nation's small business loans. With small business formation at generational lows, it is essential that we preserve and protect their access to credit, as they are the major driver of job creation in our country. In addition, community banks provide three-fourths of our nation's agricultural loans, a line of finance that requires highly specialized knowledge of farming and a long-term perspective suited to agricultural cycles.

Regulators should be able to tailor their regulations to take the distinctive nature of community banks into account. My bill would allow regulators to exempt community banks from unnecessary and burdensome regulations where it is in the public interest to do so. I urge my colleagues to support it.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1268. A bill to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to allow States to provide foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse and to reauthorize grants to improve the well-being of families affected by substance abuse; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DAINES. 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. 1268

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 ''Child Protection and Family Support Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking ''or'' and inserting '', with a parent residing in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility, but only to the extent permitted under subsection (j), or in a''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(j) CHILDREN PLACED WITH A PARENT RESIDING IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, a child who is eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this section, or who would be eligible for the payments if the eligibility were determined without regard to paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (a), shall be eligible for the payments for a period of not more than 12 months during which the child is placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, but only if—

''(A) the recommendation for the placement is specified in the child's case plan before the placement;

''(B) the treatment facility provides, as part of the treatment for substance abuse, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling; and

''(C) the substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling is provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and in accordance with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions to address the consequences of trauma and facilitate healing.

''(2) APPLICATION.—With respect to children for whom foster care maintenance payments are made under paragraph (1), only the children who satisfy the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (a) shall be considered to be children with respect to whom foster care maintenance payments are made under this section for purposes of subsection (h) or section 473(b)(3)(B).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 474(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(1)) is amended by inserting ''subject to section 472(j),'' before ''an amount equal to the Federal''.

SEC. 3. ENHANCEMENTS TO GRANTS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Section 437(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''INCREASE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND TO IMPROVE THE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AFFECTED BY'' and inserting ''IMPLEMENT IV–E PREVENTION SERVICES, AND IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND IMPROVE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY METHAMPHETAMINE, HEROIN, OPIOIDS, AND OTHER'';

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'regional partnership' means a collaborative agreement (which may be established on an interstate, State, or intrastate basis) entered into by the following:

''(A) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR ALL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS.—

''(i) The State child welfare agency that is responsible for the administration of the State plan under this part and part E.

''(ii) The State agency responsible for administering the substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant provided under subpart II of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act.

''(B) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PROPOSING TO SERVE CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS.—If the partnership proposes to serve children in out-of-home placements, the Juvenile Court or Administrative Office of the Court that is most appropriate to oversee the administration of court programs in the region to address the population of families who come to the attention of the court due to child abuse or neglect.

''(C) OPTIONAL PARTNERS.—At the option of the partnership, any of the following:

''(i) An Indian tribe or tribal consortium.

''(ii) Nonprofit child welfare service providers.

''(iii) For-profit child welfare service providers.

''(iv) Community health service providers, including substance abuse treatment providers.

''(v) Community mental health providers.

''(vi) Local law enforcement agencies.

''(vii) School personnel.

''(viii) Tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortia of the agencies).

''(ix) Any other providers, agencies, personnel, officials, or entities that are related to the provision of child and family services under a State plan approved under this subpart.

''(D) EXCEPTION FOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WHERE THE LEAD APPLICANT IS AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL CONSORTIA.—If an Indian tribe or tribal consortium enters into a regional partnership for purposes of this subsection, the Indian tribe or tribal consortium—

''(i) may (but is not required to) include the State child welfare agency as a partner in the collaborative agreement;

''(ii) may not enter into a collaborative agreement only with tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortium of the agencies); and

''(iii) if the condition described in paragraph (2)(B) applies, may include tribal court organizations in lieu of other judicial partners.'';

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''2012 through 2016'' and inserting ''2018 through 2022''; and

(ii) by striking ''$500,000 and not more than $1,000,000'' and inserting ''$250,000 and not more than $1,000,000'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting ''; PLANNING'' after ''APPROVAL'';

(ii) in clause (i), by striking ''clause (ii)'' and inserting ''clauses (ii) and (iii)''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) SUFFICIENT PLANNING.—A grant awarded under this subsection shall be disbursed in 2 phases: a planning phase (not to exceed 2 years); and an implementation phase. The total disbursement to a grantee for the planning phase may not exceed $250,000, and may not exceed the total anticipated funding for the implementation phase.''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) LIMITATION ON PAYMENT FOR A FISCAL YEAR.—No payment shall be made under subparagraph (A) or (C) for a fiscal year until the Secretary determines that the eligible partnership has made sufficient progress in meeting the goals of the grant and that the members of the eligible partnership are coordinating to a reasonable degree with the other members of the eligible partnership.'';

(4) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting '', parents, and families'' after ''children'';

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking ''safety and permanence for such children; and'' and inserting ''safe, permanent caregiving relationships for the children;'';

(iii) in clause (iii), by striking ''or'' and inserting ''increase reunification rates for children who have been placed in out of home care, or decrease''; and

(iv) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (v) and inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) improve the substance abuse treatment outcomes for parents including retention in treatment and successful completion of treatment;

''(iv) facilitate the implementation, delivery, and effectiveness of prevention services and programs under section 471(e); and'';

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''where appropriate,''; and

(C) by striking subparagraphs (E) and (F) and inserting the following:

''(E) A description of a plan for sustaining the services provided by or activities funded under the grant after the conclusion of the grant period, including through the use of prevention services and programs under section 471(e) and other funds provided to the State for child welfare and substance abuse prevention and treatment services.

''(F) Additional information needed by the Secretary to determine that the proposed activities and implementation will be consistent with research or evaluations showing which practices and approaches are most effective.'';

(5) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking ''abuse treatment'' and inserting ''use disorder treatment including medication assisted treatment and in-home substance abuse disorder treatment and recovery'';

(6) in paragraph (7)—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (C); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E) and inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) demonstrate a track record of successful collaboration among child welfare, substance abuse disorder treatment and mental health agencies; and'';

(7) in paragraph (8)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''establish indicators that will be'' and inserting ''review indicators that are''; and

(ii) by striking ''in using funds made available under such grants to achieve the purpose of this subsection'' and inserting ''and establish a set of core indicators related to child safety, parental recovery, parenting capacity, and family well-being. In developing the core indicators, to the extent possible, indicators shall be made consistent with the outcome measures described in section 471(e)(6)'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting ''base the performance measures on lessons learned from prior rounds of regional partnership grants under this subsection, and'' before ''consult''; and

(ii) by striking clauses (iii) and (iv) and inserting the following:

''(iii) Other stakeholders or constituencies as determined by the Secretary.'';

(8) in paragraph (9)(A), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

''(i) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than September 30 of each fiscal year in which a recipient of a grant under this subsection is paid funds under the grant, and every 6 months thereafter, the grant recipient shall submit to the Secretary a report on the services provided and activities carried out during the reporting period, progress made in achieving the goals of the program, the number of children, adults, and families receiving services, and such additional information as the Secretary determines is necessary. The report due not later than September 30 of the last such fiscal year shall include, at a minimum, data on each of the performance indicators included in the evaluation of the regional partnership.''; and

(9) in paragraph (10), by striking ''2012 through 2016'' and inserting ''2018 through 2022''.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 1272. A bill to preserve State, local, and tribal authorities and private property rights with respect to unmanned aircraft systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Drone Federalism Act of 2017. This good government bill provides a clear legal framework to the modern day challenges of drone regulation and empowers every level of government to issue reasonable restrictions on drone operations. I thank Senators LEE, BLUMENTHAL, and COTTON for joining me on this bill, and I appreciate their support.

In recent years, small unmanned aircraft have emerged as a transformative new technology. These devices—more commonly known as drones—are highly capable, commercially available, and operable even by novice consumers.

The way that drones are flown in the daily life of our communities and in such great numbers has raised new challenges for safety, privacy, and security that demand cooperation between the federal, state, and local governments.

Today, drone operations present an astounding array of challenges. In just two years, over 2,500 drone incidents have been reported to the Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA. The most recent year of data, from October 2015 to October 2016, saw the number of incidents surge 166% over the prior year. In addition, there have been some

alarming reports. On February 26th, 2017, a drone crashed through the 27th floor window of a Manhattan apartment building in New York City. The next month, on March 28th, a drone crashed through the 23rd floor window of City Hall in Buffalo, New York. Drones have repeatedly interfered with medical helicopters. On May 1st, 2016, a medevac helicopter trying to land at Florida Hospital East in Orlando was forced to abort its initial landing because of a drone. On November 14, 2015, a helicopter leaving children's hospital in St. Louis, Missouri had to take evasive action to avoid a drone, banking 60 degrees. Drones also interfere with emergency wild fire fighting. On April 30, 2017, multiple drones filming the Opera fire in Riverside, California forced firefighting helicopters to suspend operations. This happened eight times in 2015, and another eight times in 2016, in California alone. Drones have also crashed into the Golden Gate Bridge, including twice last month. On April 1st, a drone flown almost two miles beyond line of site fell from the sky into a lane of traffic, only a few feet from the crowded sidewalk. Again on April 9th, another drone flown beyond line of site crashed one of the bridge's towers.

These incidents are occurring throughout the nation, but each state has faced its own challenges. Half of all reported incidents came from just five States: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and New Jersey.

In fact, one-fifth of all drone incidents reported to the FAA occurred in California. What works for protecting urban areas will be different than what is needed in rural areas.

The current legal framework for managing the airspace, which evolved over a century of manned aviation, is a poor fit for these new challenges. Drones bear little resemblance to the manned aircraft that came before them.

First, drones intrude into the everyday life of our communities in a way that airplanes do not. Airplanes fly into and out of airports, and municipalities can try through zoning to minimize disruptions. Drones, on the other hand, can take flight from any location, can hover anonymously overhead, and are often used to film whatever aspect of public or private life may catch the operator's interest of the operator's.

Second, drones are seldom engaged in interstate commerce once they have been purchased. Short communication range and limited battery life means that commercially available drones are almost always operated locally, and are unlikely to be operated across state lines.

Third, there are far more drones than there are airplanes. Already, more than 750,000 drones have been registered, and the FAA anticipates up to 4 million drones by 2020. By contrast, there are little more than 200,000 manned aircraft registered in the United States.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

The Drone Federalism Act would address the modern challenges of drone operations and provide a clear legal framework to regulate drones. The bill has three provisions.

First, the bill preserves the authority of State, Tribal, and local governments to issue reasonable restrictions on the time, manner, and place of drone operations within 200 feet of the ground or a structure. These could include speed limits, local no-fly zones, temporary restrictions, and prohibitions on reckless or drunk operators, for example.

There are regulations that the FAA must issue uniformly throughout the country to ensure the safety and efficiency of the national airspace. This bill does not interfere with that authority. However, the bill does require the FAA to consider legitimate state and local interests when exercising preemption, and to respect any reasonable additional low-altitude restrictions that state and local governments choose to impose.

Second, the bill reaffirms that the federal government will respect private property rights to the airspace in the immediate reaches above a property, including at least the first 200 feet. Neither Congress nor the FAA may authorize drone operations immediately over property without the owner's permission.

Third, the bill promotes cooperation between the levels of government by directing the FAA to partner with a diverse group of cities and States to test out different approaches and report on best practices.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS REGULATE DRONES

The Drone Federalism Act is consistent with the recent action taken by States to regulate drone operations. In response to drone incidents and the concerns of their communities, lawmakers throughout the country have identified the need for a variety of new approaches to managing drones. Indeed, at least 38 States are considering drone legislation this year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

These proposals include: definitions of harassment and voyeurism, airport protections, penalties for interfering with emergency responders, protections against the delivery of contraband at prisons, bans on flights over football games, and definitions of aerial trespass, among others.

This exercise of the laboratories of democracy is appropriate. Our communities should not have to rely on an already overburdened federal agency to craft specific regulatory protections for every local context, supply on-the-ground enforcement agents, or pursue complicated civil cases in court for every infraction. Local police should be empowered to issue citations akin to a traffic violation for clear-cut infractions, without having to prove an action meets a vague tort law standards of negligence and harm. There should be no question that a State has a right to prevent drones from interfering with emergency responders or delivering contraband into prisons; to criminalize hit-and-runs, voyeurism, stalking, or harassment with a drone; to allow judges to deny drones to sex offenders.

Neither should there be any question that a State or municipality has a right to restrict the use of drones where it would be hazardous. Just as the federal government has banned drone operations over Federal Parks, States should have the option to protect State parks. Just as the Federal Government banned flights over sensitive areas, like the entire Capital region, cities should have the option to protect schools or other sensitive areas of their own. Just as the Federal Government can impose temporary flight restrictions over major sporting events or airshows, a county should have the option to protect its summer fairgrounds or holiday parade route.

CONCLUSION

The Drone Federalism Act that I am introducing today, along with Senators LEE, BLUMENTHAL, and COTTON, is a proactive, affirmative solution. It recognizes the federal interest in protecting the safety and efficiency of the national airspace, while also respecting private property rights, Tribal sovereignty, the powers reserved to the States by the Tenth Amendment, and the general principle of local self-determination.

This bill will invite the democratic participation of government at every level, avoid the need for years of litigation about the scope of preemption, and enable effective local enforcement. It is incumbent on Congress to provide clarity and to guarantee all sides an equal voice moving forward.

This bipartisan bill is the way to do that.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. TILLIS, and Mrs. ERNST):

S. 1276. A bill to require the Attorney General to make a determination as to whether cannabidiol should be a controlled substance and listed in a schedule under the Controlled Substances Act and to expand research on the potential medical benefits of cannabidiol and other marihuana components; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act with my colleagues, Senators Grassley, Durbin, Tillis, and Ernst.

Cannabidiol, or CBD, is a nonpsychoactive component of marijuana. In many instances parents, after exhausting other treatment options, have turned to CBD to as a last resort to treat their children who have intractable epilepsy. Anecdotally, CBD has produced positive results.

However, due to existing barriers and the fact that marijuana is a schedule I drug, rigorous research that is needed to better understand the long-term

safety and efficacy of CBD as a medicine, as well as the correct dosing and potential interaction with other medications, is lacking.

The Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act seeks to both reduce these barriers and spur additional research to ensure that CBD and other marijuana-derived medications are based on the most up to date scientific evidence. It also provides a pathway for the manufacture and distribution of FDA-approved drugs that are based on this research.

It does this while maintaining safeguards to protect against illegal diversion.

First, the bill directs the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to complete a scientific and medical evaluation of CBD within 1 year. Based on this evaluation, the legislation directs the Department of Justice to make a scheduling recommendation for CBD that is independent of marijuana. This may include transferring the schedule of CBD to another schedule, or removing it from the list of controlled substances altogether. A scheduling recommendation for CBD that is independent of marijuana has never been done before.

Second, without sacrificing appropriate oversight, it streamlines the regulatory process for marijuana research. In particular, it improves regulations dealing with changes to approved quantities of marijuana needed for research and approved research protocols. It also expedites the Drug Enforcement Administration registration process for researching CBD and marijuana.

Third, this legislation seeks to increase medical research on CBD, while simultaneously reducing the stigma associated with conducting research on a schedule I drug. It does so by explicitly authorizing medical and osteopathic schools, research universities, practitioners and pharmaceutical companies to use a schedule II Drug Enforcement Administration registration to conduct authorized medical research on CBD.

Fourth, the bill allows medical schools, research institutions, practitioners, and pharmaceutical companies to produce the marijuana they need for authorized medical research. This will ensure that researchers have access to the material they need to develop proven, effective medicines. Once the FDA approves these medications, the bill allows pharmaceutical companies to manufacture and distribute them.

Fifth, the bill allows parents who have children with intractable epilepsy, as well as adults with intractable epilepsy, to possess and transport CBD or other nonpsychoactive components of marijuana used to treat this disease while research is ongoing. To do so, parents and adults must provide documentation that they or their child have been treated by a board-certified neurologist for at least 6 months. They must also have documentation that the neurologist has attested that other treatment options have been exhausted and that the potential benefits outweigh the harms of using these nonpsychoactive components of marijuana. The neurologist must also agree to monitor the patient for potential adverse reactions.

Finally, because existing Federal research is severely lacking, the bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to expand, intensify, and coordinate research to determine the potential medical benefits of CBD or other marijuana-derived medications on serious medical conditions.

The 2016 National Academy of Sciences report, titled ''The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research'' underscored the need to reduce research barriers, increase the supply of CBD and marijuana for research purposes, and address existing research gaps.

The Cannabidiol Research Expansion Act seeks to do just this.

This bill is critical to helping families across the country as they seek safe, effective medicines for serious illnesses. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important legislation.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1282. A bill to redesignate certain clinics of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Montana; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the commitment to duty and personal courage of three Montanans by introducing a bill to redesignate three Department of Veterans Affairs facilities in their honor. Through their distinguished service to our Nation, the actions of these three gentlemen have earned the respect and gratitude of the Treasure State.

Under this resolution, the Community Based Outpatient Clinic on Palmer Street in Missoula will be designated in honor of David J. Thatcher. Mr. Thatcher was an outstanding Montanan. The humble circumstances of his upbringing in rural, eastern Montana helped him develop a strong work ethic. In 1940, with war raging across Europe and the clouds of war on the horizon for the United States, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he volunteered to serve as a tail gunner for a high risk mission to attack targets deep within Japanese controlled territory. This counterattack would be known to history as the Doolittle Raid. After finishing the bombing mission and running low on fuel, his aircraft crash landed near the coast of China. Mr. Thatcher was instrumental in helping the crew reach safety following the crash and for his actions during the Doolittle Raid, he was awarded the Silver Star. A few years later, the actor Robert Walker portrayed Corporal Thatcher on the silver screen in ''Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo.'' After the war, Mr. Thatcher embarked on a career with the U.S. Postal Service and married his sweetheart Dawn. Their marriage spanned seven decades until he passed away last June at the age of 94.

In Billings, the Community Based Outpatient Clinic on Spring Creek Lane will be designated in honor of Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow. Dr. Medicine Crow was an accomplished warrior and esteemed historian. He was born on the Crow Indian Reservation in eastern Montana and traveled across the U.S. while pursuing his education. In 1939, Dr. Medicine Crow earned his master's degree from the University of Southern California, becoming the first member of the Crow Tribe to attain that credential. In 1943 he joined the United States Army. While serving as an Army scout during World War II, Dr. Medicine Crow fulfilled the four requirements to become a war chief. While fighting against the German forces he led a war party, stole an enemy horse, disarmed an enemy, and touched an enemy without killing him. Later in life he served as the Crow tribal historian, received multiple honorary doctorate degrees, and spoke at venues across the Nation. He was the last Crow war chief, and his passing last April, at the age of 102, was a loss to our Nation. For his lifetime of service to the Crow Tribe, the State of Montana, and to United States, Dr. Medicine Crow was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Billings Community Based Specialty Clinic located on Majestic Lane will be designated in honor of Benjamin Charles Steele. Mr. Steele is remembered by Montanans as a ranch hand, teacher, artist, and Bataan Death March survivor. Born and raised in Montana, he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1940. After he was captured by the Japanese, Mr. Steele's sturdy fortitude helped him endure a 66-mile trek in the Philippines, a prisoner ship, and a forced labor camp. He was a prisoner of war in the Pacific Theater of World War II for a total of 1,244 days. Using charcoal to sketch on concrete, he withstood the harsh treatment in captivity and honed his artistic talents. His artistic expressions were captured on contraband paper, and some of the works he created in captivity were preserved and went on tour through the Nation after the war. In August of last year, we lost a warrior-artist when Mr. Steele passed away at his home in Montana at the age of 98.

The World War II generation produced many heroes. In 2016, Montana lost three of our greatest heroes when Thatcher, Medicine Crow and Steele completed their earthly tours of duty. In 2017 it is fitting that we honor their service and their remarkable lives by naming three Veterans Affairs facilities in their honor. Each generation of veterans using these facilities will help keep their memories alive. Their unique stories will inspire the future generation of warriors to defend our

Nation and preserve our cherished individual liberties.

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. 1282

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

SECTION 1. REDESIGNATION OF CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINICS IN MONTANA.

(a) DAVID J. THATCHER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 2687 Palmer Street in Missoula, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the ''David J. Thatcher Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the David J. Thatcher Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

(b) DR. JOSEPH MEDICINE CROW DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1775 Spring Creek Lane in Billings, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the ''Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

(3) PUBLIC DISPLAY OF NAME.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any local public display of the name of the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) carried out by the United States or through the use of Federal funds shall include the English name, Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, and the Crow name, Dakaak Baako, of Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow.

(B) LOCAL DISPLAY.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), a local public display of the name of the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) includes a display inside the clinic, on the campus of the clinic, and in the community surrounding the clinic, such as signs directing individuals to the clinic.

(c) BENJAMIN CHARLES STEELE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1766 Majestic Lane in Billings, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the ''Benjamin Charles Steele Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the Benjamin Charles Steele Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. PAUL, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DAINES, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 1287. A bill to allow United States citizens and legal residents to travel between the United States and Cuba; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I am very pleased to join my friend, the junior Senator from Arizona, in introducing the Freedom for Americans to Travel to Cuba Act of 2017.

I will have more to say about this bill, and United States policy toward Cuba, in the weeks and months ahead. My purpose in speaking today is simply to point out that 55 Democratic and Republican members of the Senate have cosponsored this bill to allow Americans to travel to Cuba in the same way that they can travel to any other country in the world. And based on my conversations with other Senators, especially Republicans, I have little doubt that if we voted on this bill today more than 60 Senators would support it.

It is indefensible that the Federal government currently restricts American citizens and legal resident from traveling to a country 90 miles away that poses no threat to us, unless they engage in certain activities and not others. For example, an American biologist can go to Cuba to study threatened species of migratory birds. That same American cannot take his family on a trip to visit Cuba's national parks. Why? Because one is defined as scientific research and the other is defined as tourism.

At a time when U.S. airlines and cruise ships are flying and sailing to Cuba, does anyone here honestly think that preventing Americans from traveling is an appropriate role of the Federal government? Why only Cuba? Why not Venezuela? Or Russia? Or Iran, or anywhere else? It is a vindictive, discriminatory, self-defeating vestige of a time long passed. This bill would end these Cold War restrictions on the freedom of Americans to travel. It would not do away with the embargo.

We are told that the Trump Administration is conducting a review of U.S. policy toward Cuba. That is to be expected of a new administration. We have also heard a rumor, and I hope it is only a rumor, that in return for the votes of certain Senators or representative on health care legislation, promises may have been made by the White House to impose further restrictions on the normalization of relations with Cuba. I hope that is not the case. I hope the review produces a policy based on what is in the U.S. national security interest and on what is in the interests of the American and Cuban people, an overwhelming majority of whom want closer relations. And I hope the policy reflects the bipartisan majority in Congress that supports expanding our engagement with Cuba, as evidenced by the bill we are introducing today.

I and others who have traveled to Cuba many times over the past 20 years, who have met with Cuban officials, with Cubans who have been persecuted for opposing the Castro government, and with many others, have requested meetings with top White House officials before the review is completed and any final decisions are made.

Every one of us wants to see an end to political repression in Cuba. The arrests and physical mistreatment of dissidents by the Cuban government are deplorable, just as they are by other governments including some, like Egypt's and Turkey's, whose leaders have been feted at the White House, or, in the case of Saudi Arabia, have feted President Trump and his family. Americans can travel freely to Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and every other country, except Cuba.

The issue is how best to support the people of Cuba who struggle to make ends meet, and who want to live in a country where freedom of expression and association are protected, and where they can choose their own leaders in a democratic manner.

Anyone who thinks that more economic pressure, or ultimatums, will force the Cuban authorities to stop arresting political dissidents and embrace democracy have learned nothing from history. For more than half a century we have tried a policy of unilateral sanctions and isolation, and it has achieved neither of those goals. Instead, it has been used by the Cuban government as an excuse for repression to protect Cuba's sovereignty. It has hurt the Cuban people, not the Cuban government. And it has provided an opening for our adversaries and competitors, like Russia and China, in this hemisphere.

Change is coming to Cuba, and we can help support that process. There is already visible, tangible evidence that the changes in U.S. policy initiated by President Obama are having positive effects for the Cuban people and for our security and economic relations with Cuba, even though critics, particularly those who have never been to Cuba, prefer to deny it.

But most importantly, the bipartisan bill we are introducing today is about the right of Americans, not Cubans, to travel. Any member of Congress, especially those who have been to Cuba, should support the right of their constituents to do so. American citizens are our best Ambassadors to Cuba, and it is wrong for the United States government to be imposing restrictions

that have no place in the law books of a free society.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 179—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF JUNE 2, 2017, AS ''NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY'' AND JUNE 2017 AS ''NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 179

Whereas, each year, more than—

(1) 32,000 people in the United States are killed and 80,000 are injured by gunfire;

(2) 11,000 people in the United States are killed in homicides involving firearms;

(3) 21,000 people in the United States commit suicide by using firearms; and

(4) 500 people in the United States are killed in accidental shootings;

Whereas, since 1968, more people have died from guns in the United States than on the battlefields of all the wars in the history of the United States;

Whereas, by 1 count, in 2016 in the United States there were—

(1) 384 mass shooting incidents in which not fewer than 4 people were killed or wounded by gunfire; and

(2) 48 incidents in which a gun was fired in a school;

Whereas gun violence typically escalates during the summer months;

Whereas, every 70 minutes, 1 individual in the United States under 25 years of age dies because of gun violence and more than 6,300 such individuals die annually, including Hadiya Pendleton, who, in 2013, was killed at 15 years of age while standing in a Chicago park; and

Whereas, on June 2, 2017, on what would have been Hadiya Pendleton's 20th birthday, people across the United States will recognize National Gun Violence Awareness Day and wear orange in tribute to Hadiya and other victims of gun violence and their loved ones: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports—

(A) the designation of June 2017 as ''National Gun Violence Awareness Month'' and the goals and ideals of that month; and

(B) the designation of June 2, 2017, as ''National Gun Violence Awareness Day'' in remembrance of the victims of gun violence; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to—

(A) promote greater awareness of gun violence and gun safety;

(B) wear orange, the color that hunters wear to show that they are not targets, on June 2;

(C) concentrate heightened attention on gun violence during the summer months, when gun violence typically increases; and

(D) bring citizens and community leaders together to discuss ways to make communities safer.

SENATE RESOLUTION 180—CONDEMNING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST PEACEFUL PROTESTERS OUTSIDE THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE ON MAY 16, 2017, AND CALLING FOR THE PERPETRATORS TO BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE AND MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE

Mr. MARKEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 180

Whereas, on May 16, 2017, President Donald J. Trump hosted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, a longstanding NATO ally, for an official meeting at the White House to discuss counterterrorism cooperation and bilateral issues;

Whereas, on the evening of May 16, 2017, over two dozen protesters gathered outside of the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC, to demonstrate opposition to Turkish government policies;

Whereas after hours of peaceful protest, violence erupted when pro-Erdogan supporters and individuals from the Turkish Embassy grounds pushed past District of Columbia police officers to brutally attack the demonstrators;

Whereas those Turkish officials blatantly suppressed the First Amendment rights of United States citizens, and multiple armed Turkish security officials beat, kicked, and choked unarmed demonstrators;

Whereas multiple video recordings of the violence and reports by the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia and the Department of State confirm that the demonstrators did not instigate the violence;

Whereas at least 11 individuals were seriously injured in the ensuing brawl, with two individuals requiring immediate hospitalization;

Whereas two armed Turkish security officers attached to a security detail were detained at the scene for physically assaulting Federal agents;

Whereas those two Turkish security officers were later released and subsequently allowed to leave the United States because they held Derived Head of State immunity;

Whereas the Department of State did not request that Turkey waive the immunity for these two security officers in order to fully investigate the assault prior to their being released from custody;

Whereas a joint criminal investigation into the incident is ongoing with the combined efforts of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department, the United States Secret Service, and the Department of State Diplomatic Security Service;

Whereas at no point was President Erdogan in danger;

Whereas immunity for diplomatic personnel and certain other foreign officials is a core principle of international law, as is the right to protest peacefully and freely in the United States;

Whereas this is the third instance of violence perpetrated by members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail in the United States;

Whereas in 2011, a brawl erupted in the halls of the United Nations General Assembly between members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail and United Nations security officers, resulting in one United Nations security officer being hospitalized due to serious injuries;

Whereas in 2016, members of Turkish President Erdogan's security detail engaged in unwarranted violence against journalists reporting on an event at the Brookings Institution;

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on May 21, 2017, that the violence outside the Turkish Embassy was ''outrageous'' and ''simply unacceptable''; and

Whereas the right to assembly, peaceful protest, and freedom of speech are essential and protected rights in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the rights to peacefully assemble and freely express one's views are essential to the fabric of American democracy;

(2) the Turkish security forces acted in an unprofessional and brutal manner, reflecting poorly on President Erdogan and the Government of Turkey;

(3) any Turkish security officials who directed, oversaw, or participated in efforts by Turkish security forces to illegally suppress peaceful protests on May 16, 2017, should be charged and prosecuted under United States law;

(4) the United States Secret Service and the Diplomatic Security Service of the Department of State should review this incident and confirm with the Turkish National Police the standards expected by visiting security details to prevent future violent incidents;

(5) the Department of State should immediately request the waiver of immunity of any Turkish security detail official engaged in any assault in the United States prior to release of that individual from custody;

(6) the Department of State should conduct a review of its own security procedures to determine how to mitigate the likelihood of such an event in the future;

(7) the United States respect for free speech requires officials of the United States to speak out against such incidents; and

(8) the United States should take steps to strengthen freedoms for the press and civil society in countries such as Turkey, and combat efforts by foreign leaders to suppress free and peaceful protest in their own countries.

SENATE RESOLUTION 181—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 21 THROUGH MAY 27, 2017, AS ''NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK''

Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Ms. HARRIS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 181

Whereas public works infrastructure, facilities, and services are of vital importance to the health, safety, and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas the public works infrastructure, facilities, and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals, including engineers and administrators, who represent State and local governments throughout the United States;

Whereas public works professionals design, build, operate, and maintain the transportation systems, water infrastructure, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities that are vital to the people and communities of the United States; and

Whereas understanding the role that public infrastructure plays in protecting the environment, improving public health and safety, contributing to economic vitality, and

enhancing the quality of life of every community of the United States is in the interest of the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of May 21 through May 27, 2017, as ''National Public Works Week'';

(2) recognizes and celebrates the important contributions that public works professionals make every day to improve—

(A) the public infrastructure of the United States; and

(B) the communities that public works professionals serve; and

(3) urges individuals and communities throughout the United States to join with representatives of the Federal Government and the American Public Works Association in activities and ceremonies that are designed—

(A) to pay tribute to the public works professionals of the United States; and

(B) to recognize the substantial contributions that public works professionals make to the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 182—DESIGNATING MAY 2017 AS ''MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 182

Whereas, as of May 2017, there are nearly 1,000,000 people living with melanoma in the United States;

Whereas over 160,000 people of the United States will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2017;

Whereas melanoma is the second-most commonly diagnosed cancer in young adults;

Whereas approximately 90 percent of cases of melanoma can be traced to exposure to ultraviolet rays;

Whereas Congress enacted the Sunscreen Innovation Act (Public Law 113–195) to help bring new, safe sunscreens to the market;

Whereas increasing intermittent sun exposure in childhood and throughout the lifetime of a person is associated with an increased risk of squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and melanoma;

Whereas 1 blistering sunburn during childhood or adolescence can nearly double the chance that a person develops melanoma later in life, while 5 or more blistering sunburns in late adolescence increases the risk of—

(1) melanoma by 80 percent; and

(2) nonmelanoma by 68 percent; and

Whereas research shows that wearing sunscreen and taking other preventive measures can prevent sunburn and reduce the risk of skin cancer and premature aging: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 2017 as ''Melanoma Awareness Month'';

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Melanoma Awareness Month;

(3) continues to support research for the prevention, detection, and treatment of, and a cure for, melanoma; and

(4) supports efforts to promote awareness of, and education on, sunsafe behaviors, including the use of sunscreen and sun-protective clothing.

SENATE RESOLUTION 183—RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY 2017 AS ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND AS AN IMPORTANT TIME TO CELEBRATE THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS TO THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHUMER (for Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. HELLER)) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 183

Whereas the people of the United States join together each May to pay tribute to the contributions of generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who have enriched the history of the United States;

Whereas the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States is inextricably tied to the story of the United States;

Whereas the Asian American and Pacific Islander community is a diverse population, comprised of more than 45 distinct ethnicities and more than 100 language dialects;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of the Census, the Asian American population grew at a faster rate than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States during the last decade, surging nearly 46 percent between 2000 and 2010, a growth rate that is 4 times the rate for the total population of the United States;

Whereas, according to the 2010 decennial census, there are approximately 17,300,000 residents of the United States who identify themselves as Asian and approximately 1,200,000 residents of the United States who identify themselves as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, making up approximately 5.5 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively, of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the month of May was selected for Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month because the first immigrants from Japan arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from immigrants from China;

Whereas section 102 of title 36, United States Code, officially designates May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and requests that the President issue an annual proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities;

Whereas Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, such as Daniel K. Inouye, a Medal of Honor and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient who, as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, was the highest-ranking Asian American government official in the history of the United States, Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian American elected to serve in Congress, Patsy T. Mink, the first woman of color and the first Asian American woman to be elected to Congress, Hiram L. Fong, the first Asian American Senator, Daniel K. Akaka, the first Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry, Norman Y. Mineta, the first Asian American member of a presidential cabinet, Elaine L. Chao, the first Asian American woman member of a presidential cabinet, Mee Moua, the first Hmong American elected to a State legislature, and others, have made significant contributions in both the Government and Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas 2017 marks several important milestones for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, including—

(1) the 155th anniversary of the date of enactment of the Act of July 1, 1862 (12 Stat. 489, chapter 120), which promoted the construction of the transcontinental railroad;

(2) the 135th anniversary of the date of enactment of the Act entitled ''An Act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese'', approved May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58, chapter 126);

(3) the 105th anniversary of the first planting of a cherry tree from Japan in Washington, DC;

(4) the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 (7 Fed. Reg. 1407; relating to authorizing the Secretary of War to prescribe military areas), which authorized the internment of Japanese-Americans; and

(5) the 25th anniversary of the formal establishment of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month;

Whereas, in 2017, the Polynesian Voyaging Society will complete the final leg of its Malama Honua Worldwide Voyage after 4 years of sailing the world and teaching traditional wayfinding practices, along with the importance of caring for the land and sea;

Whereas, in 2017, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, a bicameral caucus of Members of Congress advocating on behalf of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is composed of 50 Members, including 17 Members of Asian or Pacific Islander descent;

Whereas, in 2017, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are serving in State and territorial legislatures across the United States in record numbers, including in—

(1) the States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia; and

(2) the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

Whereas the number of Federal judges who are Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders doubled between 2001 and 2008 and more than tripled between 2009 and 2016, reflecting a commitment to diversity in the Federal judiciary that has resulted in the confirmation of high-caliber Asian American and Pacific Islander judicial nominees;

Whereas there remains much to be done to ensure that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have access to resources and a voice in the Government of the United States and continue to advance in the political landscape of the United States; and

Whereas celebrating Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month provides the people of the United States with an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, and history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and to appreciate the challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the significance of May 2017 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States; and

(2) recognizes that the Asian American and Pacific Islander community strengthens, and enhances the rich diversity of, the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 218. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 12, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 218. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 12, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike Sec. 2.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I have 9 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, May 25, 2017 at 10 a.m., in 328A Russell Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining the Farm Economy: Perspectives on Rural America.''

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 25, 2017 at 9:30 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a hearing on Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC, to consider the nominations of Mr. Dan R. Brouillette to be Deputy Secretary of Energy and Mr. Neil Chatterjee and Mr. Robert F. Powelson to be Members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposals for the Department of Treasury and Tax Reform.''

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 25, 2017 at 9:30 a.m., to hold a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Senate Select Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on May 25, 2017, following the first floor vote in the Capitol, to conduct an executive business meeting. Agenda is attached.

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Thursday, May 25, 2017 from 2 p.m. in room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed Member briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 25, 2017 at 2 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Assessing the United Nations Human Rights Council.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 25, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Stopping the Shipment of Synthetic Opioids: Oversight of U.S. Strategy to Combat Illicit Drugs.''

PRIVILEGES

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Katie Wright, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the year.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 181, S. Res. 182, and S. Res. 183.

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 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.'')

DIGITAL COAST ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 25, S. 110.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (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, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 110) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 110

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 ''Digital Coast Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Digital Coast is a model approach for effective Federal partnerships with State and local government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

(2) Access to current, accurate, uniform, and standards-based geospatial information, tools, and training to characterize the United States coastal region is critical for public safety and for the environment, infrastructure, and economy of the United States.

(3) More than half of all people of the United States (153,000,000) currently live on or near a coast and an additional 12,000,000 are expected in the next decade.

(4) Coastal counties in the United States average 300 persons per square mile, compared with the national average of 98.

(5) On a typical day, more than 1,540 permits for construction of single-family homes are issued in coastal counties, combined with other commercial, retail, and institutional construction to support this population.

(6) Over half of the economic productivity of the United States is located within coastal regions.

(7) Highly accurate, high-resolution remote sensing and other geospatial data play an increasingly important role in decision making and management of the coastal zone and economy, including for—

(A) flood and coastal storm surge prediction;

(B) hazard risk and vulnerability assessment;

(C) emergency response and recovery planning;

(D) community resilience to longer range coastal change;

(E) local planning and permitting;

(F) habitat and ecosystem health assessments; and

(G) landscape change detection.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COASTAL REGION.—The term ''coastal region'' means the area of United States waters extending inland from the shoreline to include coastal watersheds and seaward to the territorial sea.

(2) COASTAL STATE.—The term ''coastal State'' has the meaning given the term ''coastal state'' in section 304 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1453).

(3) FEDERAL GEOGRAPHIC DATA COMMITTEE.—The term ''Federal Geographic Data Committee'' means the interagency committee that promotes the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis.

(4) REMOTE SENSING AND OTHER GEOSPATIAL.—The term ''remote sensing and other geospatial'' means collecting, storing, retrieving, or disseminating graphical or digital data depicting natural or manmade physical features, phenomena, or boundaries of the Earth and any information related thereto, including surveys, maps, charts, satellite and airborne remote sensing data, images, LiDAR, and services performed by professionals such as surveyors, photogrammetrists, hydrographers, geodesists, cartographers, and other such services.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIGITAL COAST.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program for the provision of an enabling platform that integrates geospatial data, decision-support tools, training, and best practices to address coastal management issues and needs. Under the program, the Secretary shall strive to enhance resilient communities, ecosystem values, and coastal economic growth and development by helping communities address their issues, needs, and challenges through cost-effective and participatory solutions.

(2) DESIGNATION.—The program established under paragraph (1) shall be known as the ''Digital Coast'' (in this section referred to as the ''program'').

(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall ensure that the program provides data integration, tool development, training, documentation, dissemination, and archive by—

(1) making data and resulting integrated products developed under this section readily accessible via the Digital Coast Internet website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the GeoPlatform.gov and data.gov Internet websites, and such other information distribution technologies as the Secretary considers appropriate;

(2) developing decision-support tools that use and display resulting integrated data and provide training on use of such tools;

(3) documenting such data to Federal Geographic Data Committee standards; and

(4) archiving all raw data acquired under this Act at the appropriate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data center or such other Federal data center as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate the activities carried out under the program to optimize data collection, sharing and integration, and to minimize duplication by—

(1) consulting with coastal managers and decision makers concerning coastal issues, and sharing information and best practices, as the Secretary considers appropriate, with—

(A) coastal States;

(B) local governments; and

(C) representatives of academia, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations;

(2) consulting with other Federal agencies, including interagency committees, on relevant Federal activities, including activities carried out under the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act (33 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.), the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), and the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 892 et seq.);

(3) participating, pursuant to section 216 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–347; 44 U.S.C. 3501 note), in the establishment of such standards and common protocols as the Secretary considers necessary to assure the interoperability of remote sensing and other geospatial data with all users of such information within—

(A) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(B) other Federal agencies;

(C) State and local government; and

(D) the private sector;

(4) coordinating with, seeking assistance and cooperation of, and providing liaison to the Federal Geographic Data Committee pursuant to Office of Management and Budget Circular A–16 and Executive Order 12906 of April 11, 1994 (59 Fed. Reg. 17671), as amended by Executive Order 13286 of February 28, 2003 (68 Fed. Reg. 10619); and

(5) developing and maintaining a best practices document that sets out the best practices used by the Secretary in carrying out the program and providing such document to the United States Geological Survey, the Corps of Engineers, and other relevant Federal agencies.

(d) FILLING NEEDS AND GAPS.—In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall—

(1) maximize the use of remote sensing and other geospatial data collection activities conducted for other purposes and under other authorities;

(2) focus on filling data needs and gaps for coastal management issues, including with respect to areas that, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, were underserved by coastal data and the areas of the Arctic that are under the jurisdiction of the United States;

(3) pursuant to the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act (33 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), support continue improvement in existing efforts to coordinate the acquisition and integration of key data sets needed for coastal management and other purposes, including—

(A) coastal elevation data;

(B) land use and land cover data;

(C) socioeconomic and human use data;

(D) critical infrastructure data;

(E) structures data;

(F) living resources and habitat data;

(G) cadastral data; and

(H) aerial imagery; and

(4) integrate the priority supporting data set forth under paragraph (3) with other available data for the benefit of the broadest measure of coastal resource management constituents and applications.

(e) FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Secretary—

(A) may enter into financial agreements to carry out the program, including—

(i) support to non-Federal entities that participate in implementing the program; and

(ii) grants, cooperative agreements, interagency agreements, contracts, or any other agreement on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, with other Federal, tribal, State, and local governmental and nongovernmental entities; and

(B) may, to the maximum extent practicable, enter into such contracts with private sector entities for such products and services as the Secretary determines may be necessary to collect, process, and provide remote sensing and other geospatial data and products for purposes of the program.

(2) FEES.—

(A) ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION.—The Secretary may assess and collect fees for the conduct of any training, workshop, or conference that advances the purposes of the program.

(B) AMOUNTS.—The amount of a fee under this paragraph may not exceed the sum of costs incurred, or expected to be incurred, by the Secretary as a direct result of the conduct of the training, workshop, or conference, including for subsistence expenses incidental to the training, workshop, or conference, as applicable.

(C) USE OF FEES.—Amounts collected by the Secretary in the form of fees under this paragraph may be used to pay for—

(i) the costs incurred for conducting an activity described in subparagraph (A); or

(ii) the expenses described in subparagraph (B).

(3) SURVEY AND MAPPING.—Contracts entered into under paragraph (1)(B) shall be considered ''surveying and mapping'' services as such term is used in and as such contracts are awarded by the Secretary in accordance with the selection procedures in chapter 11 of title 40, United States Code.

(f) OCEAN ECONOMY.—The Secretary may establish publically available tools that track ocean and Great Lakes economy data for each coastal State.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $4,000,000 for each fiscal year 2018 through 2022 to carry out the program.

SILVER STAR SERVICE BANNER DAY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 917 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 917) to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate May 1 as ''Silver Star Service Banner Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed

and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 917) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 917

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 ''Silver Star Service Banner Day Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Congress has always honored the sacrifices made by the wounded and ill members of the Armed Forces.

(2) The Silver Star Service Banner has come to represent the members of the Armed Forces and veterans who were wounded or became ill in combat in the wars fought by the United States.

(3) The Silver Star Families of America was formed to help the people of the United States remember the sacrifices made by the wounded and ill members of the Armed Forces by designing and manufacturing Silver Star Service Banners and Silver Star Flags for that purpose.

(4) The sole mission of the Silver Star Families of America is to evoke memories of the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces and veterans on behalf of the United States through the presence of a Silver Star Service Banner in a window or a Silver Star Flag flying.

(5) The sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces and veterans on behalf of the United States should never be forgotten.

(6) May 1 is an appropriate date to designate as ''Silver Star Service Banner Day''.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 146. Silver Star Service Banner Day

''(a) DESIGNATION.—May 1 is Silver Star Service Banner Day.

''(b) PROCLAMATION.—The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe Silver Star Service Banner Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 145 the following:

''146. Silver Star Service Banner Day.''.

FOLLOW THE RULES ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 657 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 657) to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend certain protections against prohibited personnel practices, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 657) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017, THROUGH MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, May 26, at 8:45 a.m.; Tuesday, May 30, at 7 a.m.; and Friday, June 2, at 9 a.m. I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, June 2, it next convene at 3 p.m., Monday, June 5; 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; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 107, S. Res. 176, as under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 8:45 A.M. TOMORROW

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 5:23 p.m., adjourned until Friday, May 26, 2017, at 8:45 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ROBERT R. HOOD, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE STEPHEN C. HEDGER.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

RICHARD ASHOOH, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE KEVIN WOLF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

J. PAUL COMPTON, JR., OF ALABAMA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE HELEN R. KANOVSKY, RESIGNED.

NEAL J. RACKLEFF, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE MERCEDES MARQUEZ.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

KAREN DUNN KELLEY, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, VICE MARK DOMS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DAVID S. JONAS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE STEVEN CROLEY, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

GILBERT B. KAPLAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, VICE STEFAN M. SELIG, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MICHAEL ARTHUR RAYNOR, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BRETT GIROIR, OF TEXAS, TO BE MEDICAL DIRECTOR IN THE REGULAR CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, SUBJECT TO THE QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS, AND TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE HOWARD K. KOH, RESIGNED.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

HEATHER L. MACDOUGALL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 27, 2023. (REAPPOINTMENT)

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) BRET C. BATCHELDER

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CALLISTA L. GINGRICH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE HOLY SEE.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

GEORGE NESTERCZUK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE KATHERINE ARCHULETA, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate May 25, 2017:

THE JUDICIARY

AMUL R. THAPAR, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT.

For a complete list of nominations confirmed on May 25, 2017, see pages S3249–S3251 of the Congressional Record dated June 5, 2017.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on May 25, 2017 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

JAMES DONOVAN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE SARAH BLOOM RASKIN, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON MAY 16, 2017.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE RETIREMENT OF BRIAN C. COOPER FROM THE HOUSE PARLIAMENTARIAN'S OFFICE

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as both the Dean of the House and as a former employer of Brian Cooper to congratulate him an his impending retirement from the House of Representatives after 35 years of service, and to thank him for his years of dedicated service to the House.

Brian is a Baltimore native and the youngest of seven children of his parents Deloris and Ellsworth Cooper. Brian loves the Charm City so much that he has lived in the same house his whole life.

He is a proud graduate of Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore (the very same high school attended by Supreme Court Justice and civil rights icon Thurgood Marshall). After high school Brian received a scholarship to the Community College of Baltimore, now known as Baltimore City Community College, where he received his degree in commercial and graphic arts.

Brian's first Capitol Hill job began in the fall of 1982 when he began work in the stock room for Publications and Distribution Services. Thereafter, in the 1980s and early 1990s, Brian worked for the House Post Office, the House document room, the Small Business Committee and the Government Operations Committee. At Government Operations, Brian served under both Jack Brooks and myself as Chair (the latter frame 1991 through 1994). In that capacity Brian worked as staff assistant, handled filing and archiving of committee materials, and prepared documents for committee hearings and markups. I can personally testify that Brian's work was respected and appreciated by Members an both sides of the aisle.

In 1995, Brian joined the Office of the House Parliamentarian as Clerk where he spent a full 22 years, rising to become Chief Clerk to the Parliamentarian in 2009. Brian's mast visible duties included assisting presiding officers during sessions of the House and handling timekeeping and legislative paperwork at the rostrum. In addition, Brian provided invaluable assistance in creating the first office computer network, supervising House pages, and preparing for joint meetings and joint sessions. It is no understatement to say that Brian observed and participated in a great swath of American political history during that time period.

Brian remains active in many artistic endeavors—including watercolor, oils, photography, and architectural design—which I understand he plans to continue in his retirement. Brian also plans to use his well-deserved retirement to travel to Italy and spend more time with family (including his many nieces and nephews).

As a devoted Baltimore sports fan, Brian has enjoyed the highs and suffered the lows of the local teams. He is a particularly avid fan of the Baltimore Orioles, and I am sure he appreciates the good start they are off to this year.

I know from personal experience and observation that Brian is the consummate professional. Members and staff on both sides of the aisle know Brian to be committed to an orderly and accurate legislative process observed in a fair, nonpartisan manner. In this age of increasing polarization and legislative gridlock, Brian is a committed institutionalist. He is the rare individual consistently striving to continue the customs and traditions of the House, and committed to pass on his institutional knowledge to his successors.

The House and the Congress will greatly miss Brian's services, but we will greatly benefit from his work and legacy.

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN C. COOPER

HON. STEVE WOMACK

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Brian C. Cooper, who is retiring from the Office of the Parliamentarian after 35 I years on Capitol Hill.

Brian is the son of Deloris and Ellsworth Cooper, and the youngest of seven children. He is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, and has lived in the city (in the same house he grew up in) for his entire life. Brian is a graduate of Frederick Douglass High School, whose notable alumni include the Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Brian received a scholarship to the Community College of Baltimore (now Baltimore City Community College), where he received his degree in commercial and graphic arts.

Brian's first job on Capitol Hill came in September of 1982, when he was hired in the stock room of the Longworth Building, working in Publication and Distribution Services. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Brian held a variety of positions on Capitol Hill, including work at the House Post Office and , Document Room, before moving up to become staff assistant for the Small Business Committee and later the Government Operations Committee. In these roles, Brian learned the intricacies of the legislative process and the inner workings of House operations—skills that would serve him well when, in 1995, he was hired as an Assistant Clerk to the Parliamentarian.

Brian would spend the next 22 years in the House Parliamentarian's Office, and became Chief Clerk to the Parliamentarian in 2009. For over two decades, Brian has been a fixture at the House rostrum, dutifully assisting the presiding officer in timekeeping, recognizing Members on the floor, and preparing and reviewing reams of legislative paperwork for the House. Brian has also prepared the House for joint meetings to receive foreign dignitaries and other guests, and joint sessions of the House, including state of the Union addresses. As clerk, Brian also supervised House "documentarian" pages, and created the first computer network for the Parliamentarian.

An accomplished artist, Brian remains active in his artistic endeavors, which run the gamut from pencil drawings, watercolors, and oils, to photography, and architectural design. His retirement will offer new opportunities to continue these pursuits. His other retirement plans include travel and spending more time with family—including his numerous nieces and nephews. A devoted Baltimore sports fan, Brian will surely find his way to Camden Yards many times in the upcoming years to cheer on his beloved Orioles.

A consummate professional, Brian has spent his career on Capitol Hill committed to assisting with an orderly and accurate legislative process, observed in a fair and nonpartisan manner. Brian is a quintessential institutionalist, always striving to continue the traditions and customs of the House, and' to pass on his institutional knowledge to others. The House of Representatives has known few individuals more dedicated to its proper functioning and legacy than Brian Cooper.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pledge my support for the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (H.R. 1809).

As a former deputy probation officer with the Boston Juvenile Court, I have seen firsthand the benefits of providing core protections for the treatment of children, youth, and families in the justice system. When I was a Contra Costa County Supervisor in California, I saw the benefits from another perspective when our county received one of the first SafeFutures grants awarded by the federal government. The SafeFutures initiative encouraged communities to tailor prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies to local needs. It was through this program that I had the opportunity to witness first-hand the positive effects that supportive disciplinary practices have on the at-risk population.

I am pleased that the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, like SafeFutures, brings together stakeholders to identify gaps in the continuum of services. Not only will these gaps be filled, but it also encourages finding cost-savings and efficiencies to keep initiatives schools establish with the help of JJRA grants running after that funding is exhausted.

I appreciate the work done by Chairwoman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT to make the Juvenile Justice Reform Act comprehensive and bipartisan. I strongly support this bill,

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

which will help equip professionals with the supports they need to contribute positively to the lives of our youth.

HONORING DR. VALERIE PITTS

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Valerie Pitts on her retirement after a stellar 35-year career in public education, most recently as Superintendent of the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District for the past 12 years. Dr. Pitts dedicated her professional tenure to supporting and promoting quality public education. She is passionate about ensuring equity for students, a climate of inclusion, high academic standards, engaging curriculum, and an ethos of continuous improvement.

Born, raised, and educated in Larkspur, California, Dr. Pitts went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Music, a Master's Degree in Education, and a Doctorate in Education with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership, all from Bay Area universities. She spent her educational career in Marin County, first as a teacher for eight years at San Rafael High School before moving into curriculum support and administration for the duration. In 2005, Dr. Pitts returned to her home district in Larkspur where she spent the next dozen years.

Throughout her tenure, Dr. Pitts shared her considerable educational experience, skills, and knowledge to amass a list of accomplishments that numerous students, families, and staff will enjoy for years to come.

Among her many achievements, Dr. Pitts led the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District during a time of exponential growth in student enrollment, wherein she managed major facilities improvements funded by taxpayer dollars and created state-of-the-art learning environments and curriculum for the district. This included the installation of a solar energy project that is projected to save the district $2 million over 20 years.

While serving as Superintendent in the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District, Dr. Pitts also acted as Superintendent for the Sausalito—Marin City School District during transitions in leadership. This generosity of spirit was extended to her fellow superintendents around the County and in other school districts through her work on the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee and many other county leadership roles.

Dr. Pitts' legacy of professional and civic contributions will leave indelible benefits to Marin County for years to come. She is a student focused leader, whose commitment to equity and excellence in public education is outstanding. It is appropriate that she has been selected for many honors, including the prestigious Marin County's 2017 Educator of the Year award as she retires from an exceptional career in public education, at the Golden Bell Award Ceremony on May 25, 2017, and hosted by the San Rafael Elks Lodge No. 1108, Marin County School Boards Association, Marin Association of Superintendents, and Marin County Office of Education.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing deep appreciation for Dr. Pitts' long and extraordinary professional service, congratulate her on being named the 2017 Educator of the Year, and extend to her best wishes on her retirement.

CELEBRATING THE VOLUNTEER EFFORTS IN IMPROVING THE ALTOONA USPS CENTER

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate four talented young Pennsylvania students who volunteered their time and artistic abilities to the beautification of the Altoona Mail Processing Center.

Portage Area High School students Makayla Klein, Christopher Hartline, Kaylee Koval, and Alexis Miller were selected by their instructor to design and paint a mural in the lobby of the postal center. They submitted several designs for consideration, and, upon selection, collaborated to carry out the chosen design. The design that was selected by the postal center was a striking image of a bald eagle with wings spread and talons out. On the left wing is the emblem of the United States Postal Service, and on the right wing an American flag.

On April 7th and 8th, 2017, Makayla, Christopher, Kaylee, and Alexis volunteered their time to complete the mural on the lobby wall of the postal center. The mural was dedicated to the hardworking men and women of the Altoona Mail Processing Center, and their commitment to ensuring the efficient and accurate handling of our mail and postage. The students who carried out this tremendous project deserve nothing but our gratitude and admiration.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to thank Makayla, Christopher, Kaylee, and Alexis for their hand in the improvement of the Altoona Mail Processing Center. Congratulations on a job well done and for your beautiful contribution which will be enjoyed by thousands in the community for years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF COLLEEN CLARE GALLAGHER

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and pay tribute to a long-time member of my team. Colleen Clare Gallagher first joined my team during my first campaign for Congress, back in 2010. She was an intern then, but she quickly proved her value and is today our Director of Operations, critically important to every aspect of our office's operations and our team's success. Colleen grew up in the 7th District. Her parents had seven daughters and raised them all in Havertown, Delaware County.

More important than her professional talent and ability, to me and my entire team she's become a valued and trusted friend, colleague, and leader.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks Colleen will be departing my office to embark upon a new chapter in her life. I wish her continued happiness and success for the future.

THANKING MATTHEW HERRMANN FOR TEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE PEOPLE OF GUAM

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Matthew Herrmann for ten years of service to the people of Guam and the United States Congress. Over the last decade, Matt has served diligently in my office here in Washington, D.C. and he has been instrumental to enacting numerous public policies that have benefitted my constituents in Guam and our nation as a whole.

Matt joined my office in May of 2007 as my Military Legislative Assistant and he went on to become my Legislative Director and then Chief of Staff. He concurrently serves as an Adjunct Professor at American University here in Washington, D.C. where he teaches a course on the impact of technology on the American political system. Prior to joining my office, Matt was the Executive Officer to the Director at the National Guard Bureau Office of Legislative Liaison.

During his time in my office, Matt has overseen many legislative responsibilities and he has provided me with invaluable counsel in fulfilling my role as Guam's only representative in Congress. He has been my key advisor on issues impacting our military, veterans, and foreign policy. I have especially appreciated his commitment to enhancing the role and resourcing of the National Guard, efforts for which his actions have been widely recognized. His guidance has also been critical to securing millions in dollars for Guam as well as ensuring that programs such as the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Guam moves forward in a way that not only satisfies the Department of Defense's needs, but also has a positive benefit to the people of Guam and the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Matt was also instrumental to my success in including the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act as a provision of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed in to law by President Barack Obama on December 23, 2016 . This was historic legislation that finally authorized, after more than 70 years, the payment of claims to the patriotic Chamorro Americans on Guam who endured brutal enemy occupation during World War II.

Matt's professionalism, understanding of the complexities of the legislative process, and personable demeanor have been critical to his successes here on the Hill and in turn helped me best represent people of Guam. Further, on a personal note, Matt has also been a close mentor and confidant to many current and former staff members and he was always willing to lend his personal and professional experiences to guide and direct them. He has fostered strong bipartisan relationships with Congressional staffers, officials in the Administration, as well as key stakeholders in the private and non-government industries, and he will be deeply missed here on Capitol Hill.

Mr. Speaker, Matt's departure from my office will leave a void that will be difficult to fill. I will miss his counsel and the light heartedness he brought to my office every day. I am proud of the growth and experiences that he has had while working on behalf of my constituents and the American people. So on behalf of the people of Guam, I extend my sincere un dangkulo na si Yu'os Ma'ase (with deepest gratitude) to him, and I wish him well as he begins this next chapter in his life.

SENIOR CORPS WEEK

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Senior Corps Week 2017, to recognize the extraordinary work being done by hundreds of thousands of seniors across this country through Senior Corps.

Through its Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and nationwide RSVP volunteer programs, seniors are making a huge difference in the lives of millions.

In my home state of Pennsylvania alone, these programs and the over 11,000 seniors that support them have provided tutoring and mentoring services to almost 4,000 students; helped 1,500 homebound seniors live independently through the Companion program; and supported the work of an additional 1,300 local organizations with their efforts.

The RSVP program in particular, with installations in my district in both Philadelphia and Montgomery County helps by counseling Medicare recipients, helping adults improve their literacy skills, mentoring at-risk youth, delivering Meals on Wheels, staffing domestic hotlines, and so much more.

Despite all the amazing work these programs support, President Trump's budget calls for the complete elimination of its parent organization—the Corporation for National and Community Service.

This makes no sense. Not only would doing so have almost no real impact on the federal budget—CNCS makes up less than three hundredths of 1 percent of total spending—it would be devastating blow to our seniors and communities. It is also completely inconsistent with the sense of service and civic duty on which our country is built.

I call upon my colleagues to reject this harmful budget, and stand with me in support of the great work of Senior Corps.

HONORING BETSY A. CODY

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, we rise to honor the long career of public service provided to the Congress of the United States by Betsy A. Cody of the Congressional Research Service.

Mr. Speaker, there is no issue that Members of Congress disagree on more than western water policy. The very complicated details of western water policy have the ability to not only divide us by party, but they divide us by state and even by regions within a state.

One of the few things that all Western Members do agree on is our deep gratitude for the invaluable expertise we have received from Ms. Cody over the past 30 years. We are happy that she is moving on to a much deserved retirement this month, but we will greatly miss the reservoir of knowledge that she has provided to our offices.

Betsy's non-partisan research, analysis, and policy advice has been the foundation for the water debates and legislation that the Congress has produced over the past 30 years. Betsy's talent is that she is able to break down these very complex issues involving historic water rights, agriculture, endangered species, infrastructure, precipitation patterns, interstate disagreements, federal programs, and many more intricate subjects quickly and concisely. Betsy is famous for her western water briefings for new Members and staff, her ''In-Focus'' fact sheets that simplify complex pieces of legislation, and the hundreds of in-depth research memos and reports that she has produced over the years.

Betsy's best trait, which is something she shares with her colleagues at the Congressional Research Service, is that her research and advice is not political or biased. Betsy is trusted by both sides of the aisle for being fair and impartial, which has been demonstrated in her five times testifying before committees in both houses.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Cody exemplifies what Adams, Jefferson, and later La Follette had envisioned when they created the Library of Congress and the Legislative Reference Service in order to provide Members with expert research and analysis to inform our legislative work. Betsy has been an invaluable resource to us, our staff, and those of numerous other Members. We will not only miss her knowledge, but we will also miss her kindness.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Mr. CALVERT of California and myself, we ask our colleagues to join us in congratulating Betsy A. Cody on her retirement, and thanking her for her long career of public service to the Congress and to our country.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF CAPTAIN JON D. PEPPETTI, JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS, U.S. NAVY

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain Jon D. Peppetti, who is retiring after 22 years of service to our nation with the Judge Advocate General's Corps in the United States Navy. Captain Peppetti was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, grew up primarily in Cresson, Pennsylvania, and attended Bishop Carroll High School in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Notre Dame in May 1992. He later earned a J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and an LL.M. in International and Comparative Law from the George Washington University Law School.

In 1995, Captain Peppetti began his dedicated service to our nation as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy. During the next 22 years, Captain Peppetti served in a wide variety of roles throughout the United States and overseas. His assignments included Naval Legal Service Office Southeast; Navy Recruiting Command; Amphibious Group Three; Naval Legal Service Office Europe and Southwest Asia; Amphibious Squadron Four deployed onboard USS *Wasp* (LHD 1); Carrier Strike Group Twelve deployed onboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65); Navy Office of Legislative Affairs; U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet; and Naval Supply Systems Command. He also served as Deputy Executive Assistant to the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, and as a White House Social Aide in support of the President and First Lady. He concluded his career as Legal Counsel to the Chief of Naval Personnel.

Captain Peppetti's expertise and understanding of the complexities of the law of the sea and the law of armed conflict directly enhanced the ability of the U.S. Navy to fulfill its missions throughout the world. As the U.S. Navy confronted myriad diverse challenges, he delivered sage counsel to senior leaders and warfighters that facilitated our nation's ability to conduct naval operations. His profound knowledge and experience greatly contributed to our national security.

For his outstanding service to our nation, Captain Peppetti earned numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

I commend Captain Peppetti for his commitment to our country and the sacrifices he made on its behalf. On the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Navy, I thank him and his family for his honorable service to our nation and wish him fair winds and following seas as he concludes a distinguished career.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERALLY-INSURED CREDIT UNIONS

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize the 50th anniversary of the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions (NAFCU), one of the most effective trade associations advocating on behalf of the nation's federally-insured credit unions.

In 1966, around 50 credit union leaders came together in Los Angeles to explore how to better have their interests addressed at the federal level and the possibility of creating a trade association located in our nation's capital to meet that need. That idea took root and NAFCU was formed as the National Association of Federal Credit Unions in April of 1967. Soon thereafter NAFCU was the first national credit union trade association to be headquartered in the Washington, D.C., area.

Since its inception, NAFCU has steadily grown in size and expanded its team, representing now over 800 credit unions and employing over 60 individuals, and even updating its name to the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions earlier this year.

Most importantly NAFCU's influential presence has not gone unnoticed and the association has become well-known for its ability to identity, examine, and represent issues of concern to federally-insured credit unions before Congress.

NAFCU has crossed many milestones in its 50 years, from the enactment of the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund (NCUSIF) to the passage of the Credit Union Membership Access Act in 1998. In recent years, they have been at the forefront in fighting for regulatory relief for our nation's credit unions. As a Member of Congress, I have had the pleasure of working with NAFCU on numerous occasions, working to provide regulatory relief and take on crucial issues impacting our credit unions. I congratulate NAFCU on its 50th anniversary and I look forward to working with them in the future.

TAYLOR SANDER BBQ CHAMPION

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate 14-year-old Taylor Sanders on her tremendous achievement in winning the ''Kids BBQ Championship'' on the Food Network. I am delighted that she represented our Naples, Florida, community in front of a national audience with excellent cooking skills and selfless character.

The $10,000 reward for her victory is well deserved for all of her hard work. She is a very considerate and mature young person, as illustrated by her donating a portion of her reward to a charity, Take a Soldier Fishing. This is a wonderful organization and I am proud that she chose to honor our soldiers.

Taylor's barbeque skills and generosity show sophistication beyond her years. I know that our Southwest Florida community is extremely grateful for her contributions.

CARLYLE LAKE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of Carlyle Lake in Clinton County in my home state of Illinois.

The thought of Carlyle Lake was created due to the extreme flooding caused by the Kaskaskia River. A group of men residing in the area decided to create the Kaskaskia River Valley Project in 1933. This project then led to the idea of a man-made lake. The Flood Control Act of 1938 granted authorization for the construction of what eventually became Carlyle Lake. Due to the commencement of World War II the original construction plan was put to a halt.

In 1950, after the war subsided, attorney Eldon E. Hazlet took interest in the construction of the lake. He formed the Kaskaskia Valley Association, whose member's sole purpose was to convince the public for the need of a lake. After gaining enough public support, the Army Corps of Engineers made a revised plan of construction for the lake. Twenty years after the date of the original authorization; the Federal government signed off on the construction of Carlyle Lake in 1958. The Carlyle Lake Project was completed in April 1967, and the dam was dedicated in June of the same year.

Over the years Carlyle Lake has become a popular attraction for those in the area as well as for tourists. Visitors can enjoy the scenery, lie on the beach, or rent a boat out to coast on the water. The creation of this lake has allowed the economy to prosper. It has also led to the creation of the Eldon Hazlet State Park; they named this park after him because of his leadership in the advancement of Carlyle Lake. Tourists and townspeople can fish, camp, and hike in this state park.

The City of Carlyle has planned a celebration of the Lakes' 50th year. The celebration will begin on June 9th and go through the 11th. Throughout the weekend visitors can enjoy a carnival, music festival, vintage car show, and much more. The weekend will come to a close with a commemoration ceremony for Carlyle Lake.

I ask that we all join in that celebration as we pay tribute to the history and the people who made Carlyle Lake. I salute Carlyle Lake on its 50th Anniversary.

IN RECOGNITION OF EZELL AGNEW FOR HIS LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO THE YPSILANTI COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ezell Agnew for his lifetime of service on behalf of the Ypsilanti community. Mr. Agnew's work with Washtenaw Community College, the Perry Childhood Learning Center, and the City of Ypsilanti has helped make the city a great place to live and is worthy of commendation.

Mr. Agnew began working as a groundskeeper at Washtenaw Community College on the day that it opened in 1966. For over 40 years, Mr. Agnew was a friendly presence around the college who labored tirelessly to ensure that the grounds remained well-kept and clean. In addition to his career at WCC, Mr. Agnew also collaborated with the City of Ypsilanti to clean up the downtown area and provide assistance to the city as a volunteer and part-time employee. Since his retirement with WCC, Mr. Agnew has selflessly volunteered his time to beautify and maintain the Perry Early Childhood Learning Center's school grounds. He also tends to Perry's community garden and is well-known around the school for his dedication to this role. This has helped create a positive learning environment for Perry's students.

Mr. Agnew's outstanding efforts on behalf of the Ypsilanti community have helped beautify the city for decades. Additionally, his positive attitude and kind-hearted nature has made him a beloved figure in the community, and the support from students and staff of the Perry Early Childhood Learning Center underscores the impact that his actions and volunteer work has had on the city and its residents. His proactive work in helping the City of Ypsilanti and its schools is emblematic of Mr. Agnew's personality, and it is my hope that he continues his efforts on behalf of the community in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ezell Agnew for his lifetime of work and support of Ypsilanti and its residents. Mr. Agnew has helped make Ypsilanti a great place to live for generations of individuals.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR CRUISE MISSILE RECONSIDERATION ACT OF 2017 AND THE SMARTER APPROACH TO NUCLEAR EXPENDITURES ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing two pieces of legislation, along with Senator MARKEY in the Senate, that bring us closer to a more rational U.S. nuclear posture.

The Nuclear Cruise Missile Reconsideration Act of 2017 would limit Department of Defense and Department of Energy spending on the next generation air-launched nuclear cruise missile (ALCM), known as the Long Range Standoff weapon (LRSO), until the Trump administration submits a Nuclear Posture Review to Congress. The Air Force plans to replace 575 existing ALCMs with 1,000 or more LRSOs. The total cost to build this missile and life-extend its warhead (known as the W80–4) is projected at $20–30 billion.

The Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act would enable the U.S. to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent without shortchanging combat readiness and operations by strategically sizing our nuclear weapons programs. This bill would save us more than $100 billion over 10 years by dialing back redundant nuclear weapons systems.

Current U.S. nuclear weapons planning calls for spending $400 billion over the next decade and at least $1 trillion over the next 30 years to maintain and recapitalize our entire arsenal. This escalation would build a nuclear force far exceeding what the Pentagon and security experts have said is necessary to meet our national security objectives.

We are headed down an unsustainable path. Our all-the-above approach to recapitalizing every leg of the nuclear triad will inevitably push out Army, Navy, and Air Force conventional priorities, including what we need to counter terrorism and protect our servicemembers. We have to make some tough decisions for the sake of fiscal stability, and these bills are a step in the right direction.

RECOGNIZING FATHER LEWIS BROWN

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Father Lewis Brown on the 50th Anniversary of his ordination and recognize his 22 years of service as a United States Navy Chaplain.

Father Lew grew up in Elmira, New York as a member of St. Mary's Southside Parish. After graduating from Elmira Notre Dame High School, he attended St. Andrew's Theological College and Seminary and St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

In 1967, Father Lew was ordained by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester, New York. He worked in different parishes and churches for more than 15 years, until beginning his tenure as a chaplain in the United States Navy in 1985. During his time in the Navy, Father Lew encouraged sailors and aviators with his kind spirit and strong faith. He served all around the globe, from Okinawa, Japan to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Since retiring from active duty in 2007, Father Lew has worked in both the Rochester Diocese and my family's church—the All Saints Parish in Corning, New York. He has had a profoundly positive impact on my life and I am constantly reminded of one particular piece of advice that he gave me several years ago: ''Trust in the Lord; you propose, He'll dispose.''

Father Lew has made our local community a better place by working with various organizations, including Catholic Charities USA and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. In addition, he continues to serve his fellow veterans by devoting his time to the Bath VA Medical Center. In recognition of his outstanding service and commitment to Catholic school education, Father Lew received the Seton Neumann Award from All Saints Academy in 2013.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Father Lewis Brown on the 50th Anniversary of his ordination and thanking him for his years of service to our country and local community.

HONORING DIANE PATRICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Diane Patrick Elementary School in the Arlington Independent School District for their recognition as a ''Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase School'' for the 2016–2017 academic year.

Diane Patrick Elementary School opened in August 2015 with the aim of ensuring that its students were provided exceptional learning opportunities in a safe and emotionally supportive learning environment. From its inception, Diane Patrick Elementary's campus was designed with the students' interests at the forefront.

Prior to its construction, school leaders performed extensive research on which program to implement, examining the most successful programs at the highest performing schools across the country. The leaders at Diane Patrick Elementary School ultimately chose to work with the Flippen Group to bring their ''Capturing Kids Hearts'' program to its campus. As a part of the program, teachers and staff use innovative methods that increase students' connectedness with both peers and adults on campus, and create an environment where students are excited to learn.

For its dedication to the ''Capturing Kids Hearts'' program, Diane Patrick Elementary earned national recognition as a ''Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase Schools'' award recipient for the 2016–2017 school year from the Flippen Group. Showcase schools were selected based on how well the schools implemented their processes as well as demonstrating progress in attendance, discipline, climate/culture, and academics. As part of the selection process, a Flippen group team visited each nominated campus to gather data and perform interviews. A survey was performed to get feedback on the climate and culture of the campus, as well as its conduciveness to learning.

I honor Diane Patrick Elementary School for their outstanding dedication to creating a safe and emotionally supportive learning environment.

FORT BEND SCHOOLS WIN EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Fort Bend Independent School District (ISD) of Sugar Land, TX, for winning up to $70,000 at the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards.

The Fort Bend ISD Board of Trustees won $25,000 for the school boards award, while a teacher and a principal were also awarded for their leadership. Richard Embrick of David Crockett Middle School won the Rising Star Award, which recognizes teachers with less than 10 years of experience and awards $5,000 for the winner and a $5,000 grant for the school. Julie Diaz of Travis High School won the award for secondary school principal and received $10,000 for herself and a $25,000 grant for her school as well. Fort Bend ISD took home $70,000 of the $430,000 awarded at the ceremony. The winners are selected out of 58 finalists by a panel of judges comprised of school administrators and university and community leaders. Great job Fort Bend ISD!

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Fort Bend ISD for winning $70,000 at the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards. Our children benefit from their commitment to education and we appreciate their hard work.

RECOGNIZING GARY PICHON'S BIKE RIDE

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Gary Pichon, who just completed a 3,000-mile bike ride around our country.

Gary set out on a mission, not for the thrill of ride, but to see what he could learn about the landscape and people of our great nation. As he mapped a course across the states, Gary soaked up the beauty of America's cityscapes and countrysides.

In the towns that he traveled through, people were kind and ready to work. He also noted the plight of rural Americans, who are resilient and strong and often underappreciated,

Mr. Speaker, I echo Mr. Pichon's respect for the hardworking Americans who give our nation enduring character. Mr. Pichon and I call northeast Georgia home and could not ask for better neighbors in a finer nation.

Gary's ride from coast to coast serves as a reminder of the diversity that makes our nation beautiful and the unassuming kindness that fuels our nation's endurance.

HONORING ALAN McGRAW

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I celebrate the extraordinary work of my friend Alan McGraw, mayor of my home of Round Rock, Texas. On May 25, he will step down after three successful terms leading this growing and dynamic Central Texas city.

Mayor McGraw's devotion to public service has made Round Rock a great place to live and work. He focused on bringing jobs to the area, prioritized keeping citizens safe through support of public safety officials, and improved transportation and quality of life for the citizens of Round Rock. From planned resorts to a downtown revitalization project to a state-of-the-art convention center, Round Rock has become a city on the cutting edge of urban development.

Round Rock has benefitted from Mayor McGraw's love of the outdoors. His connection with the owners of Bass Pro Shops brought the retail giant to Round Rock, further strengthening the local economy. McGraw's forward-thinking leadership resulted in the construction of the Round Rock Sports Center which has entrenched the City as the Sports Capital of Texas, further diversifying Round Rock's position in sports tourism.

While effective city leadership isn't easy, Texans aren't afraid of a challenge and Mayor McGraw has embraced every opportunity, no matter how daunting, to improve Round Rock. He shepherded the city through recent economic downturns and has worked tirelessly to inject realism to regional transit planning. His leadership has been a reflection of the very best values of the Lone Star State.

While McGraw isn't tired of the privilege of leading Round Rock, he knows that everything

has its season and that it's time to allow the next generation of leaders to take the stage. Retirement from office won't give him much idle time. He'll fill his days at his law practice, start up an archery retail business, and spend time with his beloved wife Kathy and two children.

Mayor Alan McGraw has done what all public servants are elected to do: put the needs of the people first. He's led Round Rock to new heights and positioned my home town to continue its progress into a bright future. I salute his leadership, congratulate him on his retirement, and wish him nothing but the best for the years ahead.

HONORING WILLIAM PETITE ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO OUR NATION

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I offer my sincere congratulations to my constituent, William Petite, on his upcoming retirement after more than 11 years of federal civilian service and 6 years of military service.

Mr. Petite began his service to our Nation in 1969, when he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps to serve in the Vietnam War, during which he earned, among other decorations, the Purple Heart. He later enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a Non-Commissioned Officer on armored vehicles until his discharge in 1981.

Mr. Petite later began working with tracked vehicles as a mechanic, supervisor, and in quality control with Boeing. He subsequently worked with Northrop-Grumman and Letterkenny Army Depot until 2009, when he accepted a position as a Quality Assurance Specialist with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) working out of BAE in York, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Petite's workload focused on the Bradley Fighting Vehicle ACAT–1 program; specifically, he aided in the initial development and updates to the Bradley program surveillance plan. His colleagues describe him as a dedicated, persistent, and outstanding leader who took great pride in supporting the customer, the Warfighter, and contributing to the defense of our Nation.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate William Petite on his service to our Nation and wish his family continued great success in the years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OPENING OF THE AMAZING WORLD OF DR. SEUSS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to include in the RECORD entitled "Oh, the places you'll go when visiting the new Seuss museum" that was published in the Boston Globe on May 25, 2017. This article comes ahead of the grand opening of The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss in Springfield, Massachusetts this June. This impressive museum honors the legendary work of Springfield native Theodor Geisel, better known to the world as Dr. Seuss. Geisel inspired generations of children and adults with his stories that have become iconic in American folklore.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that everyone will have the chance to visit this exemplary place and enjoy the marvels that Dr. Seuss created.

[From the Boston Globe, May 25, 2017]

OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO WHEN VISTING THE NEW SEUSS MUSEUM

(By James Sullivan)

SPRINGFIELD.—Theodor Geisel loved his father, but he was a practical man. Not for him your fantastic tales of elephants and giraffes and a brass band, as the boy daydreams in Geisel's first children's book, ''And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.'' The boy in the tale, inspired by Geisel's childhood, tells his father the truth: He'd seen a plain old horse and wagon.

Geisel—better known by his pen name, Dr. Seuss—may have had to leave this horse-and-wagon town, the place where he was born in 1904, to free the full potential of his extravagant imagination. Yet throughout his life the Springfield of his youth remained a touchstone.

Now, 15 years after the city unveiled its Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden at the Springfield Museums, crews are scrambling to put the finishing touches on the Amazing World of Dr. Seuss, the first museum dedicated to the life and work of the revered children's author and illustrator. Opening on the first weekend of June, it's not on the real Mulberry Street, but it's just a few blocks away.

''He left here at a certain age, but this was always his hometown, make no mistake,'' said Leagrey Dimond one of Geisel's two stepdaughters from Audrey Stone Dimond, his second wife. Dimond was in Springfield recently to help set up the museum displays, which include a recreation of Geisel's cozy living-room workspace in the family's hilltop home in La Jolla, Calif.

''This was our soapdish,'' Dimond said, holding up one artifact as she led a group of sneakpeekers through the galleries.

The Seuss museum will be housed in the William Pynchon Memorial Building, a two-story stone-block Georgian colonial located on the Springfield Museums quad, in the former home of the local history museum. Inside, the rooms feature expertly rendered murals from Seuss's books, painted by a team of UMass honors-college students under the direction of artist John Simpson. There are oversize figures from his books and a tribute to Geisel's childhood home in Springfield, and the second floor walls will be lined with one-of-a-kind Seuss artworks, many of them doodled specifically for his stepdaughters.

''You never knew when he'd come in and drop a little something on your bed,'' recalled Dimond, 59, who owns a small bookstore in San Francisco. Her sister, Lark Grey Dimond-Cates, is the sculptor who designed the memorial garden on the lawn in the quad, which includes bronze statues of the Lorax, Horton the Elephant, the Cat in the Hat, and other famous Seuss creations.

''People ask where he got his ideas from,'' said Dimond, who was 10 years old when her mother married her ''step-pop.'' ''Who knows? What matters is they were there.''

Geisel, who had no biological children, had pet names for his stepdaughters. He called Dimond ''Lee Groo,'' or ''Snunny.'' (He dedicated his book of tongue-twisters, ''Oh Say Can You Say?,''to ''Lee Groo, the Enunciator.'')

But for all of the wacky wordplay for which he was renowned, Geisel was also a voracious reader of books for grown-ups. He loved a good mystery, Dimond recalled, and ''he could recite from memory entire pieces of Shakespeare.''

She fully expects the museum to attract plenty of adults who are just as enthralled as the children.

''As you grow older, you love him in more and more ways,'' she said.

Simpson, the art director (who is married to the president of the Springfield Museums, Kay Simpson), said it's been a joy for him to bring the pages of Seuss's books to life on the walls of the museum. As a Springfield native whose favorite story growing up was ''Yertle the Turtle,'' ''it's been the greatest honor to lose myself in his lines and marks,'' he said.

Each room is a new immersion. The yellow walls of Geisel's home studio are the same yellow they were in La Jolla, said painting contractor Walt Reynolds, who was on his hands and knees on a drop cloth, finishing the trim. The ceiling in the basement, which will be a children's activity room, will be painted purple, he said. All the walls will be coated with polyurethane, for easy cleanup.

''My grandkids are dying to come in,'' said Reynolds. ''Hopefully my grandkids' grandkids will see this.''

Until now, Dimond has been reluctant to call attention to her place in Geisel's life. She did name her bookstore Thidwick, after the ''Big-Hearted Moose'' of the 1948 Dr. Seuss book. But it's one of his lesser-known works.

With the opening of the museum, it was time to ensure that the Dr. Seuss legacy will have its permanent home, she said: ''I emptied out my house. I kept one lamp, a blue sheep, and a couple of pictures.''

She's never felt the need to speak publicly about the private life of her step-pop. Anything you need to know about what he was like in person is contained in the books, she said.

''The kindness, the warmth, the wit, the sense of fun—it's all there. He can absolutely speak for himself.''

NEIL ETSON

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Neil Etson, a World War II veteran, as well as a small business owner and entrepreneur in Southern Illinois for over 50 years. He is being honored by the Rotary Club of Richland County for his service during World War II, where he served honorably as a Staff Sergeant with the 766th Military Police Battalion.

After the War, Neil made a home for him and his family in Olney, IL, where he founded an energy company, Etson Oil Corporation. Etson Oil Corporation operated successfully for over 50 years and provided many jobs in his community. Neil has been very involved in the energy sector as a Board Member of the Canadian Oil Corporation, a Steering Committee Member for the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and on the Committee on National Preservation Drake Well Museum in Titusville, Pennsylvania.

Neil has continued to serve his country, church, and community throughout his many years in Southern Illinois. He has been active on the Richland County Board, the City of Olney Zoning Board, and a member of the Richland County Development Corporation. He is also the author of two children's books.

Neil and his wife of 66 years, Frances, have three children and ten grandchildren. I would like to thank Neil for his service to his country and commend him on a lifetime of dedication to his community.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH CARVALHO

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an extraordinary man, Joseph John ''Joe'' Carvalho. Joseph passed away on May 22, 2017 at the age of 88. A resident of Hacienda Heights, California, he was a pillar of the community and will be deeply missed.

Joe was born on June 3, 1928, in Tiverton, Rhode Island and grew up in North Dighton, Massachusetts. He served in the Navy for two years and obtained the rank of Engineerman Third Class while working in a POW camp in World War II. In 1951, he enrolled in the Massachusetts Maritime Academy where he received his degree in Marine Engineering. Upon graduation, he served with the Merchant Marines for two years.

Joe married the love of his life Audrey Enos on November 21, 1953. They moved to California and welcomed the birth of their children: Catherine, Cynthia, Barry, Pamela, and Janet. He worked for the Department of Water and Power for 33 years as an Electrical Engineer. At 55, Joe retired and worked for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee while also maintaining his own real estate business. He was a founding member of Saint John Vianney Parish and was a dedicated usher and volunteer. He was a dedicated Red Sox fan and was able to see his dreams realized with the 2004, 2007, and 2013 World Series Championships. Joe's greatest joy was his family. He became known as Poppi to his five grandchildren: Danielle, Tara, Nicole, Hope Willard, and Brennan Carvalho, and two great grandchildren: Emma and Quinn Massari.

On Friday, May 26, 2017, a memorial honoring Joe's extraordinary life will be held in Hacienda Heights, CA. Joe will always be remembered for his incredible work ethic, generosity, contributions to the community and love of family. His dedication to his family, work, and community are a testament to a life lived well and a legacy that will continue. I extend my condolences to Joe's family and friends. Although Joe may be gone, the light and goodness he brought to the world remain and will never be forgotten.

CHILD PROTECTION BILLS

HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1842, 1862 and 1761. While I support these bills, I do not support the mandatory minimum requirements in them.

As a mother I constantly worry about the wellbeing of my children, and as a legislator I am concerned about the wellbeing of all our nation's children. These bills are very well meaning and I thank my colleagues for all the hard work done on them. No one here wants to see a child sexually assaulted or abused. Violence against children can have long lasting physical and emotional effects on a child. These bills go a long way and making sure those who commit these heinous crimes are punished.

While these bills address important issues and help to further protect our children, the mandatory minimum provisions are concerning to me. These bills would expand the number of individuals subject to mandatory minimums. Mandatory minimums are an unfair one size fits all solution that often do not take into account circumstances of a crime. Drug related mandatory minimums have led to increased prison population. Many of these people were given harsh and overly punitive prison time. We should not be looking for ways to increase the use of mandatory minimums, but ways to return discretion to judges.

Congress should not be legislating sentencing. This discretion should be left in the hands of judges. Judges are able to adapt sentences to fit the individual circumstances of particular crimes and offenders. My hope is that we are able to work together to protect our nation's children and give our judges the judicial discretion they need when it comes to sentencing those convicted in a court of law.

HONORING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an industry that is recognized nationwide during the first full week of May, but recognized locally in my district by the Bay County Chamber of Commerce during the entire month of May: travel and tourism.

If tourism is the body, then our visitors are the blood sustaining life. From our award-winning restaurants and warm and welcoming hospitality businesses, to our entertainment events featuring world-renowned artists and the alluring charms of small town life, each and every member of the tourism industry is critical to making our communities thrive. I commend you for your work and am thankful for your contributions to making our communities an incredible place to call home.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMISSION ON AMERICANS LIVING ABROAD ACT OF 2017

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, there are an estimated 8 million constituents scattered across the world who promote our culture and values while strengthening our nation's global influence as they live and work abroad. For years, I have worked to ensure that overseas Americans can fully exercise their rights as U.S. citizens by having their voices heard loud and clear by Congress. Eight years ago, I formed the Congressional Americans Abroad Caucus because I wanted to bring awareness and focus to the concerns of those residing abroad. U.S. citizens remain just that, citizens, regardless of where they choose to live and should not be ignored by virtue of residence.

Our constituents living and working abroad have consistently voiced concerns about the impact federal policies have on them like voting, immigration, access to financial institutions, and taxation. The time has come to comprehensively study and address the effects of federal policies on Americans living overseas.

That is why today I am reintroducing the Commission on Americans Living Abroad Act, which creates an Executive Commission with the main purpose of examining those concerns. The Commission creates a 10 member panel to examine the impact of federal policymaking on U.S. citizens abroad. The resulting study would then be used by Congress and the Executive Branch when considering the best steps we can take to engage the abroad community and ensure their voices are heard. This process will bring clearer awareness of the federal issues impacting Americans abroad and will open a path for coordination with those communities towards more robust representation.

Each of our constituents has a right to have their interests represented and to have a role in the political process. The Commission on Americans Living Abroad would establish a foundation from which we can work to better serve the needs of our global constituents. I welcome and urge my colleagues to lend their support to this bill.

IN HONOR OF MEMORIAL DAY

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, next week, on May 29, 2017, our nation will celebrate Memorial Day, a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States.

We set aside this day to pay solemn tribute to the patriots who gave their last full measure of devotion for this country that we love.

Let us honor and remember our servicemen and women who answered America's call to service and paid the ultimate price to keep us here at home safe.

We honor their loved ones. Mothers. Fathers. Sisters. Brothers. Sons. Daughters.

Friends. We thank you for your sacrifice as well.

As a grateful nation, we have an obligation and a duty to be there for those who provided the ultimate sacrifice, and for their brothers and sisters in service.

Let us never forget our obligation to provide our troops the tools they need to carry out their mission; to care for all those who have served; to honor all those whom we've lost; to keep faith with our military families; to never stop searching for those who are missing, or trying to bring home our prisoners of war.

May God bless our fallen heroes and their families and all who serve in the United States Armed Forces.

HONORING DR. DONALD F. BOESCH

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding environmental conservationist and researcher in my home state of Maryland. Dr. Donald F. Boesch has served as the President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) since 1990, and he will be retiring from that position later this year. Throughout his tenure, UMCES has led the charge to study and conserve our state's natural environments, particularly the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

UMCES has its roots in a small research laboratory opened at the mouth of the Patuxent River in the Chesapeake Bay in 1925, and was relaunched under its current name and mission in 1997 to provide undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on learning and internships in marine biology, ecology, and environmental subjects. With five locations across the State of Maryland, from its original site in Solomons Island in Calvert County to laboratories in the Appalachians, Baltimore, College Park, and Cambridge on the Eastern Shore, UMCES forms a critical part of the University System of Maryland's commitment to research and to training the next generation of environmental scientists. Its hundred faculty members are conducting ground-breaking research and teaching UMCES's eighty-five graduate students.

Alongside UMCES's academic mission, it also fulfills a public policy role with its faculty advising policymakers in Maryland and in the federal government. UMCES scientists have been instrumental in calling attention to the challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed and in proposing ways to clean up this regional and national treasure. Under Dr. Boesch's leadership, UMCES has been especially active in raising awareness about the Chesapeake and its importance to regional ecosystems and supporting our regional economy.

Dr. Boesch began his career by earning his undergraduate degree in biology from Tulane University in his native New Orleans. Later, he received his doctorate in oceanography from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. He spent time in Australia on a Fulbright scholarship before conducting research at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. In 1980, Dr. Boesch returned to New Orleans to become the inaugural Executive Director of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and to teach marine science at Louisiana State University. He came to Maryland in 1990 to lead UMCES and now caps a very successful tenure of twenty-seven years at the helm. During that time, Dr. Boesch advised Maryland governors from both parties, has been as a member of the Governor's Chesapeake Bay Cabinet, and has served on the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. In 2010, President Obama appointed him to the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling. He has served as Chair of the Ocean Studies Board for the National Academy of Sciences and is the author of two books and dozens of scholarly papers.

The people of Maryland have been so fortunate to have Dr. Boesch leading UMCES these past twenty-seven years. We have been blessed to have his intellect, his dedication, and his wise leadership benefiting our students and our researchers. All those who treasure the Chesapeake owe Dr. Boesch much gratitude for his contributions to preserving the Bay and its watershed. I join in congratulating him on a very successful tenure and in wishing him well as he prepares to step down later this year.

COMMENDING 2017 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ENLISTED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

HON. A. DONALD McEACHIN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. McEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize greater Richmond area high school seniors who plan to enlist in the United States Armed Forces following graduation. These students have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to scholastic achievement. It is with profound enthusiasm I commend the following student leaders on the selfless choice to answer our Nation's call to service:

Adams, Solomon; Bailey, James; Bontilao, Domenique; Broughton, Adam; Delao, Natty; Flournoy, Paul; Gascott, Andrew; Hall, Liam; Herrera, Jordy; Johnson, Forrest; Jones, Savion; Lewis, Antonique; Lindsay, David; McClain, Lakeeya; McCullers, Orlando; McGriffin, John; Monteeria, Darius; Saddler, Kioni; Sauvager, Alexandra; Gordon, Shamai; Smith, Robert III; Taylor, Gabriel; Turner, Nathaniel; Viera, Sabrina; Whiting, Shamon; Williams, Fat Tae; Wilson, Armone; Witherspoon, Kendell; Woods, Ashley; Wren, David; Wynn, Kahli; Aggabao, Richard; Barba, Rigoberto; Barquero, Iyan; Briggs, Colin; Broussard, Micha; Burleigh, Emon; Cassidy, Christopher; Cheek, Austin; Cruz, Alexa; Decriscio, Donald; Dunn, Taylor; Fleming, Lauryn; Garcia, Alejandro; Hoffler, Tyler; Howe, Kyle; Lofton, Jerron; Marentes, Saul; Marshburn, Donald; Nunes, Amy; Parker, Dajohn; Perkins, Cierra; Ramirez, Alonso; Scruggs, Carlos; Spraggs, Armani; Tabora, Ivan; Taylor, Matthew; Williams, Darius; Williams, Taeyah; Yeomans, Jesse; Gadsen, Breyona; Glatt, Matthew; Grella, Julia; Hamilton, Brian; Hollen, Joseph; Hopkins, Jonathan; McLean, Alphonsje; Peyton, Calvin; Ratliff, Isis; Speer, Harrison; Taylor, Daryl; Vinson, Simone; Green, Vivian; Washington-Allen, Dominic; Williams, Kyle; Clary-Hayman, Tiana; Feggins, Roman; Chapman, Ravon; and Tunstall, Anthony.

On this day, I acknowledge your courage and commitment to our country and express my sincere gratitude for your willingness to serve honorably. I look forward to joining the Blue Star Families of Richmond and Henrico Co. Public Schools to honor these exceptional students during the ''Our Community Salutes Reception and Awards Ceremony'' on Tuesday, May 30, 2017 at Hermitage High School in Henrico Co., Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting these brave, young women and men for the courageous decision to join the United States Armed Forces upon their high school graduation.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE JOHN F. KENNEDY HYANNIS MUSEUM

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the birth of President John F. Kennedy and the exceptional work of the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum in preserving his legacy.

President Kennedy, one of Massachusetts' most celebrated sons and the youngest president to be elected to office, had a deep and abiding love for his family's home in Hyannis Port. The John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum is devoted to preserving the legacy of President Kennedy and his deep and lasting bond with the marshes, beaches, sea breeze, and way of life on Cape Cod.

Since the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum first opened its doors in 1992, it has hosted and designed numerous exhibits that highlight the life of President Kennedy and the legacy of his family. The Museum's multimedia displays give the visiting public a glimpse into the life of one of the most influential and recognizable leaders in the world. In addition to the well-known role of the Kennedys in American history, the Museum annotates the personal side of the unforgettable President—providing visitors with a deeper perspective on and edification of John F. Kennedy: the father, son, brother, husband, and friend. Lining the walls of the galleries are images of the Kennedys relaxing on the beach, enjoying evenings with friends, and recreating on the compound lawns.

Though President Kennedy was tragically taken from the American people on November 22, 1963, his legacy and impact on the country lives on—thanks in no small part to the efforts of the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum. To this day, it remains a renowned destination in downtown Hyannis. In celebration of the anniversary of his birthday, the museum is hosting numerous events including a commemoration concert in collaboration with the Cape Symphony.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the birth of President Kennedy. I ask that my colleagues join

me in recognizing the Museum on its many years of devotion to preserving the legacy and connection of the Kennedy family to Cape Cod.

HONORING THE CAREER OF MRS. MARY HENDERSON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mrs. Mary Henderson. Mrs. Henderson has devoted 50 years of outstanding service to the Dos Palos-Oro Loma Joint Unified School District. During these years, she has been a truly brilliant educator, serving her community and teaching generations of children in the Central Valley.

Mrs. Henderson has selflessly devoted her entire professional career to public education. She began her career in 1967, serving as a paraeducator for eight years before becoming a teacher in 1975. Mrs. Henderson has been educating, impacting, and improving the lives of hundreds of children for five decades, demonstrating a remarkable dedication to education. In addition to teaching our children, Mrs. Henderson is deeply committed to improving literacy in our community. She has spent countless hours working with adults as well as children, teaching them how to read.

Mrs. Henderson has been described by those who know her as an exceptional, skilled, and caring teacher. She provides her students with both endless patience and rich knowledge, and she always has kind words of encouragement. Mrs. Henderson is fondly remembered by generations of grateful students whose lives she has touched. Beyond her service as an educator, she is also an active member of Friends of the Library, supporting libraries in Merced County by volunteering at libraries and working on book donation programs and fundraising events.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Mrs. Mary Henderson for the 50 years of extraordinary and dedicated service. Through her teaching, compassion, and example, Mrs. Henderson has left a lasting impact on her community. It is fitting and appropriate that May 26th, 2017 be declared ''Mary Henderson Day'' in Dos Palos, California.

RECOGNIZING JULIA MATTOCKS ON HER 99TH BIRTHDAY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Julia Frances Mattocks, who celebrates her 99th birthday this Sunday.

Ms. Mattocks, Galesburg's 'Rosie the Riveter', serves as a role model in our community due to her tireless work ethic and dedication to serving others. As the United States entered the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, she stepped up and did her part to protect Americans abroad. With her sister Helen, Julia completed rivet work on B–17 Flying Fortresses, and worked at the Lockheed Vega plant in Burbank making Quonset huts for the military and airplane parts at Gale Products. Ms. Mattocks ultimately sacrificed her hearing in one ear and received chemical burns across her arms due to her work on behalf of our country. I celebrate and admire the role that she—and many other women—played in supporting our nation during a time of war.

Ms. Mattocks is a true inspiration for many people, and her passion and dedication makes her a uniting force within our community. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for Julia's contributions and service to our community and our nation. I wish her a Happy 99th Birthday, with more to come.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, today I stand in recognition of international students and scholars, and the U.S. institutions of higher education they attend, all of which are bearing the brunt of this Administration's rhetoric and actions. To ensure our nation's security, economic well-being, and academic leadership, we must remain an open and welcoming nation.

According to the Association of International Educators, international students and their families contributed nearly $33 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2015–2016 academic year. International students who have spent time in the United States become informal ambassadors when they return home, carrying an appreciation for common values, counteracting stereotypes about the U.S., and enhancing respect for cultural differences. They also act as cultural liaisons for U.S. students and help them succeed as global citizens.

Actions taken by this Administration have generated a great deal of uncertainty within U.S. academia. Many currently-enrolled international students and scholars will choose not to travel home at the end of the academic year, for fear they might not be allowed to return in the fall. Unsurprisingly, for prospective students, nearly 40 percent of higher education institutions reported application declines in international students for the first time in many years.

We must stop the anti-immigrant rhetoric and make the United States an open and welcoming country for the bright, ambitious international students who contribute greatly to our country.

I urge my colleagues and the Administration to recognize the vital contribution international students and their families make when we welcome them to this great country.

To the international students and scholars who may be unsure about coming, I say: Your contributions are valued and you are welcome here.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. THOMAS C. PLEGER

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to acknowledge the life of a devoted community leader and dedicated educator, Dr. Thomas Pleger, who passed away at the age of 48 on Sunday, May 7, 2017.

Thomas was born on April 24, 1969, to Ernest and Barbara Pleger, and grew up just across the border from Menominee, Michigan in Marinette, Wisconsin. He earned his doctoral degree in archaeology and anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and spent 21 years teaching at various private and public institutions throughout the region. Following his tenure as Campus Executive Officer and Dean at UW Baraboo-Sauk County, Thomas followed his passion for education into the Upper Peninsula where, on July 1, 2014, he became the eighth president of Lake Superior State University, a position he would hold until his untimely passing.

As the president of Lake Superior State University, Thomas is remembered for his warmth, generosity, and tireless devotion to the school and its students. Lake Superior State University experienced a tremendous period of growth under Dr. Pleger's stewardship, including the implementation of a One Rate tuition plan, the financial restructuring of the university, the advancement of the R.W. Considine Hall Renovation project, and the procurement of funding for the proposed Center for Freshwater Research and Education. These accomplishments eventually led to him earning an appointment to Governor Rick Snyder's 21st Century Economy Commission, where he applied his extensive background in education to identify Michigan's economic priorities for the next 20 years.

Beyond the campus, Dr. Pleger's leadership translated into real results for his community. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Thomas to lend a listening ear or life advice to prospective students, and he was known to connect on a personal level, with a lighthearted sense of humor. Today, Dr. Pleger is survived by his wife, Teresa, father, Ernest, brother, Tim, sons Matt, Andrew, Chad, and Collin, and his sister, Amy Pfister. Not only will Lake Superior State University bear the positive impact of Dr. Pleger for generations to come, but communities around the country will benefit from the countless lives he touched.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Pleger's outstanding career in education cannot be overstated, and his family and community can take great pride in knowing that the Upper Peninsula is a better place thanks to his life's work. On behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I ask you to join me in recognizing an outstanding public servant whose contributions will continue to bless Yoopers for many years to come.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

HON. JARED POLIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of international students, scholars, and the U.S. institutions of higher education they attend who have been unfairly penalized by the administration's efforts to limit travel to our country.

I'd like to share with you the story of Khalid Al-Awadhi, an undergraduate student at CU Boulder from the United Arab Emirates, who is studying electrical and computer engineering.

Khalid is president of CU International, a campus organization that helps international students adjust to campus life. He is well known for his welcoming demeanor and enthusiasm. Khalid is driven by his commitment to make CU Boulder a better learning experience for all international students. The personal connections he has built have truly made a difference for the experience of hundreds of students on campus by building bridges and connecting cultures.

May is a critical month on the college calendar. Many currently-enrolled international students and scholars will choose not to travel home at the end of the academic year, for fear they might not be allowed to return in the fall. In addition, the anti-immigrant rhetoric and uncertainty created by our broken immigration system makes the United States less attractive to the students and scholars who we want to contribute to our campuses and communities.

To ensure our nation's security, economic wellbeing, and academic leadership, we must remain an open and welcoming United States. So, to the international students and scholars who may be unsure about coming to study at institutions like CU Boulder and Colorado State, I say: Your contributions are valued and you are welcome here.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT LEE HENDEE

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District and the citizens of Wilmington, Ohio to honor the life and memory of Robert Lee Hendee. A pioneer of Southwest Ohio's radio, in his 50 years as a behind-the-scenes support and an on-air personality, Lee became a familiar name and voice in his Wilmington community.

Lee embodied the American Dream. Following his education at the International School of Broadcasting in Dayton, Ohio, he went on to work at WKFI in Wilmington, WSRW in Hillsboro, and WBZI in Xenia, before ultimately fulfilling his dream of owning his own radio station in 2015.

As the owner and founder of the nonprofit WALH in Wilmington, Lee brought the power of radio to his community; he interviewed residents and celebrities alike, and unified his neighbors by bringing them information and giving them a voice. I always appreciated the opportunity to stop by the station and catch up with him. His devotion to Wilmington was undeniable.

Aside from being the man with the voice, he was an avid sports fan and was fiercely dedicated to creating positive change in the lives of young people. He was the proud owner of Ultimate Impact Wrestling, a longtime boys' baseball and girls' softball coach, and a talented bowler.

Lee touched the lives of countless people with his infectious spirit and memorable voice, He will be fondly remembered by those who loved him, especially his mother, his brother and sister, his wife, his four children and his six grandchildren.

RECOGNIZING THE RETURN TO EL PASO ROOTS EVENT

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise and join with my colleague, the Honorable BARBARA LEE, to acknowledge and celebrate the ''Return to El Paso Roots'' event, which will take place May 26 through 29, 2017 in El Paso, Texas. This historically significant event salutes the African American families, friends, and students who attended the historic Douglass School, the first school for African Americans in El Paso.

Andrew Morelock established the school in 1883 as a refuge and haven for the children of African American El Pasoans barred from attending schools with white children. First named Franklin School, it became Douglass School in tribute to the noted abolitionist and statesman, Frederick Douglass. The school sought to allow children to thrive in a fully supportive community committed to their success and academic achievement. Douglass School provided much more than a quality education; it also provided community and a sense of well being and belonging for its students.

The school desegregated in 1955 following the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, and the site is now an historical site in El Paso. Douglass students excelled, and the school produced a notable array of successful graduates, including the family of my esteemed colleague, Congresswoman LEE.

During the ''Return to El Paso Roots'' event, former students, families, friends, and El Paso residents will come together in celebration at the historic McCall Neighborhood Community Center. The late Leona Ford Washington, a retired Douglass schoolteacher, founded the Center in 1983. She dedicated her life to the needs and development of the El Paso African American community. It is pertinent to highlight the history of The McCall Neighborhood Center as it prepares to host many events for ''Return to El Paso Roots''.

The McCall Neighborhood Center is the former home of Marshall and Olalee McCall. Mr. McCall was the first African American postal worker in El Paso, and his wife, Mrs. McCall, was a principal at Douglass School. Following Mrs. McCall's tenure as principal from 1937 through 1944, the home served as a daycare center as well as her music studio. The McCall Neighborhood Center is an important foundation in the El Paso community.

In this celebration, we acknowledge and honor the tremendous contributions of the African American community to the success and development of El Paso, and the work they have done to make our community, the State of Texas, and our country a more just world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join Congresswoman LEE and me in saluting the Douglass School students, families, and friends who will come to El Paso to commemorate and celebrate this remarkable community.

IN RECOGNITION OF MAE JEMISON FOR HER OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AS AN ASTRONAUT AND SCIENTIST

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mae Jemison, a physician, scientist and astronaut whose pioneering career has furthered our understanding of the world around us. Dr. Jemison has achieved excellence across a number of disciplines as a result of her hard work and perseverance.

After receiving a medical degree from Cornell Medical College and completing her medical training, Dr. Jemison served as a Peace Corps Medical Officer, treating Peace Corps volunteers in Liberia and Sierra Leone. She was then accepted into NASA's astronaut program in 1987, providing launch support and assistance until her space mission aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavor* in September 1992. During her mission, Dr. Jemison conducted scientific experiments on bone cell research and the effects of weightlessness on the human body, which contributed to advancements in our understanding of life sciences. She then resigned in 1993 from NASA, and has since founded several companies, including BioSentient Corp., which develops treatments for chronic pain and stress disorders.

Dr. Jemison has had an extraordinary career and has affected countless lives through her work. In addition to breaking down barriers as the first black woman in space, Dr. Jemison has utilized her medical background and business acumen to develop novel medical treatments for a variety of illnesses. She has also excelled in academia, working as a professor at Dartmouth and Cornell, and is the founder of the Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence, a nonprofit that promotes science education initiatives. Collectively, Dr. Jemison has had an indelible impact on a variety of disciplines through her work, and she continues to inspire new generations of scientists.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring Dr. Mae Jemison for her outstanding career. Dr. Jemison's work with NASA, in medicine and in business has impacted and inspired countless individuals.

HONORING SPC. JACOB D. MARTIR'S SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today, as we near Memorial Day, I rise to honor SPC. Jacob D. Martir, for his honorable service to our nation and his ultimate sacrifice during the early days of the Iraq War.

Jacob was a native of eastern Connecticut, growing up in Willimantic and Norwich. A former student of Norwich Free Academy, he enlisted in the United States Army in 2000 at the age of 17. Joining the armed services was his lifelong dream. Nearing completion of his first tour in the Army, he reenlisted for four more years in 2002, despite the added risk of serving after 9/11.

In March of 2004, Jacob deployed to Iraq with Alpha Troop, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. On August 18, 2004, while patrolling in Sadr City, one of Baghdad's most violent neighborhoods throughout the war, Jacob was tragically killed by small arms fire. His sacrifice, coming four months after the tragic ''Black Sunday'' in which eight soldiers were killed in Sadr City, was part of a years-long effort to clear the area of Iraqi insurgents. He was 21 years old and left behind a loving mother, Lydia Gutierrez, and five siblings. For his courageous service, Jacob was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, and he was buried with full military honors at Maplewood Cemetery in Norwich.

Jacob's life is a reminder of the greatest American values. His call to serve was instinctive and unrelenting even through a time of great danger. At just twenty-one years old, he marched bravely into one of the most dangerous places in the world to defend and serve his nation and protect his fellow soldiers.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in solemn remembrance of Jacob Martir and his family, and thanking them for Jacob's service to eastern Connecticut and our nation.

NATIONAL POPPY DAY

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize tomorrow, and each Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

National Poppy Day encourages all Americans to wear a red poppy flower as a symbol to remember the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform.

Following World War I, the red poppy became an internationally recognized symbol of the blood shed by those who fought for their countries.

Although it originated almost a century ago, the poppy is just as relevant today.

Throughout our history, countless Americans have laid down their lives to protect and defend the country and the people they love.

America's living veterans have served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and many other conflicts around the world.

They fought for us and many bare scars that will stay with them for life.

As Americans, we have an obligation to remember the service and sacrifice of these brave men and women and their families, who have helped build the country we love today.

By recognizing National Poppy Day, we stand with these brave men and women and with the families of all those who did not make it home.

While we all agree with the sentiment, the symbolism behind the poppy is better known around the world than it is here in the United States.

It is worn in England and Canada, on Remembrance Day, also known as Armistice Day and Poppy Day, to commemorate members of the armed forces who have died in the line of duty.

This year the United States commemorates the 100th anniversary of its entrance into World War I.

The American Legion, our largest wartime veterans organization which has a track record of promoting National Poppy Day, is approaching its 100th anniversary.

There is no more appropriate time for us, as a nation, to recognize this historic symbol of service.

As the proud author of H. Res. 309, a resolution recognizing National Poppy Day, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in promoting this visible recognition of those who have served our nation in uniform.

IN HONOR OF THE DEEP EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I, along with Representative BRIAN BABIN and Representative LOUIE GOHMERT, recognize the 50th anniversary of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Economic Development District, better known as ''DETCOG.''

In November of 1966, over fifty community officials and leaders, concerned with the economic growth and development of East Texas and the quality of life of its residents, gathered together to lay the groundwork for the Deep East Texas Economic Development District.

The Honorable Charles Wilson, a Member of the Texas Senate and later a Member of the United States House of Representatives, was unanimously elected Chair, and later President, of the new organization.

The Deep East Texas Economic Development District continued its meetings throughout 1967. It employed its first Executive Director in August and opened its first office in September. In 1968, the District even became a Regional Planning Commission under the laws of the State of Texas, and in 1972, it adopted the new name of Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Economic Development District.

DETCOG has facilitated the development of effective responses to such issues as community and economic development, affordable housing, aging and disability services, public safety and emergency response, disaster recovery, information and referral services, volunteerism, transportation and the environment that have had a profound and positive impact on the Deep East Texas Region.

Over the past half-century, DETCOG's activities have improved the quality of life for all residents in the 12-county region known as Deep East Texas, including the counties of Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity and Tyler.

Representative BABIN, Representative GOHMERT, and I are proud to congratulate the Deep East Texas Council of Governments and Economic Development District on its 50th Anniversary and its legacy of outstanding service to the governments and citizens of the Deep East Texas region.

IN HONOR OF ROY REESE'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to recognize a fine Hoosier and my friend, Roy Reese, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, which he will celebrate on Tuesday, June 13, 2017. Mr. Reese has been a pillar of his community in Wheatfield, Indiana, for nearly half a century, and having known him for many years, I can attest to his steadfast dedication to improving the quality of life for his fellow citizens. I congratulate Roy as he celebrates this momentous occasion with his many family members and friends.

Roy Reese was born in Stevenson, Alabama, on June 13, 1937. A proud American and true patriot, Roy joined the United States Air Force in 1954 and eventually became the crew chief for large cargo helicopters before returning to civilian life in 1958. Upon his return, Roy began his career with Operating Engineers Local 150 and has been a proud union member with the organization for more than fifty-four years. In addition, Mr. Reese has also utilized his vast agricultural knowledge which has helped him to become a successful farmer.

Roy has also proven himself to be a devoted public servant, as well as an esteemed member of his church. A lifelong Democrat, Mr. Reese served on the Gilliam Township Advisory Board for twenty-four years. A proud veteran as well as a man of great faith, he is also a lay speaker at Tefft United Methodist Church and has also served as chaplain for American Legion Post 228 in Francesville, Indiana. In addition, Roy has been a member of Masonic Lodge No. 642, located in Wheatfield, for more than fifty years.

I would be remiss if I did not share one specific example of the type of person Roy Reese is. While he is well-known in his community and in his church for his selfless service, Roy truly epitomizes what it means to be a good neighbor, regardless of the season. In fact, Roy has always taken it upon himself to clear snow from his neighbors' driveways during the cold winter months, a service illustrative of his generous spirit.

However, Roy Reese is first and foremost a family man. I am certain Roy would confirm that his greatest source of pride is his loving family. Roy wed his beloved wife, Bonnie, on January 20,1958, and the couple has spent the past fifty-nine years by each other's side. Roy and Bonnie are the proud parents of four sons, Daniel, Michael, Richard, and Roy Douglas Reese. They are also the loving grandparents of seventeen and the adoring great-grandparents of fourteen.

Mr. Speaker, Roy Reese has been a dedicated member of and inspiration to his community throughout his life, and on this special occasion, it is fitting that I take this time to honor him and to commend him for all that he has done for so many for so long. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in wishing Roy a Happy 80th Birthday and many more joyous years to come.

MEMORIAL DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respect to the American warfighter. As we celebrate Military Appreciation Month, it is important to convey that the words we use to honor our brave men and women in uniform must be followed up by action. The time for paying artificial lip service to the military community is over.

Next month, the House Armed Services Committee will initiate its annual markup of the National Defense Authorization Act. The NDAA is one of the few things in Washington that actually works. The NDAA has been passed—with bipartisan support—for the last 56 years.

But this year's NDAA might be the most important yet. For the last eight years, our military has been degraded, defunded, and disgraced by the previous administration's attempt to lead from behind. Today, the United States military lacks the requisite personnel and material readiness required to protect our nation against unforeseen and near-peer adversaries.

Our nation faces a litany of global threats from North Korea and Syria, to the Islamic State and Iran. Failed states and trans-national fundamentalist regimes that want nothing more than to destroy democracy and the American spirit. The United States military is America's front line defense against the plague of radical Islamic terrorism and demagogues.

There is no other way to say it. Our military is broken. Consider the following:

The Navy is in its smallest state in 99 years, and faces increased demand with limited resources (274 ships).

Moreover, the Navy can only satisfy 40% of all Combatant Commander requests due to high operational tempo and lengthy maintenance periods

50% of the civilian workforce working in Navy shipyards have less than five years of experience, and such inexperience impacts the on-time delivery of new ships, and increases the cost of the American taxpayer

Prior to 1992, the Air Force purchased about 200 fighter aircraft per year; today the Air Force buys less than 20; that is a 90 percent reduction of new fighter aircraft

And of the 58 Army Brigades stationed around the world, only three—three—are prepared to fight in an armed conflict tonight, meaning they require no additional training, manpower, or equipment

I am honored to serve as the elected representatives of one of the largest military districts in America. No district in this entire country has more military retirees, military veterans, and military dependents than Northwest Florida.

Few districts can lay claim to Northwest Florida's operational and training footprint. My district is home to the Army's 7th Special Forces Group; the Air Force Special Operations Command; The Joint Gulf Range Complex which provides supersonic air combat training and hypersonic weapons testing for frontline warfighters like the F–35 and the F–22; and Pensacola Naval Air Station, the cradle of Naval Aviation.

But the time for honoring the brave men and women of the military with just words is over. They need more than free dinners at Applebee's and free milkshakes at Dairy Queen to feel truly appreciated. We need congressional commitment to end the scourge of sequestration. We need to right the wrongs of the previous administration's systematic dismantling of military readiness. We need the 115th Congress show its true military appreciation by providing the American warfighter with the tools, training, and long term funding to protect the homeland and sustain America as the preeminent global superpower.

400 YEARS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY COMMISSION ACT

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1242 entitled, ''400 Years of African-American History Commission Act.'' As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I worked with my colleagues to pass this act in the House and look forward to the Senate also passing this bill. I believe it is important for all citizens of the United States to recognize the unique history, sacrifices, and remarkable contributions that African Americans have made to build our great nation.

I am invigorated by this legislative intention to identify and educate the public on the arrival of Africans and their role in building this great country. It is equally important to understand the generational impact that slavery and laws that enforced racial discrimination had on the United States. While there have been many successful and inspirational African Americans with enumerable contributions, we must address ongoing racial disparities in employment and education by focusing on achieving six universal milestones for success.

These six universal milestones include:

1. Entering school ready to learn;
2. Reading at grade level by third grade;
3. Graduating from high school ready for college or career;
4. Completing post-secondary education or training;
5. Successfully entering the workforce; and
6. Reducing violence and providing a second chance for returning citizens.

I applaud the many organizations actively working to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by African Americans. In my community of the 2nd Congressional District of Nebraska, I appreciate the efforts of Willie Hamilton, president and founder of Black Men United. He is a true grass roots leader. In addition, I want to highlight some other organizations, and work ongoing in the district I serve to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people. These organizations include Urban League of Nebraska, The START Center, the Omaha Empowerment Network coordinated by Willie Barney, Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership, 100 Black Men of Omaha, Malcom X Foundation, Operation Youth Success, Members of the Midlands Mentoring Partnership, the efforts by the City of Omaha through the Black Male Achievement program previously coordinated by Cameron Gales. Like all complicated issues facing Americans, we need this type of strong community support along with smart bipartisan legislation to address any problem.

As the African-American History Commission develops programs, I hope they will consider inspiring communities to continue building partnerships between local organizations, government, businesses and foundations. This will connect young African American men and women with support networks, mentoring programs, and the skills training they need to succeed in the classroom and in the workforce. While we learn from and celebrate the past, we must also look to a much brighter future for all Americans.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOTE BY MAIL ACT OF 2017

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are in the middle of national civics lesson, with unprecedented levels of citizen and grassroots activism driving political and policy conversations in communities across the country. It is ironic, then, that many states are trying to make it harder for Americans to participate in our democracy. On November 8, 2016, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, fourteen states had new restrictions on voting in place for the first time in a presidential election. Restrictions like these have historically targeted minority and low-income voters. This disturbing trend in state action has mirrored the weakening of campaign finance restrictions and voting rights laws by the U.S. Supreme Court in recent years. Even as we witness a growing civic engagement, legal and political barriers rise to unjustly diminish individual voices.

Expanding vote by mail is a clear and cost effective measure to make voting easier, not harder. Mail-in voting states Oregon, Washington, and Colorado saw among the highest voter turnout in the 2016 general election, especially notable for Oregon with nearly 250,000 new automatically registered voters. The Vote By Mail Act of 2017 will build on Oregon's successful reforms at the national level

The legislation will require states to mail ballots to all eligible voters in federal elections at least two weeks before the election. Every registered American voter would have the ability to return their ballots through the mail, using prepaid envelopes, or drop them off at secure predetermined drop-off locations like a public library or county elections office.

This bill also shifts the burden of registration from the individual to the government. It calls on state governments to collaborate with state motor vehicle agencies to maintain updated voter registration rolls for all citizens who apply for a driver's license and who do not ask to remain unregistered.

The Vote By Mail Act of 2017 is a vital step to restoring the mandate of American democracy.

IN RECOGNITION OF MAJOR DAVID ANDERSON

HON. MARK MEADOWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major David Anderson of the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office. On behalf of the people of Western North Carolina, I would like to thank Major Anderson for his 30 years of service to Caldwell County.

Major Anderson began his law enforcement career in 1986 when he graduated from the U.S. Army Military Police School at Fort McClellan, Alabama. The following year he joined the 21st Airborne Military Police Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He then worked for the Lenoir Police Department as a patrol officer and field training officer from 1990 until 1993.

In 1993 Major Anderson joined the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office and was assigned to the Patrol Division as Deputy Sheriff. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1994, to Lieutenant in 1998, and to Captain of the Patrol Division in 2006. Major Anderson was appointed to Major/Chief Deputy by Sheriff Alan Jones in 2008 and served in this position until his retirement. As Chief Deputy, Major Anderson supervised budgetary and personnel matters and oversaw the daily operations of the Sheriff's office. In addition to these duties, Major Anderson conducted an extensive research project to document the history of the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office.

Throughout his career, Major Anderson has received numerous medals, service awards, and commendations including the Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate, Advanced Service Award, Officer of the Year, and the Medal of Valor. Major Anderson is a lifelong resident of Caldwell County, where he lives with his wife and children.

Through his dedication to the people and history of Caldwell County, Major Anderson has enriched the community that he so faithfully served. I am honored to recognize Major Anderson on his retirement and convey the sincere congratulations and best wishes of the people of North Carolina.

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND MAGNON

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Raymond Magnon, who passed away in California on Monday, April 24, 2017. Raymond, or Ray as he was known to friends and family, proudly served our nation as a plane mechanic in the Air Force during the Korean War and he will be deeply missed.

Ray was born to Frank and Caroline Magnon in Niles, Ohio. In 1944, when Ray was 14 years old, his family moved from Ohio to Riverside where he attended Poly High School, served in the Air Force as a plane mechanic during the Korean War, and later attended Chaffey College. After college, Ray worked at Lockheed and at a local fiberglass company. Shortly after Ray started his career working as an electrician, he would eventually start his own company, Service Electric. Over the years, Service Electric would provide the electrical construction for many notable buildings in the city of Riverside, including Tyler Mall. At one point in the 1970s the company was the largest electrical contractor in California, employing hundreds of electricians and staff.

Later in life, Ray ventured into commercial real estate development. In 1977, he founded The Magnon Companies which developed and built many of the buildings constructed in Riverside, including buildings in the Sycamore Canyon Business Park, Hunter Park, and other areas of the city. Ray also was responsible for the construction of several apartment buildings in Canyon Crest including Bunker Hill. Ray had many passions in life such as Formula 1 races, tennis, traveling to Europe, collecting sports cars, and a fondness for classic jazz and crooner songs. One of his strongest passions was being a business leader in the community and working to advance important causes for our region.

Ray is survived by his wife, Kelly Magnon, their son, Ryan Magnon and by his daughters from his previous marriage to Elaine Timmons Taber; Patti Oldham, Cheryl Cliff and Deanna Magnon. Ray was preceded in death by his son, Douglas Magnon. He is also survived by many loving grandchildren, nieces, nephews and step-children. I had the distinct privilege of knowing Ray for many years and I will deeply miss him. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the entire Magnon family. Although Ray may be gone, his selfless dedication to our nation will long be remembered.

YOUTH SEXUAL ABUSE

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, this week we considered an important issue that needs to be addressed: youth sexual abuse. Some research shows that as many as 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys will be victims of sexual abuse. Congress can and should do more to reduce the prevalence of this heinous behavior.

Unfortunately, some of the bills we considered this week use the wrong tools to address this problem. Those bills include the Strengthening Children's Safety Act (H.R. 1842), the Global Child Protection Act (H.R. 1862), and the Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act (H.R. 1761). All of these bills double down on our country's misguided practice of enforcing mandatory minimum sentencing, which research has shown does not dissuade crime and can tie the hands of judges when mitigating factors warrant lighter sentencing.

Let me be clear—sexual abuse of children is a horrible offense that cannot be tolerated, and I support efforts to address this issue, including the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act (H.R. 1973), which I was proud to vote in favor of this week. My opposition to H.R. 1842 and H.R. 1761 reflects my opposition to mandatory minimum sentencing. I would welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues to improve these measures for the future to best protect our youth.

RECOGNIZING MARY ANN STARBUCK

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mary Ann Starbuck on her retirement.

Ms. Starbuck has dedicated her life to helping individuals and families across the Southern Tier of New York. For nearly 23 years, she served as Chief Executive Officer of CareFirst NY, a community-based program that provides hospice services, palliative care, and grief support to local residents. Her work has touched countless lives and has had a profoundly positive impact on our entire community.

Ms. Starbuck has been a tireless advocate for legislation to improve and increase access to hospice care. I have had the pleasure of working with her to promote several pieces of legislation to improve and strengthen hospice care, and I have always been encouraged and inspired by her conviction and determination.

As a result of her outstanding leadership, the Hospice Action Network recently presented CareFirst NY with the Advocacy Innovator Award. This award recognized the efforts of the staff, volunteers, and board of CareFirst NY to further the mission of hospice through advocacy.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Marry Ann Starbuck on her years of service and wishing her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF DRUG AND VETERAN COURTS

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of one of the most effective tools against the opioid crisis—drug and veteran treatment courts.

The opioid crisis is the worst drug epidemic our country has ever experienced. Around two and a half million people are now addicted to opioids, and 91 of them die from overdoses each day.

Drug and veteran courts are proven approaches in this fight. Instead of incarcerating those with drug addiction and mental illness, these courts provide treatment based accountability. This strategy has saved over one and a half million lives, billions in taxpayer dollars, and has proven one of the most effective means to reduce recidivism and drug use.

May is National Drug Court Month, so there is no better time for my colleagues to stand and join me in support of drug and veteran courts in the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations process. Thank you.

SPENCER REITZ EARNS EAGLE SCOUT AND BRONZE PALM AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Spencer Reitz of Sugar Land, TX, for earning both his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award and the Bronze Palm.

Eagle Rank is one of the highest achievements a Boy Scout can earn, and a Bronze Palm goes one step beyond that. To earn Eagle Rank, Spencer had to earn 21 merit badges, and develop and provide leadership to others in a service project. He earned the Bronze Palm by remaining active in his troop for an additional three months and earning five additional merit badges. For his service project, Spencer enhanced an existing playground at the Children's Center for Autism at the Texana Center. He is a part of Troop 1631.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Spencer Reitz for earning his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award and Bronze Palm. We are so proud and confident of his continued success in future endeavors.

FLUORSPAR MINER'S MEMORIAL REVEAL

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Fluorspar Miner's Memorial of Hardin County in my home state of Illinois.

In 1971 a tragic accident occurred at the Barnett mining facility ending the lives of seven miners: Gale Bates, Randal ''Jock'' Belford, Orval Holbrook, Jerry Jenkins, James R. Lane, William ''Bill'' and Wayne Long. These men gave their lives to a lifestyle that has impacted so many families in the region.

The Ohio River Scenic Byway, the City of Rosiclare, and many local partners decided to dedicate a memorial to these fallen miners as well as all Fluorspar miners and their families. The memorial displays a life size bronze statue of a Fluorspar miner and his wife—a black granite memorial honoring the seven fallen miners, interpretive panels to tell the story of Fluorspar mining in the area, landscaping and a separate memorial garden wall commemorating area families and businesses.

The memorial will provide travelers and younger generations with information on this tragic accident and the importance of the fluorspar industry and its importance to Southern Illinois and the nation. The Miner's Memorial celebrates the strong past of the City of Rosiclare due to the mining of fluorspar.

I ask that we all join in that celebration as we pay tribute to the history and the people who made the Fluorspar Miner's Memorial, and I salute the completion of the Fluorspar Miner's Memorial.

HONORING COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND PRESIDENT DR. BRADLEY GOTTFRIED

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, next month the College of Southern Maryland in my district will bid farewell to Dr. Bradley Gottfried, who will step down as its president. Dr. Gottfried has led the College for the past eleven years with great care and dedication to its mission of expanding higher educational opportunities to those living in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties and throughout the region.

The College of Southern Maryland began as a public community college serving Charles County residents in 1958 and has since grown into one of our state's most highly respected institutions of higher education serving commuter and remote learning students. Offering associates degrees in the arts, sciences, and teaching, the College served a total of more than 11,000 credit students at four campus locations last year and an additional 20,000 students online. It hosts six women's and six men's intercollegiate NCJAA Division III athletic teams and nurtures a strong school pride among its students and alumni. The College also trains many students who are serving in the military or who have been recently discharged as veterans. Many of its graduates transfer to four-year colleges to pursue bachelor degrees.

During Dr. Gottfried's tenure as President, the College has expanded to launch its Regional Hughesville Campus and its Center for Trades and Energy Training, which provides direct access to specialized training in career fields that have substantial growth potential, such as HVAC, electrical, construction, and plumbing. The College has also partnered with Southern Maryland businesses to create college-to-career pipelines that help students learn in-demand skills in cybersecurity, robotics, and digital media, among others. He has been praised both for his sound management of the College's finances and for his long-term vision for the College and how it can best serve its students. I've been proud to work closely with Dr. Gottfried to secure funding for the College of Southern Maryland's STEM Workforce Initiative, to enable the College to add to its nursing and health care resources and technology, and to expand courses supporting those training for careers in construction and transportation in our region.

Dr. Gottfried is someone who believes strongly in the importance of community colleges, as I do, to impact lives positively and add to the range of higher education options available for Maryland students. He came to the College of Southern Maryland with a long and experienced career as an academic and community college administrator. Having earned a Ph.D. in Zoology from Miami University, Dr. Gottfried taught for many years and then became President of Sussex County Community College in New Jersey in 2000. He has also become a noted and accomplished historian of the Civil War and has written extensively on the Battle of Gettysburg. The entire College of Southern Maryland community and its partners across the region have been very fortunate to have Dr. Gottfried leading the school these past eleven years, and he will be greatly missed.

I join in congratulating Dr. Gottfried on his retirement and wishing him and his wife Linda all the best in the future. I also wish to congratulate incoming President Dr. Maureen Murphy, currently at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, on her selection to take the reins from Dr. Gottfried and continue the work of making the College of Southern Maryland one of the premier community colleges in the country.

IN RECOGNITION OF INFORUM FOR ITS SUCCESS IN PROVIDING MENTORSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Inforum for its work on behalf of women. Since its founding 55 years ago, Inforum has provided effective mentorship and education opportunities for women throughout Michigan.

Originally founded in 1962 as the Women's Economic Club, the organization has grown and evolved over the years to meet its mission of empowering women to lead and succeed. Inforum hosts a variety of high-performing women leaders for lunches and roundtables to exchange ideas and foster leadership skills. Additionally, Inforum sponsors the Inforum Center for Leadership, an educational initiative that provides professional development through its training programs for mid-career women leaders. These include its Executive Leadership professional development program, a four-month program that combines individual instruction, group exercises, and personalized feedback to provide women with the skills to assume more senior and influential roles in their careers. Collectively, over 1,100 women have graduated from this program since its launch in 2003.

Inforum has provided countless women with critical skills and training to succeed in the 21st century workforce. Its talent initiatives and programs provide targeted professional development to women of all backgrounds, including veterans and early-career women. As a result of its success, Inforum has expanded throughout Michigan to better serve its members. Today, the organization hosts additional

branches in Lansing, Grand Rapids, the Saginaw/Bay City area and southwest Michigan. The growth of the Inforum Center for Leadership, along with its long track record of educating and empowering women, is a testament to the organization's success, and it is my hope that Inforum continues to effectively serve a broad range of women throughout their careers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to Join me in honoring Inforum for its record of providing career skills and training that allows women to achieve success. Inforum provides resources and hosts a variety of programs that provide professional development for women.

INTRODUCTION OF THE YOUNG AMERICANS FINANCIAL LITERACY ACT

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to re-introduce the Young Americans Financial Literacy Act. Financial literacy is critical to ensuring future financial responsibility. Studies have shown that 87 percent of Americans believe finance education should be taught in schools and 92 percent of K–12 teachers believe that financial education should be taught in school, but only 12 percent of teachers actually teach the subject. Yet, according to a 2016 survey, only 1 in 3 states require high school students to take a personal finance course, and only five States require high school students to take a semester long personal finance course.

I believe that Congress has an opportunity and a responsibility to address the pressing needs of individuals faced with the loss of their financial stability and the challenges of economic uncertainty. This should include financial literacy education reform and long-term solutions to prevent future personal financial disasters. Research-based financial literacy education programs are needed to reach individuals at all ages and socio-economic levels, particularly those facing unique and challenging financial situations, such as high school graduates entering the workforce, soon-to-be and recent college graduates, young families, and to address the unique needs of military personnel and their families. High school and college students who are exposed to cumulative financial education show an increase in financial knowledge, which in turn drives increasingly responsible behavior as they become young adults.

According to the Government Accountability Office, giving Americans the information they need to make effective financial decisions can be key to their well-being and to the country's economic health. The recent financial crisis, when many borrowers failed to fully understand the risks associated with certain financial products, underscored the need to improve individuals' financial literacy and empower all Americans to make informed financial decisions. This is especially true for young people as they are earning their first paychecks, securing student aid, and establishing their financial independence. Therefore, focusing economic education and financial literacy efforts and best practices for young people between the ages of 8 through 24 is of utmost Importance.

I believe America should be leading the world with the best-educated students who will drive our economic innovation and success, so please join me in cosponsoring the Young Americans Financial Literacy Act. This act:

Establishes a grant program in the Bureau of Consumer Financial protection to develop and implement financial literacy programs for young people ages eight to twenty-four;

Incentivizes the development of partnerships between institutions or higher education, local educational agencies, non-profit organizations, and financial institutions to develop programs aimed at young Americans in different phases of their life;

Ensures the development of evidence-based instructional material that is geared towards targeted groups and addresses unique life situations, including bankruptcy, foreclosure, student loans, credit card misuse; and

Conducts ongoing assessment and accountability of the program over the short-and long-term to ensure that grand money achieves the greatest impact.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the Young Americans Financial Literacy Act.

EAGLE SCOUT KENT DURANTE

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Kent Durante, who received his Eagle Scout pin posthumously this past Saturday.

Kent lost his brave battle with cancer last November before he could fulfill his dream of becoming an Eagle Scout. Last weekend, he was honored at a ceremony along with two of his fellow scouts, where they achieved the highest rank Boy Scouts can achieve.

For over a century, the Boy Scouts of America have had an honored tradition of teaching young men essential life skills including outdoor survival and leadership skills. As told to me, these times were cherished by Kent as, even after his diagnosis, he continued to remain active in his troop and even graduated cum laude from Estero High School.

It is understood in the scouting community that only about 4 percent of scouts attain the rank of Eagle. It is humbling to know that Kent is among this distinguished group. I would like to honor Kent for this well-deserved award.

HONORING STATEN ISLAND'S WORLD WAR II VETERANS

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, on May 31, 2017, the North Central Kiwanis Club will host a dinner honoring Staten Island's World War II veterans. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, with immense gratitude for the patriotic sacrifice our WWII veterans gave to our country in its triumph over evil.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941—the ''date which will live in infamy,'' as President Roosevelt so eloquently stated—the United States declared war on the Axis Powers, joining the United Kingdom, Soviet Union, Free French Forces, and China in their fight against brutality, barbarity, and oppression. We owe our lives to the servicemen who, without a moment's hesitation, leapt to defend their country and the world from Nazism and fascism. Moreover, many even lied about their age just so they could join the fight. The world will never forget their valor and courage.

Life. Democracy. Freedom. Many take these for granted. If not for the veterans of the Second World War, those values would simply be an impossible dream. In a speech to the House of Commons on August 20, 1940, Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared, ''Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'' I cannot think of a better statement to describe what this nation owes to its WWII veterans. It is simply not possible to repay the insurmountable debt we owe to them.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to provide my everlasting thanks to the men who answered their country's call in the moment when they were needed most. They are the saviors of our nation and for that, I salute them.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3159–S3227

Measures Introduced: Sixty-one bills and seven resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1229–1289, S.J. Res. 42–43, and S. Res. 179–183.

Pages S3211–13

Measures Reported:

S. 512, to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–86)

S. 692, to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–87)

S. Res. 176, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

S. 722, 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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S3210**

Measures Passed:

Increasing the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability to Veterans Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 12, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S3189–90**

McConnell (for Moran) Amendment No. 218, to improve the bill by striking section 2, relating to reduction of benefits for senior executives and certain health care employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs convicted of a felony. **Pages S3189–90**

Department of Veterans Affairs Bonus Transparency Act: Committee on Veterans' Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 114, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the bill was then passed. **Page S3190**

Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act: Senate passed S. 585, to provide greater whistleblower protections for Federal employees, increased awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and increased accountability and required discipline for Federal supervisors who retaliate against whistleblowers, after agreeing to the committee amendments. **Pages S3190–94**

National Public Works Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 181, designating the week of May 21 through May 27, 2017, as "National Public Works Week". **Page S3225**

Melanoma Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 182, designating May 2017 as "Melanoma Awareness Month". **Page S3225**

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 183, recognizing the significance of May 2017 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States. **Page S3225**

Digital Coast Act: Senate passed 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. **Pages S3225–26**

Silver Star Service Banner Day Act: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. 917, to amend title 36, United States Code, to designate May 1 as "Silver Star Service Banner Day", and the bill was then passed. **Pages S3226–27**

Follow the Rules Act: Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 657, to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend certain protections against prohibited personnel practices, and the bill was then passed. **Page S3227**

Reunification of Jerusalem 50th Anniversary—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that following Leader remarks on Monday, June 5, 2017, Senate begin consideration of S. Res. 176, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided in the usual form; and that at 5:30 p.m., Senate vote on adoption of the resolution, with no amendments or motions in order to the resolution or the preamble. **Page S3186**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 3 p.m., on Monday, June 5, 2017, Senate begin consideration of the resolution as under the previous order. **Page S3194**

Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that following disposition of the nomination of Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, Senate begin consideration of S. 1094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that the committee-reported substitute amendment be adopted, and that there be three hours of debate, equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with no intervening action or debate. **Page S3194**

Pro Forma Sessions—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Senate adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, May 26, 2017 at 8:45 a.m.; Tuesday, May 30, 2017 at 7 a.m.; Friday, June 2, 2017 at 9 a.m.; and that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, June 2, 2017, it next convene at 3 p.m., on Monday, June 5, 2017. **Page S3227**

Elwood Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, be withdrawn, and that following Leader remarks on Tuesday, June 6, 2017, Senate resume consideration of the nomination, with the time equally divided until 2:15 p.m.; and that at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 2017, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S3179**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 52 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. EX. 137), Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit. **Pages S3161–79, S3227**

3 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

54 Army nominations in the rank of general.

2 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

22 Navy nominations in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. **Pages S3186–88**

David L. Norquist, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

Kari A. Bingen, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Robert Story Karem, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. **Page S3188**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Robert R. Hood, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Richard Ashooh, of New Hampshire, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

J. Paul Compton, Jr., of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Neal J. Rackleff, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Karen Dunn Kelley, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs.

David S. Jonas, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

Gilbert B. Kaplan, of the District of Columbia, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade.

Michael Arthur Raynor, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Brett Giroir, of Texas, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, subject to the qualifications therefor as provided by law and regulations, and to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2023.

Callista L. Gingrich, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Holy See.

George Nesterczuk, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

Page S3227

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

James Donovan, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, which was sent to the Senate on May 16, 2017. Page S3227

Messages from the House: Pages S3209–10

Measures Referred: Page S3210

Measures Placed on the Calendar: Page S3210

Executive Reports of Committees: Pages S3210–11

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S3213–15

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S3215–25

Additional Statements: Pages S3208–09

Amendments Submitted: Page S3225

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S3225

Privileges of the Floor: Page S3225

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—137) Page S3179

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:30 a.m. and adjourned at 5:23 p.m., until 8:45 a.m. on Friday, May 26, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3227.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

THE FARM ECONOMY

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Farm Economy, focusing on perspectives on rural America, after receiving testimony from Robert Johansson, Chief Economist, Department of Agriculture; Nathan S. Kauffman, Assistant Vice President, Economist, and Omaha Branch Executive, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City; Alec Sheffer, Agri-AFC, Montgomery, Alabama; and Bruce Weber, Oregon State University, and Rural Policy Research Institute, Corvallis.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Homeland Security, after receiving testimony from John F. Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Robert M. Speer, Acting Secretary of the Army, and General Mark A. Milley, USA, Chief of Staff of the Army, both of the Department of Defense.

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018, after receiving testimony from Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Neil Chatterjee, of Kentucky, who was introduced by Senator McConnell, and Robert F. Powelson, of Pennsylvania, who was introduced by Senator Toomey, both to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and Dan R. Brouillette, of Texas, who was introduced by Senator Cornyn, to be Deputy Secretary, all of the Department of Energy, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY BUDGET

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Treasury, and tax reform, after receiving testimony from Steven T. Mnuchin, Secretary of the Treasury.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 722, 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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1221, to counter the influence of the Russian Federation in Europe and Eurasia, with amendments;

S. 905, to require a report on, and to authorize technical assistance for, accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria, with amendments;

H.R. 601, to enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality

basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, with an amendment;

S. 1141, to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict;

S. Res. 114, expressing the sense of the Senate on humanitarian crises in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, with amendments;

S. Res. 18, reaffirming the United States-Argentina partnership and recognizing Argentina's economic reforms, with amendments;

S. Res. 176, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem; and

The nomination of Scott P. Brown, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Independent State of Samoa, Department of State, and routine lists in the Foreign Service.

THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy concluded a hearing to examine the United Nations Human Rights Council, after receiving testimony from Kristen Silverberg, former Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, and Tom Malinowski, former Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, both of the Department of State; Hillel C. Neuer, United Nations Watch, Geneva, Switzerland; and Ted Piccone, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

STOPPING THE SHIPMENT OF SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations concluded a hearing to examine stopping the shipment of synthetic opioids, focusing on oversight of United States strategy to combat illicit drugs, after receiving testimony from Gregory D. Thome, Director, Office of Specialized and Technical Agencies, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State; Robert Cintron, Vice President, Network Operations, and Tammy Whitcomb, Acting Inspector General, both of the United States Postal Service; Robert E. Perez, Executive Assistant Commissioner, Office of Operations Support, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security; Thomas Synan Jr., Newtown Police Department, Newtown, Ohio; Thomas P. Gilson, Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner, Cleveland, Ohio; Norm Schenk, United Parcel Service, Inc., Washington, D.C.; Michael Botticelli, Boston Medical Center Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts; and Terry L. Horton, Christiana Care Health System, Wilmington, Delaware.

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to consider pending intelligence matters.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 100 public bills, H.R. 15, 2650–2748; and 16 resolutions, H.J. Res. 102–104; H. Con. Res. 63; and H. Res. 357–369, were introduced. **Pages H4601–07**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4610–11**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 10, to create hope and opportunity for investors, consumers, and entrepreneurs by ending bailouts and Too Big to Fail, holding Washington and Wall Street accountable, eliminating red tape to increase access to capital and credit, and repealing the

provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act that make America less prosperous, less stable, and less free, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–153, Part 1). Page H4604

Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 1761, to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, by a recorded vote of 368 ayes to 51 noes, Roll No. 284. Pages H4582–90

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–19 shall be considered as adopted, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. Page H4582

Rejected:

Jackson Lee (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 115–152) that sought to ensure minors are not punished as sex offenders (by a yea-and-nay vote of 180 yeas to 238 nays, Roll No. 283). Pages H4587–90

H. Res. 352, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1973) and (H.R. 1761) was agreed to yesterday, May 24th.

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 1973, to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, by a yea-and-nay vote of 415 yeas to 3 nays, Roll No. 285. Pages H4575–82, H4590–91

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–20 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. Page H4579

Agreed to:

Johnson (LA) amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–152) that harmonizes language in the bill with language in the underlying statute; clarifies duties of national governing bodies with respect to implementing procedures pertaining to interactions between young athletes and adults; and makes small technical and conforming changes; and Pages H4580–81

O'Halleran amendment (No. 3 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–152) that requires national governing bodies to clearly list dedicated information and resources, which may include sexual assault hotlines and victim support resources, on their official websites. Pages H4581–82

Withdrawn:

Costa amendment (No. 2 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–152) that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have struck the word "reasonably" from the bill to make the Senate statute of limitations apply rather than the House statute. Page H4581

H. Res. 352, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1973) and (H.R. 1761) was agreed to yesterday, May 24th.

Amending section 1214 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for stays during a period that the Merit Systems Protection Board lacks a quorum: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass S. 1083, as amended by Representative Jody B. Hice (GA), to amend section 1214 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for stays during a period that the Merit Systems Protection Board lacks a quorum. Page H4591

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow, May 26. Page H4591

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H4577.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4589–90, H4590, and H4591. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Food and Drug Administration. Testimony was heard from Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of Commerce. Testimony was heard from Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce.

APPROPRIATIONS—FOREST SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Forest Service. Testimony was

heard from Sonny Perdue, Secretary, Department of Agriculture; and Tom Tidwell, Chief, Forest Service.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE FY 2018 BUDGET REQUEST FOR SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing entitled "Department of the Air Force FY 2018 Budget Request for Seapower and Projection Forces". Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Arnold W. Bunch Jr., Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, U.S. Air Force; Lieutenant General Jerry D. Harris, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements, U.S. Air Force; and Major General Scott A. Vander Hamm, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, U.S. Air Force.

FISCAL YEAR 2018 PRIORITIES FOR NUCLEAR FORCES AND ATOMIC ENERGY DEFENSE ACTIVITIES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a hearing entitled "Fiscal Year 2018 Priorities for Nuclear Forces and Atomic Energy Defense Activities". Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral Terry Benedict, Director, Navy Strategic Systems Program; Susan Cange, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, Department of Energy; Frank Klotz, Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration; General Robin Rand, Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command; Rob Soofer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy, Department of Defense; and John Zangardi, Acting Chief Information Officer, Department of Defense.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H. Res. 351, condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya; H. Res. 354, condemning the violence against peaceful protesters outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence on May 16, 2017, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future; H. Res. 355, condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in Manchester, United Kingdom, on May 22, 2017, expressing heartfelt condolences, and reaffirming unwavering support for the special relationship between our peoples and nations in the wake of these attacks; H.R. 2484, the "Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017"; and S. 371, the "Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act". H. Res. 354, H. Res. 355, and H.R. 2484 were ordered reported, without amendment. H. Res. 351 and S. 371 were ordered reported, as amended.

VIOLENCE OUTSIDE THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE: THE RIGHT TO PEACEFUL PROTEST

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats held a hearing entitled "Violence Outside the Turkish Ambassador's Residence: The Right to Peaceful Protest". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

VIETNAM: WHY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE CRITICAL TO U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled "Vietnam: Why Religious Freedom and Human Rights Are Critical to U.S. National Interest". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IMPROPER PAYMENTS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: STUDENT AID

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Government Operations; and Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs held a joint hearing entitled "Improper Payments in the Federal Government: Student Aid". Testimony was heard from Kathleen S. Tighe, Inspector General, Department of Education; Jay Hurt, Chief Financial Officer, Office of Federal Student Aid; and a public witness.

ALL WORK AND NO PAY: CHANGE ORDERS DELAYED FOR SMALL CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce; and Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations held a joint hearing entitled "All Work and No Pay: Change Orders Delayed for Small Construction Contractors". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

8:45 a.m., Friday, May 26

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

10 a.m., Friday, May 26

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in a Pro Forma session at 10 a.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Bacon, Don, Nebr., E730
Beatty, Joyce, Ohio, E725
Bergman, Jack, Mich., E727
Beyer, Donald S., Jr., Va., E727
Blumenauer, Earl, Ore., E722, E730
Blunt Rochester, Lisa, Del., E725
Bordallo, Madeleine Z., Guam, E720
Boyle, Brendan F., Pa., E721
Brady, Kevin, Tex., E729
Bustos, Cheri, Ill., E727
Calvert, Ken, Calif., E725, E731
Carson, André, Ind., E729, E733
Carter, John R., Tex., E723
Collins, Doug, Ga., E723
Conyers, John, Jr., Mich., E719
Costa, Jim, Calif., E727
Courtney, Joe, Conn., E729
DeSaulnier, Mark, Calif., E719, E731
Dingell, Debbie, Mich., E722, E728, E732
Donovan, Daniel M., Jr, N.Y., E733
Dunn, Neal P., Fla., E725
Gaetz, Matt, Fla., E730
Hoyer, Steny H., Md., E726, E732
Huffman, Jared, Calif., E720
Keating, William R., Mass., E726
Maloney, Carolyn B., N.Y., E725
McEachin, A. Donald, Va., E726
Meadows, Mark, N.C., E731
Meehan, Patrick, Pa., E720, E731
Napolitano, Grace F., Calif., E721
Neal, Richard E., Mass., E724
O'Rourke, Beto, Tex., E728
Olson, Pete, Tex., E723, E732
Perry, Scott, Pa., E724
Polis, Jared, Colo., E728
Reed, Tom, N.Y., E723, E731
Rooney, Francis, Fla., E722, E733
Rothfus, Keith J., Pa., E721
Royce, Edward R., Calif., E721
Shimkus, John, Ill., E722, E724, E732
Shuster, Bill, Pa., E720
Stivers, Steve, Ohio, E728
Veasey, Marc A., Tex., E723
Visclosky, Peter J., Ind., E729
Womack, Steve, Ark., E719

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