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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BRAT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 7, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVE BRAT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL MINERS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Nation observed National Miners Day, which was designated by Congress to honor the contributions and sacrifices of miners both past and present.

Mr. Speaker, I am the proud grandson of a Pennsylvania coal miner. National Miners Day does mark the anniversary of the worst mining accident in

history on December 6, 1907, in Monongah, West Virginia. The disaster resulted in the death of 362 miners.

While technology in mining has continued to improve, mining remains difficult work. Every day, our Nation's miners work so hard excavating minerals for energy production and raw materials for many forms of manufacturing. In particular—my family heritage—I am very proud of our Pennsylvania coal miners who really dug the coal that fueled the industrial revolution and provided the energy for fueling our preparations to win World War I and World War II.

From coal to copper, and from gold to granite, miners work to provide materials that play an important role in our everyday lives. American miners today deliver the same commitment to the industry that they historically have. But thanks to advancements in technology, we are seeing the industry operate smarter, faster, and, most importantly, safer.

Americans benefit from the energy, metals, and minerals made available to us thanks to mining. It is as fundamental today as it was centuries ago.

Mr. Speaker, to all of our miners, I say: Thank you for all you have given to this important industry.

CONGRATULATING THE TITUSVILLE AREA HOSPITAL

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Titusville Area Hospital on a national recognition for overall excellence in patient perspective.

The award, which is presented by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, was announced on National Rural Health Day. Titusville Area Hospital CEO Lee Clinton called the award a true honor and added that he is very proud of the care provided and the level of expertise offered to the citizens served at the Titusville Area Hospital.

He said: "All of our staff strives to provide each patient with the best pos-

sible experience every time. This award demonstrates our ability to exceed as a small, rural community hospital."

Mr. Speaker, our rural hospitals face complex challenges that range from financial concerns to a shortage of healthcare professionals. Thankfully, the Titusville Area Hospital is being recognized as a top performer that is increasing patient satisfaction, and I am proud that it sets the standard for other rural hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly congratulate CEO Lee Clinton and all of the staff of the Titusville Area Hospital on this outstanding achievement.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES THOMAS ESCO, SR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. James Thomas Esco, who was born in Canton, Mississippi in 1942, which is home to my good friend, Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON, who represents that area. It is also home of The Canton Spirituals, one of the most outstanding gospel singing groups in the country.

Mr. James Thomas Esco was born a unique person. He was the 29th child of 30 in a blended family of Mr. Percy Lee and Mrs. Earline Esco. He loved his family and fell in love with his wife's 16 brothers and sisters. He was married to Mrs. Sadie Pearl Esco for 55 years.

He was as solid as a rock and a humanitarian with a heart of gold. He was always concerned about and looked out for the well-being of others. He was a hard worker. He worked in a factory and drove a taxi. He brought dignity to any work task which he performed. He stressed the importance of education and taught his children to get the best grades. He adored his wife's 16 siblings and supported them in their endeavors.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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He instilled in his children and seven grandchildren to be kind, to be respectful of others, to work hard, to get the things you want in life, to be active citizens of the United States, and, most importantly, to know Jesus.

These words and this biography were put together by the daughter of Mr. Esco. What a man. What a daughter. What a family.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kind of people who I am fortunate to represent, and I am indeed pleased to share them with the rest of the world.

With much love and respect, I am U.S. Representative DANNY DAVIS from the Seventh District of Illinois.

MONTHLY MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING MILITARY MEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, in 2008, I introduced a resolution amending House rules, which would require that we open the first session day of every month with a moment of silence in honor of the military members who had been killed in war. Speaker NANCY PELOSI got word of my resolution and her office informed me that amending the rules would not be necessary.

Speaker PELOSI decided that she, and only she, would open the legislative month with that moment of remembrance. She kept her word and, monthly, met her commitment to our fallen American heroes.

Yesterday, I introduced the same legislation, H. Res. 643, and I called on the Speaker of the House to initiate this policy of honoring the military members we have lost fighting for this country.

Since Mr. RYAN became Speaker of the House in 2015, at least 165 brave American men and women have been killed in service. We in Congress have not sufficiently recognized or remembered those who have died for America.

It is my belief that since Speaker RYAN is in the line of succession to become President of the United States and Commander in Chief, it is his constitutional responsibility, and solely his responsibility, to show gratitude to those who have died for this country. I wrote to Speaker RYAN on December 5 asking that he begin this tradition in January of 2018.

In closing, I hope all of my colleagues will join me in support of H. Res. 643. America is at war. American military members are fighting and dying for this country. It is only through remembrance and prayer that the United States House of Representatives can truly show the bereaved families of those we lost that we share in their sadness.

Mr. Speaker, when I come to the floor to talk about death and war, I try to show the pain in the faces of those who have lost loved ones. The least we can do in this House is, once a month,

have a moment of prayer in remembrance of those who have died for this country.

COMMEMORATING ADMIRAL LLOYD R. "JOE" VASEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HANABUSA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Hawaii and the veterans of the Pacific war, I speak today in support of H.R. 4300, the Admiral Lloyd R. "Joe" Vasey Pacific War Commemorative Display Establishment Act, which will establish a Pacific war memorial at Pearl Harbor.

Pacific Historic Parks, a nonprofit organization based in Honolulu, will design and build the memorial in coordination with the National Park Service. The project will not require Federal funds, and I am grateful for their partnership.

My sincere thanks to my friends and colleagues, Congressman ROB BISHOP, for joining me in introduction of this bill, and working with Ranking Member RAÚL GRIJALVA to ensure its swift consideration by the Natural Resources Committee.

"Thank you," "mahalo," to our over 990 cosponsors who built bipartisan support for this measure. I understand it will pass by unanimous consent later today.

Seventy-six years ago today, Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, pulling our country into World War II in the Pacific. The Pacific Theater was the scene of fierce fighting, and more than 150,000 U.S. casualties on the Philippines, Guam, the Solomon Islands, and many places in-between.

Brave Americans lost their lives in defense of our Nation. Today, at Pearl Harbor, the USS *Arizona* symbolizes the start of the war, and the USS *Missouri* marks its conclusion. But there is no memorial recognizing the experiences and sacrifices of those who fought in the Pacific.

Admiral Vasey served on the USS *Gunnell* during the Pacific war, and it is his vision that we are realizing with this memorial. After fighting for his country, he dedicated his life to the pursuit of peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition to his service in the U.S. Navy, he founded the Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies—CSIS. Admiral Vasey served as the Senior Adviser for Policy, Pacific Forum CSIS; the former chief of strategic plans and policies for the U.S. Pacific Command; and the Secretary to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Admiral Vasey is 100 years old, and he will turn 101 on January 31, 2018. He carries with him the memories of those lost in combat and the honor and responsibility of the veterans who survived. Hopefully, with passage of H.R. 4300, Admiral Vasey and the remaining survivors will find some peace, knowing that the fallen soldiers will be

properly honored and future generations will visit the memorial and learn of the battles that they fought.

We must share their stories of sacrifices in the hopes that we prevent future generations from waging war and participating in the historical racism that resulted in the internment of Japanese Americans, including both of my grandfathers.

This spirit of American history must not be forgotten. The lessons were hard, but they helped shape a better nation. This country owes Admiral Vasey and the members of the Greatest Generation a heartfelt "thank-you," "mahalo."

□ 1015

THE KATE STEINLE VERDICT AND THREE PRINCIPLES FOR IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, on July 1 of 2015, Kate Steinle was walking with her father on a pier in San Francisco. While she was on the pier, she was shot to death by an illegal immigrant who had been deported five times. He had been convicted of seven felonies.

Before he murdered Kate Steinle, the Federal Government had asked the city to turn him over so that he could be deported again. The city, following its policy of not cooperating with Federal immigration officials, released him from jail. He murdered Kate Steinle 3 months later. A few days ago, her killer was declared not guilty by a San Francisco jury. For now, there is no justice for Kate Steinle.

There is a question in this, though, for all of us. It is a question we should ask when we are confronted by a terrorist attack conducted by the asylees like the Boston bombing or the San Bernardino massacre, where one of the attackers was in the United States on a K-1 visa.

The question is: Why was this person in our country? In the case of Kate Steinle, we now know exactly why: the city of San Francisco's policy. The city is an accomplice to Kate Steinle's death. It is pure and simple.

They have defied and continue to defy Federal law. They defied it in general by refusing to cooperate with Federal immigration authorities as a blanket policy, and they defied it in the specific case that led to the death of Kate Steinle.

This is a radical policy, and I don't use that word lightly. You have an illegal immigrant convicted of multiple crimes, in addition to coming here illegally five times. The Federal Government tries to send the guy home a sixth time, and the city lets him go because they ignore the law, and then he murders someone.

The results of this city's extremism is a shattered family. The result is a

father who will never see his daughter again. The result is a mother who has to face the worst nightmare of every parent. These are the terrible facts of this tragedy, Mr. Speaker, and there is nothing we can do in this body to change them.

What we can do is move forward towards an immigration policy that is based on sound principles. For the radicals, this will be a radical change. For everyday Americans, this is just common sense.

On this front, there are three fundamental principles to a sane immigration policy. First, Americans have the right to determine who becomes citizens through laws. It is right there in the Constitution. Article I, section 8, provides Congress with the explicit authority to regulate naturalization. A country without borders is not a country. It is just a geographic destination.

Second, who comes here should be in the best interest of Americans. The number of known criminals we need to be letting in is zero. The number of people who cannot read and cannot speak English we need to be admitting is zero. The number of radical Islamists and of drug addicts we need to be letting in—zero. We are ready and willing to welcome hardworking immigrants who are ready to pay taxes, to follow our laws, and to build our country together.

Third, we have the right to enforce our choices through immigration laws. We should stop sanctuary cities and enforce sanctions against those who hire illegal labor. We should build President Trump's border wall, a policy that has worked unbelievably well in Israel. Most people agree that law enforcement is an effective deterrent against committing crimes. Illegal immigration is no different.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Pew Research Center, the population of illegal immigrants in my State of North Carolina has gone up 1,400 percent from 25,000 people in 1990 to 350,000 in the year 2014. We have got to get this under control. Any country where the Kate Steinle tragedy can happen is not a country with a sane immigration policy.

I hope we never again have to ask the question after a tragedy: Why is this person in our country? Because I hope the answer will be widely known, that we have a reasonable immigration system that benefits all Americans and does everything within reason not to bring in people who will hurt us. Kate Steinle proves that we are not there yet. But I believe that we can get there one day.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF FEDERAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the American public has caught on to our Republican colleagues' tax scam. They

know their bill takes from our struggling middle class and rewards bountifully the billionaire class and transnational corporations—the very ones that will use the money to ship more of our jobs overseas.

In fact, the only permanent tax giveaways this bill will cause are for big corporations. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates their bill will add \$1 trillion additionally to our debt minimum, and that doesn't count the interest.

This chart shows over time how much more of our gross domestic product—our economic prowess, what we produce every year in our country—is related to the national debt. The national debt has been exploding over time. Their bill makes it worse, not better. We should not so highly leverage our economy.

Their bill flies in the face of fiscal responsibility, and to what end? The bill would decrease Federal revenue by a projected \$5.5 trillion, tragically putting our national economic security at grave risk. What is put on the table for cuts? Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—all on the chopping block.

There is little in the Republican bill good for average Americans. With their legislation, our Republican colleagues will actually push America into deeper financial servitude to foreign investors buying our debt like China and Saudi Arabia. How does this make America great again? Foreign investors will be financing more and more of U.S. debt.

This chart shows how much now is being financed by foreign interests. Way back, the American people used to buy Treasury securities, and we financed our own debt. But over time, what has happened is that because we were leveraging our economy too highly with debt—borrowed money—foreign interests started to buy our securities. They now own nearly half. Do you know what? That means we owe not just the principal they have borrowed, but interest. So over time, the hole is being dug deeper, and foreign interests literally have now become the largest holder of U.S. debt.

Under their scheme, foreign nations will snap up and buy more U.S. Treasury securities, and this will rob future investments that would benefit Americans because we are required to pay back not just the principal but the interest to foreign creditors. Imagine if that money that we are paying on interest to foreign creditors could actually be invested here in America through tax cuts that actually target middle class families to increase their buying power. But with this massive debt, the American Government is sliding on a slippery slope more beholden to foreign creditors, not the American people.

China is now our largest foreign creditor. If you look at the debt that we owe, you will see China has been growing as an owner of the United States of America. Over time, they already own \$1.2 trillion along with other Asian

powers, or 19 percent of our foreign-owned debt. Our taxpayers are paying China principal plus interest—not a good formula for American independence.

Yet China's authorities are not hesitant to undermine American interests starting with democracy itself. But on economic issues, they dump steel to such an excessive level on global markets that it has crushed our domestic steel industry. They manipulate their currency to advantage the yuan, and they continue to rob intellectual property from American companies and universities every day. Being in the pocket of China to finance our debt is not in America's interest.

Other top countries buying U.S. debt include—get ready for this—the Cayman Islands with \$260 billion, and India and Saudi Arabia with between \$135 billion and \$248 billion; and that is a conservative estimate. Even Russia—Russia—owns \$86.2 billion of our debt—a country that interfered in our election process and in our closest allies in Europe's elections.

America best be careful because we are ending up in foreign servitude through the ownership of the U.S. debt. Defeating the Republican tax plan is one way to start righting the ship of state.

NORTH CAROLINA IS THE NUMBER ONE STATE FOR BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, recently, Forbes magazine reported something that we North Carolinians have known for some time: North Carolina is the number one State for business.

To give credit where it is due, the Tar Heel State's successful business atmosphere is in large part due to the North Carolina Legislature which has cut personal and corporate tax rates since Republicans assumed the majority in 2010. This year the legislature enacted a budget that reduces the State's flat personal income tax rate from 5.499 to 5.25 in January of 2019.

In 2013, elected officials in Raleigh created an impressive probusiness policy agenda that reduced the State's corporate income tax from 6.9 percent in 2013 to 3 percent in 2017, which will drop to 2.5 percent in 2019. This progrowth corporate income tax reduction has played a pivotal role in making North Carolina attractive to businesses.

The State of North Carolina is a wonderful place to start a business and to live, and people from other States are moving to the State in droves. Migration rates to North Carolina consistently rank in the highest percentiles in the Nation. Our State ranks second in lowest business costs in terms of labor, energy, and taxes. With rankings like that, it is no wonder that businesses rightly choose to operate out of North Carolina.

As a former small businessowner, it is a pleasure to hear that Forbes had recognized North Carolina's business bona fides. Thanks to the North Carolina Legislature, small and big businesses in North Carolina are competitive on a domestic and global scale.

Mr. Speaker, the officials in Raleigh worked hard to ensure North Carolina would become the most competitive State for business in the country. Here in Washington, we are building upon the success of North Carolina and bringing about a tested policy recipe for economic growth: fairer, simpler, and lower taxes.

Whether you are an individual struggling to make sense of your tax burden before April 15, or an American corporation that is trying to compete with America's competitors, or a small business that has faced the IRS's stifling complexity, you know that our Tax Code is broken. I have heard enough from Fifth District families, businesses, millennials, and other budding entrepreneurs to know that Congress must act now to bring about the economic expansion that Americans need and deserve.

That is why I was proud to cast my support in favor of H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs bill. This bill is Congress' answer to the will of the people. It delivers much-needed tax relief to taxpayers by lowering every marginal tax rate on the books that applies to working Americans. It enables our businesses to win here at home and expand our Nation's job growth. It will boost paychecks for generations to come.

By doubling the standard deduction, even more Americans will no longer need to itemize their deductions. For married couples filing jointly, this translates to \$24,000 yearly that is free from Federal taxes. By lowering the crippling taxes on businesses, workers will see an increase in their wages.

A report from the nonpartisan Tax Foundation found that a middle-income family in North Carolina would see its aftertax income increase by \$2,366. The same foundation found that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will create 975,000 new jobs nationally and grow wages by 4.4 percent for middle-income households.

As we have seen in North Carolina, when governments simplify and lower taxes, citizens reap the rewards of economic expansion, job growth, and higher wages. Despite all of the hard work done by North Carolina's Legislature and despite our State being rated the number one in which to do business, it is being held back by the Federal Tax Code. The current Tax Code is littered with trillions of dollars in special interest tax breaks that have held people back.

Even though North Carolina is number one, you will find that the four highest earning counties in the United States are all near Washington, D.C. The spending of the Federal Government fueled by the Tax Code and its giveaways undermine the foundations of our economy.

□ 1030

These special-interest tax carve-outs are driven by—you guessed it—special interests. It is time we stop rewarding the closely connected here in Washington and keep taxpayer dollars where they belong, with American workers, job creators, and businesses.

It is time the Federal Government stopped using the Tax Code to engineer people's decisions and allow Americans to live their lives based on their desire for higher wages, entrepreneurship, service, and economic exchange.

I urge my colleagues to follow North Carolina's lead and support the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to lower taxes and increase paychecks, wages, and job growth, and to fix the Tax Code.

RECOGNIZING THE SONG "KUMBAYA"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very important song to the history of the State of Georgia, "Kumbaya."

The first known recording of "Kumbaya" took place in 1926 near Darien, Georgia. The original name was "Come By Here," but now the song is internationally known as "Kumbaya."

While the exact origin of the song is uncertain, scholars believe it originated with the Gullah Geechee people, who are descendants of enslaved African Americans who lived on the Sea Islands in the coastal regions of Georgia.

It is largely believed that the song was a plea for God's intervention for this group of African Americans, asking Him to relieve them from a number of different hard times in the community: a sick family member, oppression, and more.

Robert Winslow Gordon, a staff member and eventually founder of the Library of Congress' Archives of Folk Song, was temporarily living in Georgia in 1926 and took the first recording of "Kumbaya" on a wax cylinder recorder numbered A839, still located in the Library of Congress today. He recorded a person in the Gullah Geechee community named H. Wylie, who sang the lyrics: "... need you Lord, come by here. Somebody need you, Lord, come by here ..." This recording of "Kumbaya" is one of the earliest items located in the Library of Congress' Archive of Folk Song. Today, Robert Winslow Gordon is buried in Darien, Georgia, home of that first recording of "Kumbaya."

Scholars think that "come by here" simply sounded like "kumbaya" to some listeners, a nonexistent word at the time that evolved into the song that we have here today. Other scholars think that the original song was not even "come by here," but instead "come by ya."

Since that time, the song has spread throughout our Nation and the world.

Recordings can even be found sung by Americans throughout all different times in our Nation's history.

There are 1930s recordings from central Texas and in Florida, while many Americans were finding solace during the Jim Crow period. In the 1950s and 1960s, "Kumbaya" was sung by Pete Seeger; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and Joan Baez. The song has even been traced to Angola, transported by missionaries.

Even today, "Kumbaya" means something different to different groups of people, but we should never forget the original meaning of the song and who we believe may be the original creators of the song, the Gullah Geechee people.

The Gullah Geechee people live on the southeastern coast, from St. Augustine, Florida, up through Georgia and South Carolina, to their northernmost area of Wilmington, North Carolina. Most of these areas refer to the people as Gullah, but in Georgia, we call them Geechee. They are the direct descendants of enslaved Americans who arrived here from west and central Africa to produce rice for slaveholding Americans.

There are many aspects of their culture that are unique, complex, and beautiful. Their language is based in creole and is the only distinctly African creole language in the United States. The Gullah Geechee people make sweetgrass baskets designed for rice production as a craft passed down to both men and women.

Although this culture and their traditions have modernized since the 19th century and early 20th century in America, today you can still see the Gullah Geechee people weaving sweetgrass baskets and living their culture in other ways if you drive through coastal Georgia.

I cannot overstate the importance this group of people has had on the development and history of the First Congressional District of Georgia, and I want to thank them for their contributions to this area.

Further, as creators of the song "Kumbaya," they have changed lives and have been a significant force not only in the First Congressional District of Georgia, but across the world and throughout American history. To recognize just how widespread this song has become, the Georgia General Assembly passed a resolution officially stating the impact this song has had on our State.

I hope you all will join me in our Nation's Capitol by also recognizing the importance of this song. I am very proud that it originated in the First Congressional District of Georgia, a district that I have the honor and privilege of representing. It is also an honor to have members of the Gullah Geechee community from my district here at the Capitol today.

Welcome to our Nation's Capitol. Thank you for your contribution to our Nation's history.

I WILL NOT BE MOVED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I enjoy the preeminent privilege of speaking from the well of the House of Representatives. I am so honored to have this great opportunity.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge that, yesterday, a historic event took place right here in this House. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, 58 persons voted to impeach Donald John Trump, President of the United States of America. Mr. Speaker, that is 57 more than a good many people anticipated.

Mr. Speaker, there are some who would have the event be nothing more than a footnote in history. Some would just have it be a nonevent. But, Mr. Speaker, it won't happen. It will not be just a footnote. It won't be a nonevent.

Mr. Speaker, this event will be looked upon by scholars as they look through time to understand what happened at this time. They will ponder it and find that those 58 persons were the first 58 to vote to impeach Donald John Trump—the first 58, not the last 58, Mr. Speaker. There will be another opportunity for us to remove Donald John Trump from the Presidency.

Mr. Speaker, when I took my vote yesterday, I voted for a lot of constituents. I just want to single out a few.

I voted for the man who stood on a corner under a bridge, cup in his hand, asking for help. When he saw me, he had a big smile on his face. I voted for him because his words to me, paraphrasing, were: I am so proud of what you are doing with that impeachment. This is a man standing in the streets of life, who sleeps in the streets of life.

I voted for the person who was on a serving line at a cafeteria—I eat in cafeterias quite regularly—who said: Right on; keep on.

I voted for the woman who saw me at church and said: AL GREEN, you are a troublemaker, but don't you stop until you impeach Trump.

Mr. Speaker, I voted for people who would never have this preeminent privilege that they have accorded me to stand here in the well of the Congress. I am not going to let them down, Mr. Speaker.

This was round one. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I don't give out, I don't give up, and I don't give in. I know that I am on the right side of righteousness, and I am going to stay there.

Here is where I stand. I will not be moved.

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

HONORING ALICE FUQUA MCCALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank an exceptional North Carolinian, Alice Fuqua McCall, who has spent nearly three decades working for Members of Congress.

Alice first began her career with Senator Jesse Helms back in 1986 as a special assistant. Alice was fresh out of college when she came to Washington, D.C., and was immediately hired to work for the Senator on Capitol Hill.

It was during this time, Mr. Speaker, that I first met Alice. We both served on Senator Helms' staff together, bringing conservative North Carolina values—and, in Alice's case, Southern charm—to our work in the Senate.

When Senator Helms retired in 2003, Senator Elizabeth Dole welcomed Alice to her staff in Raleigh to handle constituent services. Mr. Speaker, Alice spent 6 years working for Senator Dole in that role. During that time, she became well known in North Carolina for her personal attention to casework. She helped countless constituents navigate the many problems that arise when dealing with Federal agencies.

Following her time working in the Senate, Alice moved over to the House side, serving on the staff of former Congresswoman Renee Ellmers as her constituent services director. Alice's caring and compassionate demeanor made her a logical choice for that position.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected to serve as a Member of Congress, I couldn't think of anyone better suited to serve as my district director than Alice McCall. Her devotion to her work and the people of North Carolina made her an excellent hire.

This past summer, Alice retired from her Federal service after almost 5 years on my staff. The people of North Carolina were lucky to have her as an advocate. My office certainly misses her and will not be the same without her.

I will always think of Alice as a colleague and good friend from our time together with Senator Helms, and I wish her and her family well as she enjoys her much-deserved retirement.

STOP THE BLEED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, when I say the term "CPR," everybody in the room knows what I am talking about; but when I mention "Stop the Bleed," few of us know what it is.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to take part in a Stop the Bleed training program offered for my good friends and fellow physicians at the American College of Surgeons. This simple training teaches individuals how to treat bleeding injuries and help save a life.

Every year, almost 200,000 Americans die from traumatic injuries sustained as a result of events, including vehicle

crashes, falls, industrial and farm accidents, shootings, and natural disasters. The most common preventable cause of these deaths is losing too much blood in the minutes before trained responders can arrive. This is something we need to change.

The ability to recognize life-threatening bleeding and the ability to intervene effectively can save a life. Whether the injury was the result of a car crash, home accident, or farm accident, one person who is there at the right time and has the right skills can make all the difference.

Just like CPR training, a civilian familiar with basic bleeding control techniques is better equipped to save a life. The effort to make this training available to the public is driven by the goal to reduce or eliminate preventable death from bleeding.

The American College of Surgeons, working in partnership with many other organizations, has now made the training needed to address such incidents available to the public. Through nationwide advocacy efforts, the American College of Surgeons will work to ensure that all people have access to training opportunities.

I would implore and encourage folks like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, and other organizations that teach CPR to add this very simple course on Stop the Bleed to that training course program. It is a very simple concept of putting pressure where the bleeding is occurring or how to make a quick tourniquet out of a belt or a piece of clothing.

Today, I also take this opportunity to encourage fellow congressional Members of Congress to get trained in Stop the Bleed.

□ 1045

CONTINUING RESOLUTION AND TAX BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we should not shut down the government of the United States. Democrats do not want government to shut down. It is, however, not in our hands. It takes a majority to pass any bill in this House: 218 votes. Our Republican colleagues have over 240 votes. We have 193. So it is not in our hands, Mr. Speaker.

The Republican Party has been given the responsibility and the duty to enact legislation to ensure the proper functioning of government. As the governing party, they can pass whatever they want to pass on this floor. Indeed, as the governing party, they have a responsibility to use their votes to keep the government running. They control the House, they control the Senate, and they control the White House. All the levers of power of legislating are in their hands.

But, we are here, Mr. Speaker, on the verge of a shutdown because of a familiar pattern where Republicans cannot

unite as a party. They cannot agree among themselves on spending priorities. This has happened again and again and again. In fact, each time Congress has successfully enacted a funding bill since the majority took the majority in 2011, they had to have Democratic votes to pass that legislation every single time.

When we passed the continuing resolution in September, just about 3 months ago, we did so because Republican leaders asked for more time to work on the priorities that confront this country and, responsibly, keeping government working. They had 3 months to do so, yet here we are with 1 day remaining and nothing to show for it.

Instead, they have spent the past 3 months—on priorities that I will outline in just a minute—working on a tax bill that is reckless, deeply unpopular, and harmful to the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans and the economic well-being of our country that I call a death tax because it will explode the debt of the United States; a bill that would raise taxes on 78 million middle class households and kick 13 million Americans off of their health insurance coverage; a bill that would increase, as I have said, the deficit by \$1.5 trillion—indeed, much more than that, because we have to pay interest on the money that we are going to borrow to do the tax cut, while we fail to pay our bills—a bill that would trigger an automatic cut of Medicare by \$25 billion next year; a bill premised on a falsehood that tax cuts magically pay for themselves.

That is what the past 3 months have been wasted on, Mr. Speaker.

Not a single appropriations bill has been enacted by this Congress, not a single one. There are 12. They control the House, they control the Senate, and they control the Presidency.

Now our Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker, are asking for 2 more weeks. Two more weeks, they say. Republicans are asking us for 2 more weeks because they claim they haven't had time to write a funding bill they can pass.

Ninety days. Every Democrat voted for what I call the "no drama" CR in September. Ninety Republicans voted "no" on an agreement we had to use the next 90 days to address the priorities of America. But 90 Republicans voted "no."

They have had time to write and rewrite and rewrite and rewrite again a tax bill that advantages the wealthiest in America at the expense of the majority of Americans. That, Mr. Speaker, is how they have spent their time these past 3 months.

Write a funding bill to avert a shutdown?

No.

Reach an agreement that is responsible to fund the priorities of America?

No.

Write a tax bill that kicks millions off of their health coverage and raises

taxes on millions more. That is what they have done for 90 days. That is what they chose to do.

Two more weeks?

If they want 2 more weeks, they have 240 votes to give themselves more time. But I am certainly not going to vote to give them 2 more weeks simply to work on the tax bill, which they have pledged to pass by Christmas.

However, if they passed it a year from now, it would have the same impact on America's taxes. The critical they have ignored and delayed. The political has been their sole focus.

I say to my Republican friends, Mr. Speaker: You won control of the government. Govern, govern. Be responsible. Focus on that which is critically important to the American people. Don't say you haven't had time to do the most important job you had. You had time. We voted—every one of us—to give you 90 days, to work either in a partisan sense, as you have done so much of the year; or in a bipartisan sense, which was much more positive and would have been much more productive.

There is a to-do list, Mr. Speaker, of critical legislative items that this House has to complete before the end of the year. It is a long and compelling list. Six of them have hard deadlines and must be done before we leave for the end of the year. For 90 days we didn't do them.

None of the six is a surprise either. Neither are any of the others that the American people expect us to do by the end of the year as well.

The majority has had months to work on bringing legislation to the floor on each one of them—months—yet here we are, in December, pushed up against the wall of a funding deadline.

And Republicans want 2 more weeks so they can focus on passing their tax bill before Christmas?

Not the priorities of America, but a tax bill, a deeply unpopular, appropriately so, tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, let me list what we need to do, what we ought to do, and what we should have done over the last 90 days. Let me just share with the American people who sent us here what the Republican majority has not gotten done in all of the months they have had complete control of the government:

Keep the government open and functioning by passing funding bills and sending them to the President for signature;

Reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program so that millions of our children will not lose healthcare insurance;

Provide funding for VA Choice to help care for our veterans, which must be done;

Reauthorize the flood insurance program, which is so critical to so many millions of Americans;

Extend expiring health programs, such as community health centers, on which so many others rely;

Reauthorize portions of the Intelligence Act to protect America's security, which will end before the end of the year.

Ninety days we have had to consider all of those items.

The American people also expect us to:

Provide the necessary resources to address the opioid addiction crisis, which they had 90 days to do that;

Reach an agreement on spending levels for critical priorities of the American people. We call it dealing with sequester, which is somewhat jargon, but we haven't done that;

Pass funding to keep government effectively serving our people. Ninety days to do that, and here we are;

Pass the Dream Act to provide certainty for those young people who were brought here as children and have grown up as Americans;

Take action to stabilize our health insurance markets. We haven't done that. We had 90 days;

Extend the expired Perkins Loan Program so college students, with the most need, can complete their degrees. We haven't done that in the last 90 days;

Reauthorize fire grants so that our domestic defenders and our first responders can have the resources they need for training, for personnel, and for equipment to keep our communities safe. We had 90 days to do that;

Prevent nearly 1 million people from losing access to Medicaid in Puerto Rico;

And I will end with: making sure that the people of Texas, the people of Florida, the people of Puerto Rico, and the people of the Virgin Islands have resources to rebuild and restore their communities devastated by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

All of this we need to do by December 31.

What do we focus on?

A tax bill.

When will that tax bill take effect for taxes in 2018? When will you pay those? By April 15, 2019.

Yet that is what we spend all of our time on. That is what we have spent all of our time on, not the priorities that I have just read, but a tax bill that will hurt America, hurt its financial status, hurt its middle-income workers, and, most of all, hurt the children who will pay back the money we will borrow to give the wealthiest in America a tax cut, those people making over \$900,000 a year. That crowd will get 62 percent of the resources, yet the Speaker says that we need to help struggling Americans.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is not a person at any one of my town meetings who came up to me and was worried about the people making \$900,000 or more—not one. Maybe it has happened to you, Mr. Speaker, but it hasn't happened to me.

Why are we at this point?

Because we have a governing party that refuses to govern; because we have

a majority that has failed to do the business of the American people, even for something as fundamental as providing for the operations of government.

Mr. Speaker, we Democrats welcome the opportunity to sit down with our Republican colleagues and reach a compromise agreement to meet our responsibilities and address many of the pressing issues I have outlined earlier in this address.

My time is about up. Had we utilized the 90 days that we all voted—we on our side of the aisle, the Democrats voted—with our Republican friends, although 90 Republicans voted “no,” but we all voted “yes” to take 90 days to meet our responsibilities to the American people. It hasn’t been done. We have no confidence that giving 2 more weeks will make it happen.

Let’s get to work right now. Not on the tax bill. That could be passed at some point in time. I am against it. I will vote against it. I hope it fails. It is a bad bill. But let’s address these priorities. That is not what the intent of these 2 weeks are. It is to give 2 weeks so we can pass a bad tax bill that will hurt America, will hurt our children, and will hurt the middle class.

□ 1100

PEOPLE ARE PAYING ATTENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the House Democratic whip lay out the case for the American public, I was struck by how stark the choices are and how much we are looking at failure at home and abroad.

We are watching the reckless action of Trump with his declaration that we are going to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, further isolating America. We are alone in this instance. People who are in the Arab world, European allies, are deeply concerned that this will have a destabilizing effect.

We are watching the countdown here as we are kind of scrambling to keep government open, when, for heaven’s sake, these have been clear for months. Republicans occupy all the levels of power. Why can’t they simply act to be able to send clear signals so the appropriators can work and government operates.

We have watched the expiration of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, wildly popular with people across the political spectrum to be able to have this significant enhancement of health for children in this country, even more important because of the Republicans’ relentless assault on the Affordable Care Act and destabilizing insurance markets. Yet State after State, including my home State of Oregon, is facing the difficult task of sending out notices to families that they are no longer going to have access to this critical healthcare.

In the backdrop of all of this, we are watching a Republican tax program which would be the largest transfer of wealth in our Nation’s history paid for by mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren a trillion and a half extra debt. When you put in the fact that we will have to pay interest on that, \$2.3 trillion to be able to give some of the largest corporations and the wealthiest Americans even more tax benefit, and we are neglecting fundamental responsibilities.

\$2.3 trillion tax benefits for some who don’t need it, and we still don’t have an infrastructure plan, which the President promised a trillion dollars of infrastructure spending to rebuild and renew America.

Well, I will tell you, there would be bipartisan support for any reasonable plan going forward. In fact, we have people in the American transportation industry who are saying: Raise our taxes.

The fuel tax has been raised in over half the States, including a number of red Republican States. There is a deal to be had when AAA and the American Trucking Associations say: Let’s provide the leadership, make the investment, put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work in ways that will enhance the environment, improve the economy, and give people a sense of pride that we can actually come together and get something done.

It is waiting there. Yet we are spending \$2.3 trillion to largely benefit the top 1 percent and the largest corporations, and we are ignoring needs like that.

The Treasury, we are told, has been doing studies that will prove that this will just pay for itself, and the Secretary of the Treasury has been asked: Show us the studies. What is the research? Where do you pick this number out of the air that is rejected by virtually every independent economist as well as past experience?

We see nothing.

The tax bill is constantly in flux. That is one of the prices that we pay, because they never followed regular order, they didn’t attempt to work on a bipartisan basis. There were no hearings held on this bill. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I was shocked. This bill changed sometimes hour by hour. They still don’t know what they have passed. They are talking about changing corporate tax rates, they are talking about dealing with some of the deductions that have been taken away, like for State and local taxes. It is in a state of flux.

What we do know is what was passed in the House is wildly unpopular. How do you take a tax cut that is unpopular by 75 percent of the population? It is because people are starting to look at it, and the closer they look, the more they are going to find it distasteful.

I am hopeful that we will be able someday to come to our senses, work together on things that will actually make a difference for the American public rather than make things worse.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o’clock and 5 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Steven E. Boes, Boys Town, Boys Town, Nebraska, offered the following prayer:

Today we remember the lives lost at Pearl Harbor and all the young men and women who serve today.

Lord God, in these troubled times of fires, floods, hurricanes, terror attacks, and mass shootings, help us to rely on Your strength to envision and build a stronger, more secure America.

Give us more visionaries like Father Edward Flanagan, who founded Boys Town on December 12, 100 years ago. Father Flanagan was an Irish immigrant who lived the American Dream and taught us all that even the most troubled child could grow up to be a useful citizen if given half the chance. He saw the best in the kids that others rejected as useless.

Help us, but especially each of our Representatives, to see the best in those who have different political or social views so that we can, together, build an America that enables and calls forth the best in its citizens.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. DAVIDSON 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.

WELCOMING REVEREND STEVEN E. BOES

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and recognize Father Steven E. Boes, who joined us today to deliver the opening prayer.

Father Boes is the fifth executive director of Boys Town, which is in Nebraska's Second Congressional District and is celebrating its 100th birthday this month.

Father Boes was ordained as a priest in 1985 for the Archdiocese of Omaha and assumed his post at Boys Town in July 2005. He regularly attends sporting and school events at Boys Town High School and dines with kids in their family homes, and I have joined them.

Under his leadership, the number of children served through Boys Town's on-campus, family-style care and programs serving children in their homes and communities has doubled. The Family Home Program, started in 1974, has served 36,000 children to date.

Boys Town Foster Family Services program has cared for nearly 9,000 youth to date, and the In-Home Family Services program has helped approximately 102,600 youth without having to remove them from their homes. Boys Town also has emergency services that have served over 45,000 youth.

The man who started this all 100 years ago, Father Edward Flanagan, was truly a visionary for changing how America cared for families and children. He worked to close reformatories and juvenile facilities where children were abused, eventually opening Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, which became Boys Town. He has made a life-long impact on thousands upon thousands who were given a rough start in life.

Boys Town now has nine locations across the country including Nevada; Louisiana; north Florida; central Florida; south Florida; Washington, D.C.; New England; Iowa; and Nebraska.

From Father Flanagan to Father Boes, many lives have been impacted.

I recognize Boys Town for 100 years of service to the community and America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YOUNG of Iowa). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING EDDY ACEVEDO

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today is a bittersweet day for our office because we bid farewell to my senior foreign policy adviser and subcommittee staff director, Eddy Acevedo—a native Miami boy and a proud Nicaraguan American.

For over a decade, Eddy and I have worked side by side to advance the issues critical to U.S. interests at home and around the globe. Eddy's depth of knowledge and his political acumen are only eclipsed by his passion and his kindness.

But don't let that fool you, Mr. Speaker. He is a bulldog when it comes to advancing our core ideals, like the respect for human rights and the promotion of democratic principles. That is why he is an ideal fit for his next role as deputy assistant administrator and chief legislative strategist with the USAID. I have no doubt that we will hear many great things from Eddy in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Eddy is more than just my most trusted adviser. He is my dear friend, and he will be very much missed. So our staff and our family wish him and his wife, Luly, all the best as they enter this next new, exciting chapter of their life together.

GOP TAX SCAM

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this holiday season the Republican majority has been working overtime on a tax plan that gives permanent tax cuts to wealthy families and corporations funded by raising taxes on middle class families.

As the Republican majority tries to disguise its tax plan as a beautifully wrapped gift, the American people need to know that there are negative healthcare effects hidden inside the plan.

By passing this tax plan, there would be automatic cuts to Medicare to the tune of \$25 billion a year. In addition, this plan could cause an extra 13 million people to become uninsured. The tax bill will explode our debt or will cut Medicare and Medicaid.

It has been more than 2 months since Congress should have reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program and federally qualified health centers. This is the first time in history that these programs have been held hostage to the legislative process.

Instead of racing to reauthorize these popular bipartisan programs, the Republican majority instead has neglected children across the country solely to provide tax cuts to corporations and wealthy individuals.

Mr. Speaker, this plan is not for the many, but it is only for the few.

RECOGNIZING JERUSALEM AS THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to President Donald Trump and Ambassador Nikki Haley—South Carolina's former Governor—for the announcement that the United States will recognize Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel and relocate the American Embassy to the holy city which protects all religions.

As President Trump said at the White House: "This long overdue recognition of reality is in the best interests of both the United States and the pursuit of peace between Israel and the Palestinians."

America's bond with Israel is unique, and its strength is the foundation for peace through stability for all of the Middle East providing for prosperity for all countries.

The President's announcement strengthens that alliance, and I appreciate his honoring another of his campaign commitments. Friends of Israel know they have a true friend in the White House, which was heartfelt when I met last month with Sheldon and Miriam Adelson at the Washington Convention Center.

President Trump's team is leading boldly. The President is clear: peace is never beyond the grasp of those willing to reach for it.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism, just as America had resolved December the 7th, 1941.

END HUNGER NOW: FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM

(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, yesterday, my dear friend and colleague from Maine, Representative PINGREE, hosted a panel discussion on the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program.

Experts from Wholesome Wave, the American Heart Association, and War on Poverty—Florida briefed congressional staff on how we can improve health outcomes for people living in poverty by increasing access to healthy, fresh produce. It is a simple concept with incredible results.

Currently, healthcare providers at 34 clinics across 10 States provide individuals and family members with prescriptions for fruits and vegetables and \$1 per day per family member to purchase these nutritious foods.

The program has significantly increased food security among its participants and has enabled these families to increase their vegetable consumption by an astounding 206 percent.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the Local FARMS Act, H.R. 3941, Representative PINGREE's bipartisan legislation to expand the support and effort, and let us all work together to end hunger now.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY

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

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Speaker, today, on this day that lives in infamy, we recall MacArthur's message from the Philippines. He said famously:

From the Far East, I send you one single thought, one sole idea written in red on every beachhead from Australia to Tokyo: There is no substitute for victory.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Corps of Cadets at the United States Military Academy to remember that on the football field on Saturday.

Go Army. Beat Navy.

DUCKS UNLIMITED

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the great contributions of Ducks Unlimited.

For 80 years, Ducks Unlimited has played an important role in the wetland conservation process in our country by fighting for critical conservation policies in our national and State capitols and conducting outreach and education to bring the next generation of sportsmen and -women into play.

They have raised billions of dollars to conserve more than 14 million acres, and they have biologists on the ground working with local partners to bring these projects across the finish line.

Ducks Unlimited has had great success in making critical habitat improvements to wetlands that support healthy flyway populations, clean air and water, and strong local economies.

RECOGNIZING DARREN LUTTRELL

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Darren Luttrell from Ohio County, in the First District of Kentucky.

Darren was named the 2017 Farmer of the Year by the Kentucky Farm Bureau at their 98th annual meeting held in Louisville, Kentucky. Throughout an extensive interview process, Darren's steadfast commitment to agricultural modernization, education, and community involvement shone through every facet of his career and personal life.

During his decades of experience in farm management and agricultural technology sales, Darren has not only

doubled the size of his family farming operations, but has been an outstanding leader in the Ohio County Farm Bureau and his local chamber of commerce. Known to the students as Farmer Luttrell, he has inspired the next generation of agricultural leaders through his involvement with local schools.

I am thankful for Darren's advocacy for Kentucky agriculture, and I join Kentucky Farm Bureau and all those Darren has served throughout his career in wishing him the best of luck as he competes at the Swisher Sweets-Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year competition in Georgia in 2018.

RUSSIA'S EXPULSION FROM 2018 OLYMPICS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the International Olympic Committee has banned Russia from the 2018 Winter Olympics due to rampant and state-backed doping. The Olympic Committee says that Russia's scale of cheating is unprecedented.

Unfortunately, this is yet another example that the enemy of democracy knows no limits under the Putin regime. Russia's Government and its corruption—some say depravity—is so pervasive that it even tarnishes the dignified and ancient tradition of the Olympic Games.

Russia dishonors athletes around the world who make countless sacrifices and give their blood, sweat, and tears to compete. While this decision rightly penalizes Russia, Russia is looking ahead to host the 2018 World Cup in soccer. Putin will relish this global platform to spew out his propaganda to the world while thousands of Ukrainians are killed and millions more throughout central Europe are stifled under his repressive thumb.

The global community must be on alert. We must stand for liberty. We must counter Russia's corruption, interference, and aggression in all its forms.

As the 2018 World Cup nears, I call upon the international community to choose again an honorable field on which the world's athletes can compete.

Mr. Speaker, I include in today's RECORD a news article from The New York Times dated December 5, 2017, titled "Russia Banned from Winter Olympics by IOC."

□ 1215

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

(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, 76 years ago today, our Nation witnessed a devastating attack at a naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. That event hastened our entry into World War II.

The surprise attack by the Japanese on the morning of December 7, 1941, left 2,403 people dead. Among them were members of the U.S. Navy, Army, Marines, and also civilians. It was one of the deadliest attacks in American history. President Franklin D. Roosevelt described it as "a date which will live in infamy."

On this solemn day of commemoration, we remember and we reflect. Flags throughout our country are flown at halfstaff in honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Mr. Speaker, let us remember and honor the lives of those brave Americans who perished on this day 76 years ago. As President Roosevelt said: "No matter how long it will take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory." And we did.

God bless all of our Pearl Harbor victims and survivors, and God bless the United States of America.

GOP TAX BILL

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

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, this week, Republicans are continuing to work behind closed doors to put finishing touches on their disastrous tax bill that will hurt countless families in Nevada and across this country.

Let's be clear: This monstrosity of a bill would eventually slam many of Nevada's hardworking families with a tax increase, while adding more than \$1 trillion to our national debt. To make matters worse, the Senate version of this bill would spike healthcare premiums and cause millions to lose their healthcare coverage. Also, billionaires and giant corporations can receive an unnecessary tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, Americans can clearly see that this is a bill that is just a giveaway to wealthy campaign donors and giant corporations at the expense of hardworking families. We need a Tax Code that is focused on putting money back in the pockets of all families, not one that creates even worse wealth and income inequality—and certainly not one that puts profits before people.

CONGRATULATING THE PENN MANOR FIELD HOCKEY TEAM

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

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Penn Manor field hockey team on their 2017 State championship victory.

It was a remarkable season for these young women. The State championship

victory capped off a perfect 28-0 season, and 23 of those victories were shutouts. Mr. Speaker, they scored 148 goals and only allowed 5. Leading scorers Gabby Bitts and Emma DeBerdine combined for 64 goals and 54 assists.

But what is also special about this team is their combined GPA. It is 3.63. It speaks volumes about the team, but also about their coaches and parents, because we know that success like this isn't achieved alone. I couldn't be prouder to represent these young women, and I look forward to the continued success of this program.

Congratulations to the Penn Manor field hockey team, the coaches, their families, and the faculty, staff, and students that helped make this championship possible.

REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, my heart is in Hawaii today as we commemorate the 76th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, a day that forever changed Hawaii and our country.

We remember those who paid the ultimate price on that fateful day and the millions of Americans who answered the call to serve in the months and years that followed, including two of our former U.S. Senators, Inouye and Akaka.

We remember the famed "Go for Broke" 442nd Infantry Regiment and other units made up of young men who, despite seeing their friends and family members be sent off to internment camps, still stood up and volunteered to serve, putting their lives on the line for this country. They served bravely, sacrificed greatly, and became the most highly decorated unit in all of the U.S. Army's history.

We must never forget what happened at Pearl Harbor, the lessons learned, and the sacrifices of those who served. There is no question that the stories of the Greatest Generation will live on forever in the hearts of a grateful nation.

PEARL HARBOR

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it was a calm, cool Sunday sunrise over the Hawaiian Islands when the planes came over the horizon. They were carrying the emblem of the rising sun on their wings and fuselages, the symbol of the imperialist regime of the Kingdom of Japan. They were headed for a surprise attack on a place called Pearl Harbor, an American naval base. It was December 7, 1941.

Meanwhile, here in Washington, D.C., hypocritical diplomats from Japan were talking peace with the United States.

The Japanese planes bombed American battleships in the harbor. They

bombed American aircraft on the ground. After the destruction was over, 2,403 Americans lay dead, murdered by the imperialist kingdom. It was the beginning of America's entry into World War II.

Nearly 4 years later, over 416,000 Americans were killed in the Second World War. Victory over Japan occurred on August 14, 1945, and the "rising sun of aggression" sank into the sunset of history.

We honor and remember Pearl Harbor and all the men and women of the Greatest Generation who served in that war.

And that is just the way it is.

NET NEUTRALITY

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound the alarm against the Federal Communications Commission's misguided proposal to repeal net neutrality rules.

Now, let me be clear. Net neutrality rules protect Americans' access to an open, free, and fair internet. The rules prevent internet companies from blocking websites or slowing down their load time simply because they disagree with what the website says. Repealing them would be undemocratic and very dangerous.

What is worse, we know that gutting net neutrality would have a detrimental impact on communities of color. From entrepreneurs to social justice advocates, the internet has been a powerful tool for communities of color to help draw attention to injustices in our society.

This new proposal will essentially kill this free expression and innovation. This is ridiculous. We can't allow democracy and access to the internet to be restricted in the name of corporate profits.

I urge the FCC to reject this plan and stand with the vast majority of Americans who want to keep the internet open and free.

REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the attack on Pearl Harbor and in memory of those who gave their lives on that tragic day.

Today marks 76 years since the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, where 2,403 Americans lost their lives. Many years have passed since that day, and, sadly, there are fewer and fewer survivors of the attacks left with us; however, it is vital that we never let their memory fade.

In my own district, a group of Pearl Harbor survivors, other veterans, and community members have dedicated themselves to preserving the memory

of this attack. Every year, the city of Mission, Kansas, hosts a memorial to observe this date.

One of my constituents, Dorwin Lamkin, is a veteran, Pearl Harbor survivor, and has played a key role in organizing this event. I have had the privilege of attending this ceremony in the past, and I applaud them for continuing this important tradition.

Let us never forget the fallen and the survivors of Pearl Harbor, and may we work every day to honor their memory and sacrifice.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Republicans continue to rush their tax scam through Congress, raising taxes on tens of millions of people, borrowing over \$1 trillion, just to give massive tax breaks to the people at the very top of the economy.

For the last 3 months since we passed the temporary spending bill, what has been their focus?

Has it been to deal with the lack of reauthorization and full funding for children's health? No.

Have they focused at all on the need to deal with the Dream Act and those DREAMers who are here, knowing no other place than the United States? Have they done anything on that? No.

They have an obsession about one thing: tax cuts for the wealthiest.

Have they done anything at all to deal with this opioid crisis? The President talked about it, declared an emergency.

What have we seen from the other side? Nothing, except an obsession to give tax breaks to the people at the top. For 3 months since we passed that temporary spending bill, that has been the singular obsession of the Republican majority.

That is not what the American people are looking for. That is not what they sent us here to do. We should do the work of the American people.

FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the Republican corporate tax cut bill is a massive takeaway from middle America and a massive giveaway to corporate America.

The Treasury Secretary says that these tax cuts will pay for themselves, and more. News flash for the Treasury Secretary: Tax cuts don't pay for themselves. They never have, not once, in human history.

What does pay for itself are Federal historic tax credits. When Federal historic tax credits are used to renew historical buildings, \$1.20 for every \$1 in tax credits is generated. When historic buildings are renewed, including in my

community of Buffalo, New York, Main Streets across America are restored, jobs are created, and new business income and property tax revenues are generated.

The Federal historic tax credit does, in fact, pay for itself, and more, by helping cities and communities to become economically independent and self-sufficient.

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID CUTS

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, Leo Rosten, the author of "Joys of Yiddish," defines chutzpah as "that quality enshrined in a man who, having killed his mother and father, throws himself on the mercy of the court because he is an orphan."

Here is a new definition. Yesterday, Speaker RYAN reconfirmed that, after pushing through a tax scam that adds \$1.5 trillion to the deficit by giving tax cuts to the richest, Republicans will insist on slashing Medicare and Medicaid to reduce the deficit. He said: "We're going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit."

This is not just chutzpah. It is actual cruelty and callousness.

So I ask my Republican colleagues: Did you really come to Congress to take healthcare and long-term care from children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, families, and seniors? Who are you?

GOP TAX PLAN

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, our Republican colleagues who control the House, the Senate, and the White House are on the verge of another government shutdown. They have brought us to the brink, and now they are asking for more time to get their work done.

Why do they need more time? We have seen this coming. We have already granted one extension. But instead of working with Democrats to avoid a shutdown, they have been rushing through a tax scam. They have been obsessed with this reverse Robin Hood scheme to take money from the middle class and give it to corporations and the wealthiest 1 percent.

Meanwhile, we need to keep the VA open for business. We need to restore the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers. We need to provide safety for DACA recipients who are living in fear. We need to provide wildfire victims in California and the victims of the disastrous hurricanes who are waiting for emergency disaster funding the support they need to rebuild their lives.

Each of these priorities has bipartisan support. But instead of working

together on these bipartisan solutions, a unified Republican government has been focused solely on further rigging the system to benefit special interests and billionaires.

No more extensions. Let's work to keep the government open and to address the real priorities of the American people.

□ 1230

TAX REFORM

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I come down here again finding myself in a position, not planning on speaking. I am down here to speak on a bill that I have on the floor—a bipartisan bill, I might add. I can't help but address what I am hearing from the other side.

First you are hearing: This is getting rushed through. We need to slow this down. We need to be thoughtful.

I ran in 2010 talking about tax reform. Many of my colleagues ran in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 talking about tax reform and the need for it. Even President Obama talked about this, when he was saying we needed to lower the corporate rate from 35 percent down to 25 percent. Why? Because we are uncompetitive. We are uncompetitive as a country.

Now you are hearing the other side saying: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. We have to slow this down, slow the whole train down.

What they want to do is protect the status quo. They want to protect the status quo, which I believe is unacceptable.

We know that there is great agreement between the House version and the Senate version, delivering \$24,000 on a standard deduction, which is going to bring real tax relief to working families; making sure that pass-throughs, those small businesses, those S-corporations and LLCs and sole proprietorships, actually get treated better and, at the least, the same way that a C-corporation would.

Here we are on the cusp of making sure that we advance the ball.

TAXES

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, "Kill the bill, don't kill me"; "Tax the rich, not the sick"; these are the chants of hundreds of protestors who have taken to the Halls of Congress. I have never seen anything like it.

The American people know this GOP tax scam is one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation to come before this body. This legislation adds trillions to the deficit, cuts Medicaid, and increases healthcare premiums. It is an unpopular bill pushed by an unpopular President and an unpopular Congress.

Mr. President, the American people don't want your bill. They want healthcare, Medicaid, and Medicare. They want CHIP and community health centers.

Trump, RYAN, and McCONNELL are bankrupting America's priorities to give tax cuts to the wealthy. Their bill is welfare for Wall Street.

In the past year, Republicans have attacked our healthcare, ignored our gun crisis, abandoned our DREAMers, failed to pass a long-term budget, and now this.

Enough is enough. It is time for Republicans to start working for their constituents, not their donors.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

TAX-AND-SPEND REPUBLICANS

(Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I just heard a Member from the opposite side of the aisle come to the floor to talk about what we are talking about. I am only talking about tax-and-spend Republicans.

Can you believe the Republicans who have been singing the song of conservatism for years? They called us "tax-and-spend liberals." And they talk about the deficit. They even run signs talking about how much it is costing the American public every minute. But guess what. They are creating a deficit of \$1.5 trillion in this tax scam that they are passing.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage over this harmful tax scam legislation passed by tax-and-spend Republicans. That is what I am saying: tax-and-spend Republicans.

Both the House and Senate bills explode the deficit by over \$1 trillion and raise taxes on the middle class in order to spend on tax cuts for the wealthy. After 10 years, those making \$75,000 or less would see a tax increase, while those making \$1 million or more would see their taxes decrease.

Under the House bill, tens of millions of working families nationwide would experience a tax increase by 2027.

I hope that the tax-and-spend Republicans on the other side of the aisle will come to their senses before sending a final bill to the President's desk.

Tax-and-spend Republicans: over a \$1 trillion deficit. Can you believe it?

TAX BILL

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise again in strong opposition to H.R. 1, the so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This bill is an example of what happens when the wealthy exert their rule over hard-working Americans. Their bill should be called the "Job-Killing Tax Cut Act."

A leading organization fighting to combat hunger, Feeding America, has said that H.R. 1 would undermine efforts to assist those struggling with adequate food access.

In addition, the GOP leadership has yet to take up the CHIP bill.

This is wrong. Let's stop the games and get something done. We shouldn't have to sacrifice the health and wellness of one population for another, and that is exactly what this divisive GOP bill does. It puts the healthcare of our children, our families, and our seniors at risk by pitting their needs against one another.

Healthcare is not a choice, it is a right. The kids in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, who rely on CHIP for their basic healthcare needs, deserve more than this foolish game of politics. We need to come together, roll up our sleeves, do the right thing for our kids, and not engage in the sham version of this tax scam.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to engage in truth in advertising, calling the bill a true tax scam.

I oppose this bill because it is unnecessary, grows the national debt, is a giveaway to big corporations and the wealthy, and takes our attention away from the real problems facing the American people—like jobs.

GOP TAX CUTS

(Miss RICE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this deficit-exploding tax cut for the wealthy and big corporations.

This bill will raise taxes on middle class families in my district on Long Island and add trillions to the deficit—and my Republican colleagues want to pay for it with cuts to education, healthcare, and Social Security.

They seem to think that the biggest problem in America is that corporations and millionaires are struggling to pay their taxes, but that is not what I am hearing from my constituents.

My constituents are asking: When will we take action to protect the DREAMers? When will we reauthorize CHIP? When will we take up the infrastructure bill that the President promised would be a priority?

Instead of solving those real, urgent problems, Republicans spent the first 9 months of the year trying to take away people's healthcare and the next 3 on trying to cut taxes for corporations on the backs of the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues once again to reject this ridiculous trickle-down fantasy, stop the backdoor assaults on healthcare and Social Security, and work with us to solve real problems for the people we serve.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 477, SMALL BUSINESS MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, SALES, AND BROKERAGE SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3971, COMMUNITY INSTITUTION MORTGAGE RELIEF ACT OF 2017; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 123, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 647 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 647

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 477) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-43 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; (2) the further amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as 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; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3971) to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-44 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as 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; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 647.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I hope you were listening as the Reading Clerk was going through this rule, because there was a lot of meat in this rule today.

Ordinarily, and, in fact, historically, we will do a bill and we will do a rule; we will do a rule and we will do a bill. This rule today makes three bills in order, three important bills in order.

I am proud to be able to carry this rule today. I hope my colleagues will see the merits of it as I do.

The rule provides a structured rule for the debate of two bills out of the Financial Services Committee. One is H.R. 477, Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017. The second is H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act. The rule also provides for consideration of a continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 123, which provides appropriations through December 22, as final year decisionmaking and negotiating goes on. It also allows the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, to reallocate existing funds for the CHIP program through December 31, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start off talking about the Financial Services bills. We will have some members from the Financial Services Committee come down. They can talk about it in details that I cannot.

It was a fascinating hearing that we had in the Rules Committee last night, Mr. Speaker. We had the chairman, Mr.

HENSARLING from Texas, and we had the ranking member, Ms. WATERS. It was a conversation about how we protect people, how do we serve people better.

Now, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act, Mr. Speaker, is the result of small community banks and local credit unions saying: We are having a tough time providing mortgages to our members because the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has created rules designed to protect consumers that are protecting them right out of access to a mortgage at all.

Mr. Speaker, it is a legitimate disagreement that we have here from time to time about how to protect people best, about how to love people best, but it is the right kind of conversation to be having. If we pass this rule today, we will be able to get into debate on that underlying bill.

The debate will not be about should we protect people, because we all agree that we should.

□ 1245

The debate will be about how should we protect those people, an issue on which legitimate, well-intentioned, thoughtful men and women can disagree. I look forward to this body working its will.

The second bill, Mr. Speaker, from the Financial Services Committee, H.R. 477, was introduced by a classmate of mine in that big class of 2011, Mr. HUIZENGA from Michigan. He has worked this bill through the process one step at a time, trying to build consensus so that, Mr. Speaker, as we were in the Rules Committee last night, the conversation between the chairman and the ranking member was: Hey, if we can make one more amendment in order, one more amendment that Mr. HUIZENGA and Mr. SHERMAN had worked out together, if we can make one more round of changes, we believe we can get this through on a bipartisan majority coming out of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. Speaker, we don't celebrate those things, we don't talk about those things. The newspaper will be filled with discord coming out of this city tomorrow morning, but I can tell you that it gives me great pride to come on behalf of the Rules Committee today bringing forward these bills, not that are going to change the world overnight, but are going to make a big difference for real people facing real challenges across this country.

It turns out, Mr. Speaker, my experience is if we do a little bit together every day, a little bit today, a little bit tomorrow, a little bit the next day, we wake up a year from now finding out we have done a whole lot together on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, finally, the continuing resolution. I am not a fan of continuing resolutions, I just want to tell you. I got to talk to you about my enthusiastic, optimistic part of this rule earlier. I am going to lay some tough love

on you now, Mr. Speaker. We are not supposed to be in the continuing resolution business. You know with your leadership, the leadership of the gentlewoman from New York, the leadership of the two gentlemen from Michigan here on the floor, this House passed on time, ahead of schedule, the funding bills to fund the priorities of the American people for fiscal year 2018.

Folks said we couldn't get it done, folks said we couldn't do it all. We did, and we did. We sent that to the Senate, Mr. Speaker, before the end of the fiscal year, which was back on September 30. The Senate hasn't been able to take it up yet, Mr. Speaker. The Senate hasn't been able to debate it yet, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know if the Senate is going to get it done in the next 2 weeks, but there are folks in this institution, Mr. Speaker, who say: You know what? We couldn't get it done in the Senate over these last 2 months, so let's just go ahead and pass a continuing resolution for all of fiscal year 2018.

A continuing resolution, for folks who don't follow the appropriations process, means, hey, if it worked well last year, let's just do the same thing next year. Mr. Speaker, that is awful public policy.

We came together debating almost 500 amendments. Having moved every single appropriations bill through the Appropriations Committee, we came together not just in a bipartisan way in the committee, we came together here on the House floor, debated these issues, grappled with these issues, and produced a work product with which the American people can take great pride.

I don't want to give up on that work product, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to settle for the way things have been. I believe that we can do better.

By passing a 2-week continuing resolution today, we ensure that all the features of government continue to operate as the American people expect them to, and we provide another window for the Senate to come together and pass those appropriations bills as we have done here in the House.

I am optimistic about that coming to fruition, Mr. Speaker. I believe that we can get that done together.

Mr. Speaker, we can take up these bipartisan efforts from the Financial Services Committee, we can take up this important effort to continue the funding of the government if we pass this rule today.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I have great fondness for Mr. WOODALL. I think he is one of the best, most pleasant persons on the Rules Committee, and it grieves me that I have to, right off the bat here,

take issue with him, but I have to take issue with the claim that Republicans completed their appropriation work on time.

I have got a timetable of the budget process that came from the website of the Budget Committee majority, on which my colleague, Mr. WOODALL, serves. Let's review the most important deadlines.

First, the President must submit his budget to Congress by the first Monday in February. The truth: this year, the administration released what they called a skinny budget on March 16 and didn't release the full budget until May 23. From our reckoning, that is 4 months late.

Second, the Congress must complete action on the budget by April 15. The truth: this year, Republicans weren't able to get the fiscal year 2018 budget through Congress until October 26, over 6 months late and nearly a month into the new fiscal year.

Now, here is another deadline, again available on the Republican Budget Committee's website. The Appropriations Committee is supposed to complete their work by June 10. The truth: this year, they didn't report out any appropriations bills until after that deadline had passed.

Another deadline: the House is supposed to complete action on annual appropriations bills by June 30. The truth: not only did the Republican majority fail to meet that deadline, they weren't able to pass any of them separately at all. Instead, they lumped four bills together and passed them on July 27 and then passed an Omnibus with all 12 bills together on September 14, leaving 2 weeks only for the House and Senate to work out their differences, but the law said that they should have 3 months to do it.

I wouldn't bring this up except I know Mr. WOODALL believes, with all his heart, that what he is saying is right, because we have heard it before.

That leads me to the final deadline that they missed. Fiscal year 2018 began October 1, but here we are more than two months later on December 7. The Republican majority has still failed to fund the government, because they have been too busy working to kill the Affordable Care Act and to give big tax breaks to corporations and billionaires.

On time, Mr. Speaker? Any school child could tell you that you don't get credit for an assignment that is 2 months late.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the timetable of the budget process from the website of the House Budget Committee majority.

TIME TABLE OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

Title III of the Congressional Budget Act establishes a specific timetable for the congressional budget process.

On or Before, Action to be completed:

First Monday in February, President submits his budget; February 15, Congressional Budget Office submits report to Budget Committees; Not later than 6 weeks after the President submits the budget, Committees

submit views and estimates to Budget Committees. (Frequently, the House Budget Committee sets own date based on Legislative Calendar); April 1, Senate Budget Committee reports concurrent resolution on the budget; April 15, Congress completes action on the concurrent resolution on the budget. (This is not signed by the President)*; May 15, Annual appropriation bills may be considered in House; June 10, House Appropriations Committee reports last annual appropriation bill; June 15, Congress completes action on reconciliation legislation. (If required by the budget resolution); June 30, House completes action on annual appropriation bills; October 1, Fiscal year begins.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, the majority has put before us today a 2-week continuing resolution to fund the government through December 22.

I have heard some in the majority question why anyone would take issue with this approach, but, Mr. Speaker, the question that should be asked is this one: What is the majority actually willing to get done over the next 2 weeks? Because it has now been more than 2 months since some vital national priorities have lapsed under their leadership.

The Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides healthcare to more than 9 million children across this Nation, expired on September 30. So did the community health centers, which serve more than 25 million people. Now, this expiration has put 2,800 centers in danger of closure and 9 million people at risk for losing their access to their healthcare.

The Perkins Loan Program, which many low-income students rely on for their education, was allowed to expire by the majority with no reauthorization in sight, despite broad bipartisan support for a bill to do just that. Unfortunately, the majority has been unwilling even to bring it up for a vote.

Are they now ready to take meaningful action to protect our children, our students, our public health, and our Nation?

Democrats haven't just been fighting to reauthorize programs that expired 2 months ago, we are also trying to address the priorities that we know our Nation will face in the weeks ahead. That includes passing hurricane relief funding to help the families that are still recovering from this horrendous hurricane season; and as all of us are fearful of and sad about, California is burning once again; reauthorizing section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which we depend on, which is due to expire at the end of this month. The FISA court helps to keep our country safe.

Mr. Speaker, if past is prologue, this majority will be missing in action 2 weeks from now, just as they have been for months.

Just consider, for a moment, how they have squandered this year, wasting months on fruitless attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act until persuaded by their constituents that they did not want that done. It remains the law of the land today after the public overwhelmingly demanded the majority stop that crusade.

Now they are trying to pass a tax cut for the wealthy that, if enacted, would represent one of the largest transfers of wealth from working families to the wealthy that our Nation has ever seen.

I want everybody to please pay attention to this, because it is proof positive of what is happening with this majority. According to the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Congressional Budget Office, under the majority's plan, those making \$40,000 to \$50,000 would pay an additional \$5.3 billion in taxes combined over the next decade. Now, remember, they are going to pay more into the number of \$5.3 billion.

At the same time—attention, America—those earning \$1 million or more would see a \$5.8 billion cut. Have you ever seen anything as cut and dry? They absolutely want to take from the poor to give to the rich—Robin Hood in reverse.

So we are 2 months into the fiscal year, and the majority has been so preoccupied with the special interest agenda, that we haven't passed full year appropriations. This has robbed the Federal agencies and our economy of the certainty that they need.

The majority holds the House, the Senate, and the White House and still can't get anything done. So when Democrats see a continuing resolution for 2 weeks, we don't see a simple extension of the status quo; we see it for what it really is: kicking the can down the road in order to pursue reckless partisan politics, and it comes without any plan to tackle the major issues that face our Nation today.

Let me remind my colleagues how important it has been for both parties to work together, because in this process, both the CR and the tax bill, there are no Democrat fingerprints on any of it. For a lot of this stuff, there has even been no committee action.

Democrats have helped the majority pass every major funding bill since they assumed control in 2011. That is the result of bipartisanship.

This time, the majority decided not to compromise with us to reach a deal. Let's see if they can cobble together the votes to get this proposal over the finish line.

Even if it passes, we will be back here later this month to consider another short-term continuing resolution, and we still have no idea whether this bill, the one we are working on today, could even pass the Senate.

This is no way to run the United States of America. The lives of our countrymen are hanging in the balance.

All we do under this majority is to lurch from one self-inflicted crisis to the next. Our constituents deserve much better than this.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I don't disagree with a lot of what my friend from New York had to say when it comes to the facts.

I do disagree with the conclusions that are reached there, Mr. Speaker.

We do need to do a better job of working together. Now, sometimes that means Republicans and Democrats, sometimes that means the House and the Senate, sometimes that means the White House and the Congress. We need to hold each other accountable, but we also need to give each other credit for our successes.

The gentlewoman talked about important issues relating to education and improving workforce. We passed together in this institution a continuation of career and technical education funding. We reauthorized that program together, led by G.T. THOMPSON on my side of the aisle, by Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY on your side of the aisle, by Chairwoman FOXX on our side of the aisle, by Ranking Member SCOTT on your side of the aisle. We grappled with that issue together. We did it together, because it was the right thing for the American people, and now it sits in the United States Senate without action.

□ 1300

We came together, and we funded the government. We grappled, line by line, section by section, we did it together, and now it sits in the United States Senate.

Mr. Speaker, what needs to be said, one can describe it as Republican incompetence. One can describe it as Democrat intransigence. But we, as a House, have come together and gotten our work done. The Senate cannot, and why the Senate cannot is because it requires 60 votes to get something done over there under Senate rules. In order to have 60 votes, you have to have Democrat votes.

If the Senate changed its rules tomorrow and made it just a Republican majority institution, they could move all of these bills without delay. Far from being a reflection of incompetence, it is a reflection of a commitment to a bipartisan effort on the Senate side.

We can poke them and poke them and poke them and, just one day, folks might get their wish, and we may make that a completely Republican streamlined process over there. But be careful what you wish for.

We don't have to kick each other in the shins all day long, every day, over here. We have success after success that we have earned together. We should spend more time celebrating those successes, Mr. Speaker. Among those successes is the bill I mentioned earlier, offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) to talk about the hard work, the effort, and the success that he has been able to accomplish in a bipartisan way.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and classmate from Georgia, Mr. WOODALL, for the opportunity to be here.

Mr. Speaker, more and more baby boomers retire every day, and it has been estimated that approximately \$10 trillion of privately owned, small, and family-run businesses will either be closed or, if possible, sold to a new generation of entrepreneurs in the coming years.

Mergers and acquisitions—or M&A as it is oftentimes referred to—brokers play a critical role in facilitating the transfer of ownership of these smaller, privately held companies. However, today's one-size-fits-all system of broker-dealer regulation unnecessarily burdens business sellers and buyers with the pass-through of heavy regulatory compliance costs that do not provide significant incremental benefits in privately negotiated M&A transactions.

Today, Federal securities regulations technically require local mergers and acquisitions brokers to be registered and regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission and FINRA, just like Wall Street investment bankers. Those bankers are trying to sell or buy publicly traded companies. That is right; anyone brokering the sale of a hometown small business in your district or in mine, like in Holland, Michigan, must be federally registered and regulated as a securities broker-dealer, in addition to State law requirements, regardless of the size of the business or the sale transaction.

Federal securities regulation was primarily designed to protect passive investors and public securities markets. Privately negotiated mergers and acquisitions transactions facilitated by these small business brokers are vastly different and do not typically relate to the transactions meant to be protected by the SEC and FINRA regulation and registration.

That is why I have continued to introduce bipartisan legislation known as the Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act. This bipartisan bill would create a simplified system for brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller, privately held companies.

I would like to thank Representatives SHERMAN and MALONEY, along with the work of Chairman HENSARLING and Ranking Member WATERS for what they have done. And as my friend from Georgia had pointed out, not every day do we have to just keep kicking each other in the shins. We actually can work together, and this is an example of doing that.

So the impact of this legislation would significantly reduce transaction costs, promote competition among these small business brokers, and facilitate private businesses and acquisitions of these small businesses.

This initiative promotes economic growth and development through these sales, and there is really substantial relief of regulatory burdens on small business professionals who serve these smaller business owners.

Business brokerage services are critically important to entrepreneurs who

start, build, and eventually want to sell their private companies. Similarly, these services help new entrepreneurs acquire these businesses, while helping existing companies grow, thus preserving and creating jobs in the communities that we all serve.

We have worked very closely with our colleagues across the aisle, and this has been a multi—not just multiyear—a multi-Congress effort over the last few different Congresses, and I am just pleased today that we can show the American people positive, effective, bipartisan work that is coming together.

It is legislation like H.R. 477 that demonstrates, frankly, that Congress can act in a bipartisan manner to positively impact the lives of Americans, and I urge swift consideration and passage of this important bill.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentlewoman, the ranking member, for yielding, and I thank Mr. WOODALL for his comments. He and I have worked together on issues in the past. We worked together to try to protect our solar manufacturers in this country, so there are areas of agreement that we come to.

I think we also agree, I now hear, on this question of continuing resolutions. We both don't like them. And I think we do have to keep in mind that, today, we are 48 hours from the government closing, so I won't address any other subject than that question and the process that has led us to this moment where we are looking at another continuing resolution for 2 weeks.

I won't address the Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act. While it may be an important piece of legislation, it is difficult to forget what has brought us to this moment where we are 48 hours from the government shutting down.

What is interesting to me about it is, it is true that the Republicans hold the majority in this House and set the agenda here; hold the majority in the Senate, set the agenda there. You have your Republican President, the leader of your party, your leader, who sets the agenda from the White House.

You have had the entire year to get a package of spending bills to the floor and through to the President. And here we are, 2 days away from a shutdown, because 2½ months ago, after nearly a year, the process came to a halt, and this body had to approve a 2½ month extension because we couldn't get the work done.

Now, instead of, over the last 2½ months, coming up with a full plan to fund the government and provide the certainty and security that the American people and our economy depend upon, after 2½ months, the best we can do is promise the people of the country and our economy 14 more days.

I mean, why are we here?

In the last 2½ months, have we seen any action? No, not on disaster relief for those places that are struggling through the worst moments that they have experienced; not to make sure that we have healthcare, health insurance, which was a bipartisan program, the Children's Health Insurance Program. Anything? No.

So that DREAMers aren't deported? People who only know this country?

And think about this: since the President, himself—and this is an area where we have some agreement—declared that we have a national emergency, our people, our children, are dying due to this opioid crisis, and where is the solution there?

Where is the debate there?

Where is the effort on the floor of this House to deal with these big, pressing problems that our country faces?

We have had the last 2½ months; we could have done it during that period.

But what has been the focus? A singular obsession around a piece of legislation that is purported to be tax reform, but at close examination by just about any significant economist, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents is the greatest, most significant, massive shift of hard-earned wealth from working Americans to people who make more than \$900,000 a year.

The notion that, with all the difficulty we are facing in this country, with all the struggles we are having, with disasters that are yet to be corrected, with an opioid crisis that is yet to be attacked, with DREAMers who have uncertainty, with children with no certainty of healthcare, the most significant priority is not funding the government, but ensuring that people who make more than those suffering people, who make more than \$900,000 a year, get more?

That is not a reflection of the priorities of the American people; and that is why it is so difficult for us, who are ready, honestly—honestly ready to work hand in glove, knowing we are not going to win every fight, but give us a chance to sit at the table and have a conversation about where we might find some common ground.

And we do from time to time. It is not impossible. Even with my friends in this Chamber right now, we have found ways to work together. But we cannot do it, we cannot do it unless there is a commitment to do the work of the American people, and we have not seen that.

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

I would be interested sometime, Mr. Speaker, having a team building expert take a look at some of our proceedings here on the House floor and see if they think that the conversations that happen here bring us closer to working together on serious solutions, or push us further away.

I agree with my friend from Michigan; we need to get about the business of the American people. The business of

the American people is not figuring out who to blame, it is figuring out how to fix things. And to continue to perpetuate the inaccurate message that we don't collaborate on those issues is to do our bosses, the American people, a terrible disservice.

On bill after bill to combat the opioid epidemic, we have come together in this institution. We have passed these bills in a collaborative way and sent them to the United States Senate. Bill after bill on human trafficking, we have come together in this institution. We have passed these bills. We have sent those bills to the United States Senate.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about funding the American Government. I have been in this Congress since 2011. I got to vote, for the very first time, on funding the Centers for Disease Control, which sits right in my back yard in the great State of Georgia.

I got to vote, for the very first time, on funding the National Institutes of Health, which do such amazing research, both for our seniors and for our children. The kind of talent that we have there, Mr. Speaker, boggles the mind. We came together, and we funded those institutions in the annual appropriations bill for the first time ever.

Now, we can spend our time together talking about who hates children and who hates old people, and why it is everybody is an untalented buffoon; or we can recognize that, on issue after issue, we come together and get about the business that our bosses sent us to get about.

I don't think any of us are going to be rewarded by figuring out who to blame. I think we are going to be rewarded by getting it fixed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), who has worked, through the Financial Services Committee, again, in a bipartisan way, to deal with local community financial institutions and local home buyers who are getting shut out of the process by an overly burdensome Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Georgia, Mr. WOODALL, for yielding and for his great comments about bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years, the community financial institution industry has undergone a dramatic transformation. Since 2006, more than 1,500 banks have failed, have been acquired, or have merged due to economic factors and the overwhelmingly expensive regulation brought forth by the passage of Dodd-Frank.

During that same period, there has been a drought in de novo banks. In fact, only five new bank charters and 16 new credit unions have chartered since that time.

Today, for the first time in 125 years, there are fewer than 6,000 banks and roughly 6,000 credit unions serving all consumers in the United States. This is proof that community financial insti-

tutions need smart, commonsense, regulatory relief so they can properly serve local communities by assisting them with small business startups and consumer credit, particularly in a region like mine in upstate New York.

It is important that we pass this rule today to consider my bill, H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act.

□ 1315

This bipartisan measure would offer real relief for institutions that are barely surviving in an excessive regulatory environment.

I thank my colleague, Mr. SHERMAN, for assisting us in a bipartisan way to bring this bill forward and to make it even better than we originally conceived it.

H.R. 3971 would exempt small community institutions from mandatory escrow requirements and would provide relief from new regulations that have nearly doubled the cost of servicing, with direct impact on the consumer for the cost of mortgage credit.

I know that certain institutions wish to continue to provide escrow services to their consumers, and under current law and under this provision, they are welcome to do that. However, for the smaller institutions, like the ones in my district, like GPO Federal Credit Union, for example, that rely on relationship banking, customers that walk in the door and know who your neighbors are and know who your friends are and whose children serve on the same sports teams and go to the same schools, this bill will greatly help them and help our consumers continue with that relationship.

By mandating that all institutions follow escrow requirements, it raises the cost of credit for those borrowers who can least afford it, and harms our small local institutions who can barely afford to stay alive.

This is a great commonsense bill. It is bipartisan, as every bill I have ever proposed in this Chamber has been since my first year as a freshman, and I will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill. I again thank my colleague from Georgia for his work. I urge everyone to support this commonsense bill that will help our small community banks and our credit unions.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me and also for her tremendous leadership on so many issues, especially on the Rules Committee.

As a members of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and the underlying bill, H.J. Res. 123, the fiscal year 2017 continuing resolution.

This bill kicks the can down the road for 2 weeks just so Republicans can continue focusing on the greatest tax scam in history.

As Ranking Member LOWEY has said: What do Republicans think that they can accomplish in the next 2 weeks that they haven't accomplished in the last 2 months?

Well, I say: Except, of course, trying to give tax breaks to their wealthy donors, millionaires, billionaires, and corporations, and raising taxes on middle-income and low-income families. That is what this is about.

This reckless, short-term resolution ignores many of our critical year-end priorities, like passing a clean Dream Act, a temporary protective status provision we need in the CR; raising budgetary caps; and emergency disaster funding for hurricanes and wildfires, children's health insurance programs, and community health centers. I could go on and on. That is what we should be debating and what should be in this resolution. Now is not the time for Congress to be asleep at the wheel. We need action, Mr. Speaker, and we need it now.

Despite the fact that Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the White House, once again, they refuse to do their job. It is so wrong to string people and communities out not knowing whether their government will function or stay open.

How irresponsible can you get?

We need to fully fund the government. Across the country, millions of people are living on the edge. Forty million Americans are living in poverty. Millions more are struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. We are passing a short-term funding bill that underfunds education and workforce training at a time that Americans need it the most.

Instead, once again, what are they doing?

They are taking time to give tax cuts to corporations to send jobs overseas.

The American people expect us to create jobs, to strengthen our economy, to provide a basic standard of living for all. With sequester cuts looming, it is past time that we focus on our spending here at home and stop these increases to a bloated military budget, which really does nothing for our national security.

Instead of bringing our Nation to the brink of self-inflicted crisis, Republicans should work with us to meet the needs of our Nation and a strong national security, which requires resisting these cuts to our State Department and to our foreign assistance. Unfortunately, this 2-week continuing resolution does just the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this rule and "no" on the underlying bill, and let's do our job. Let's do what the American people expect us to do, and that is to fully fund

the government and look out for them in terms of not giving tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires and raising their taxes, because they deserve better from us.

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

Mr. Speaker, I opened with a discussion about how we all care about these American homeowners who are trying to get, oftentimes, into their first home, and how it is that we protect them better.

We disagreed about how to protect them.

Do you do it through the CFPB and Federal regulation? Or do you do it through more local hometown institutions being governed by their neighbors?

We agreed on what the need was, but we disagreed on how to get there.

What is so frustrating to me—I still feel like a relatively new Member of this institution, Mr. Speaker. I guess I am not any longer—is that we seem to have one standard when we are in the majority and a completely different standard when the other guy takes over the institution. It seems to me that principles should be principles irrespective of who sits in your chair.

The very first big vote I took when I got here in 2011, Mr. Speaker, was to fund the United States Government in February.

Why?

Because when Democrats ran every single facet of government—they controlled the House, they controlled the Senate, and they controlled the White House—they didn't get it done. They couldn't get it done. It is hard to do sometimes, Mr. Speaker.

I will take you back. You weren't in this institution at that time. The year is 2010. The first CR that they passed went from October 1 to December 3, about the same length of time as the one that we passed.

They weren't up to anything nefarious when that happened, Mr. Speaker, and I resent the implication that we have been during that same path. They needed a little extra time and they took it.

When that CR expired, Mr. Speaker, they then went and passed, lo and behold, a 2-week CR—a 2-week CR from December 4 to December 18. They needed a little more time. They passed one for 2 more weeks to get themselves a little more time.

That didn't work out, Mr. Speaker. They still weren't able to get it done in those 2 weeks, so their next CR, Mr. Speaker, went from December 19 to December 21. Three days is what they found to be the right number to extend funding of the Federal Government so they could continue to get their work done, Mr. Speaker.

When that 3-day CR didn't work, they then punted altogether; and when my freshman class came in in 2011, we took over and we funded the government instead.

Mr. Speaker, we can describe what happened when my friends last con-

trolled this institution as an abominable failure, or we can describe it as a frustrating failure but something that happens in this institution. It happened when my friends ran it. It happens when we run it. We need, on behalf of the American people, to get on a better track. Let me stipulate that is true.

But let me ask my friends to stipulate, Mr. Speaker, that for the first time in a long time we are on a better track because we came together in this institution and we got our work done. The Senate hasn't, and I am frustrated by that, but I want to give them a little more time.

For my friend from Michigan who asked the question, "What difference does 2 weeks make," I would ask anyone who has that question to Google "continuing resolution" and "Department of Defense."

If you think that continuing to fund the government one day at a time with a continuing resolution, or even 12 months of the time during a continuing resolution, if you think that is the definition of success, Google "continuing resolution" and "Department of Defense."

Every single day that we fail to take up in the United States Senate the large full-year funding appropriations bill, we do a disservice to every single man and woman in uniform.

If we have a choice here today, Mr. Speaker, between doing that disservice to those men and women for 2 weeks or 6 weeks or 8 weeks or 12 months, I choose to.

If you wonder what difference it makes, ask any man or woman in uniform. There is a reason, Mr. Speaker, as hard as the appropriations process is, that you and I took up the defense portion, the Homeland Security portion, the national security portion all the way back in the summer and passed it out of this House before the end of July, because we knew how important it was. We knew how mission critical it was, and we wanted to give the Senate the most time we possibly could.

I am frustrated, too, but let us not describe these failures as partisan failures, as an effort by one side or the other to subvert the process. These are failures. But 2 weeks, Mr. Speaker, is going to be less of a failure for our men and women in uniform than would be 3 weeks, 4 weeks, or 12 months.

I am sorry that we are here, but this is the best circumstance that we can create to allow our Senate time to succeed.

They cannot succeed alone. Republicans cannot succeed there alone. It requires a bipartisan majority to succeed. Let us not pretend this is a partisan problem. This is an American challenge, and I believe we are up for it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia said they need the Democrats. He must be aware that they only need us when the votes come.

There is not a Democrat fingerprint on that tax bill. We had nothing to say about any of it. And while we begged almost on our hands and knees to be a part of what they are doing, we are not. It always sounds good when we hear it on the floor: Bipartisan. Oh, look, we want to work together.

But then, oftentimes, as you know, Mr. Speaker, bills come to the Rules Committee with no committee action whatsoever and no possible description to be bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, for years we have endured relentless Republican attacks on the Affordable Care Act, including just last week in the Senate's disastrous tax bill. By repealing the individual mandate, the Senate bill has knocked 13 million people from their health insurance.

I must have asked 20 times when they were doing those 60 times to try to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act: Why do you want to take healthcare away from people?

I have never, to this day, gotten an answer as to why it is they so despise a healthcare bill that is working and has literally insured more Americans than have ever been insured before.

Then suddenly, just on a whim, one party decides—the one that has been fighting to kill it over and over again—that they will come at it piecemeal and just try to render it helpless by taking away the ability to even say it is time to go sign up again.

I am sure they thought they would do grievous harm, but it didn't work that way, and millions of people came out to sign up again because healthcare is one of the most critical needs for any American family.

To make matters worse, the bill also repeals most of the State and local tax deductions, and that is a deduction that helps middle class families in my State of New York.

New York, on average, gives back to the Federal Government of the United States \$40 billion; money that we send to Washington and get nothing back for it, the way we are rewarded for that. I think that probably will not be happening anymore since the taxes are going to go up so much higher on the people of my State, unless they do away with what is absolutely one of the most atrocious things I have ever seen them do.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that the tax bill was not designed to help middle class families put food on their table, but, instead, it gives corporation tax cuts to line the pockets of their shareholders.

I have yet to read or see the Senate tax bill, but I understand there are gifts in there for people who own jet planes. I don't represent any of those.

□ 1330

But taking care, again, of the rich, as demonstrated in the figures that supported my speech a while ago, that just

short of \$6 billion, that goes from the poor people who make under \$40,000 to the rich people, the same office, the same amount of money, dollar for dollar, and absolutely proves what we are saying.

But you don't need to hear from it me. Don't take my word for it. Republican Congressman MARK SANFORD recently said in a moment of great candor: "From a truth-in-advertising standpoint, it would have been a lot simpler if we just acknowledged reality on this bill, which is it's fundamentally a corporate tax reduction and restructuring bill, period."

There is no tiny scintilla of reform in this bill. It is simply, as he points out, a way to lower the corporate tax and take care of the extraordinarily wealthy in this country who don't need it.

Mr. Speaker, I wish we could provide health for middle class families, which is what I believe the President of the United States thinks he did. I hear him say all the time that there is nothing in there to benefit him—except, probably, the estate tax, which we understand would save him about \$1 billion.

So, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment that will prohibit any legislation being considered on the floor that limits or repeals the State and local tax deduction or repeals the ACA individual mandate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment and remind everyone watching of the impacts of the majority's last shutdown in 2013. The impacts on our economy were significant. We lost \$24 billion in just those 2 weeks. The impacts on our economy, as I said, were very significant:

Federal loans to small businesses, homeowners, and families were brought to a halt.

Banks and other lenders were unable to access government verification services, which delayed private sector lending to small businesses and individuals alike.

Federal permitting was brought to a standstill, which delayed job-creating projects in the transportation and energy sectors.

Experts have estimated that all told, this 16-day shutdown cost our economy an estimated \$24 billion.

So, during this shutdown, again, vital services were put on hold.

At the National Institutes of Health, hundreds of patients were unable to enroll in possibly lifesaving clinical trials.

Federal agencies like the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency were unable to conduct health and safety inspections.

Federal scientific research was also halted, and we lost a lot of scientists in this country because of all that. Five Nobel Prize winning scientists who worked for the Federal Government at the time of the shutdown, four of the five of them were laid off.

This is all according to a report issued by the Office of Management and Budget.

The public knows how devastating another shutdown could be. According to a poll conducted by Morning Consult and Politico released this week, there is bipartisan opposition, with 68 percent of Democrats, 62 percent of Republicans, and 61 percent of Independents all opposing a government shutdown.

I forgot to mention up there about Social Security checks and things for the Veterans Administration. They came to a halt.

So that is what makes this so frustrating. I agree with Mr. WOODALL. This is a frustrating part of what we are trying to do here. Every day it seems we get up and we face some kind of new disaster.

We could have crafted a bipartisan bill—we sure could have—that would have removed any question of whether a continuing resolution would pass the House and Senate.

We could have reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program, community health centers, Perkins loans, and more months ago, if only the majority were willing to work with Democrats. Instead, bipartisanship is all too often becoming a dirty word under the majority. I sadly say: It is the American people left to pay the price.

So I urge a "no" vote on the previous question, the rule, and the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I thank my friend from New York for helping me to bring the rule today.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in truth in advertising, and of all the things that you heard the Reading Clerk read, when he went through word for word for word from this rule, you heard not one word about taxes today. Why? Because we are not talking about taxes today at all. Because nothing that we are doing today has anything to do with taxes at all. Because of all the successes that we are down here to partner on today, tax is not one of them.

What is on the list today?

Well, in the spirit of truth in advertising, Mr. Speaker, shutdowns aren't on the list either. In fact, the opposite is true. If we pass this rule today, we will fund the government. We will prioritize keeping the doors open.

Mr. Speaker, habits are hard things to break, and we are in two very bad habits in this institution. One is failing to see the merit in what the other side is offering. We have two Financial Services bills today that break that pattern, that see the merit in working together and collaborating together, and we bring two bills to the floor that this entire institution can be proud of.

We have another bad habit of ascribing to the other side's motives that I believe are not worthy of this institution at all. A government shutdown would be one of those things. We are, in good faith, working together—Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, Congress and White House—to get about the business of the American people, and it is hard. But it is worth doing, and it is worth doing right.

If I have to choose between fast and right, I choose right. We have got a chance today, with the passage of this rule, to bring up two bills that our colleagues, in bipartisan ways, have worked through on the Financial Services Committee that will make a big difference to families and businesses across this Nation.

We have an opportunity today, if we pass this rule, to bring up a continuing resolution that guarantees to every single American that the doors are open, the lights are on, and we continue and have an opportunity for the Senate to move final legislation.

I want my colleagues to support this rule. I want my colleagues to support the underlying bills. But, Mr. Speaker, more than anything, I want my colleagues to take pride in the successes that we have achieved here today.

CHIP funding, Children's Health Insurance funding, is at risk, but not because we haven't succeeded. We have. All we need is one more signature from the Senate.

CDC funding may be at risk, but not because we haven't succeeded. We have. We just need that bill to get across the floor in the Senate.

Our troops are on the cusp of receiving a well-deserved pay raise. Why? Because we came together and we passed it here. We just need it to get across the floor of the Senate.

And there is not one of those items or a dozen more that I could list, Mr. Speaker, that will move across the floor of the Senate in anything but a bipartisan way.

Do you want bipartisanship? If you want cooperation, if you want success, we have our chance today. Vote "yes" on this rule, Mr. Speaker. Vote "yes" on these underlying bills, and let's get together and get the Senate across the finish line as well.

The material previously referred to by Ms. SLAUGHTER is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 647 OFFERED BY
MS. SLAUGHTER

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

"SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY TAX BILL THAT RAISES TAXES ON MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES BY ELIMINATING OR LIMITING THE STATE AND LOCAL TAX DEDUCTION.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that repeals or limits the State and Local Tax Deduction (26 U.S.C. § 164).

(b) WAIVER IN THE HOUSE.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider a rule or order that waives the application of subsection (a). As disposition of

a point of order under this subsection, the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the rule or order, as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn."

"SEC. 5. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY TAX BILL THAT REPEALS THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE UNDER THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT."

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that repeals or limits the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (26 U.S.C. § 5000A).

(b) WAIVER IN THE HOUSE.—It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives to consider a rule or order that waives the application of subsection (a). As disposition of a point of order under this subsection, the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the rule or order, as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn."

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the pre-

vious question on the rule When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. 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 ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Adopting House Resolution 647, if ordered;

Suspending the rules and adopting H. Res. 259; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 236, nays 190, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 665]

YEAS—236

Abraham	Bucshon	DeSantis
Aderholt	Budd	DesJarlais
Allen	Burgess	Diaz-Balart
Amash	Byrne	Donovan
Amodei	Calvert	Duffy
Arrington	Carter (GA)	Duncan (SC)
Babin	Carter (TX)	Duncan (TN)
Bacon	Chabot	Dunn
Banks (IN)	Cheney	Emmer
Barletta	Coffman	Estes (KS)
Barr	Cole	Farenthold
Barton	Collins (GA)	Faso
Bergman	Collins (NY)	Ferguson
Biggs	Comer	Fitzpatrick
Bilirakis	Comstock	Fleischmann
Bishop (MI)	Conaway	Flores
Bishop (UT)	Cook	Fortenberry
Black	Costello (PA)	Fox
Blackburn	Cramer	Frelinghuysen
Blum	Crawford	Gaetz
Bost	Culberson	Gallagher
Brady (TX)	Curbelo (FL)	Garrett
Brat	Curtis	Gianforte
Brooks (AL)	Davidson	Gibbs
Brooks (IN)	Davis, Rodney	Gohmert
Buchanan	Denham	Goodlatte
Buck	Dent	Gosar

Gowdy	MacArthur	Rouzer
Granger	Marchant	Royce (CA)
Graves (GA)	Marino	Russell
Graves (LA)	Marshall	Rutherford
Graves (MO)	Massie	Sanford
Griffith	Mast	Scalise
Grothman	McCarthy	Schweikert
Guthrie	McCaul	Scott, Austin
Handel	McClintock	Sensenbrenner
Harper	McHenry	Sessions
Harris	McKinley	Shimkus
Hartzler	McMorris	Shuster
Hensarling	Rodgers	Simpson
Herrera Beutler	McSally	Smith (MO)
Hice, Jody B.	Meadows	Smith (NE)
Higgins (LA)	Meehan	Smith (NJ)
Hill	Messer	Smith (TX)
Holding	Mitchell	Smucker
Hollingsworth	Moolenaar	Stefanik
Hudson	Mooney (WV)	Stewart
Huizenga	Mullin	Stivers
Hultgren	Newhouse	Taylor
Hunter	Noem	Tenney
Hurd	Norman	Thompson (PA)
Issa	Nunes	Thornberry
Jenkins (KS)	Olson	Tiberi
Jenkins (WV)	Palazzo	Tipton
Johnson (LA)	Palmer	Trott
Johnson (OH)	Paulsen	Turner
Johnson, Sam	Pearce	Upton
Jordan	Perry	Valadao
Joyce (OH)	Pittenger	Wagner
Katko	Poe (TX)	Walberg
Kelly (MS)	Poliquin	Walden
Kelly (PA)	Posey	Walker
King (IA)	Ratcliffe	Walorski
King (NY)	Reed	Walters, Mimi
Kinzinger	Reichert	Weber (TX)
Knight	Renacci	Webster (FL)
Kustoff (TN)	Rice (SC)	Wenstrup
Labrador	Roby	Westerman
LaHood	Roe (TN)	Williams
LaMalfa	Rogers (AL)	Wilson (SC)
Lamborn	Rogers (KY)	Wittman
Lance	Rohrabacher	Womack
Latta	Rokita	Woodall
Lewis (MN)	Rooney, Francis	Yoder
LoBiondo	Rooney, Thomas	Yoho
Long	J.	Young (AK)
Loudermilk	Ros-Lehtinen	Young (IA)
Love	Roskam	Zeldin
Lucas	Ross	
Luetkemeyer	Rothfus	

NAYS—190

Adams	DeGette	Keating
Aguilar	Delaney	Kelly (IL)
Barragán	DeLauro	Khanna
Bass	DelBene	Khuyen
Beatty	Demings	Kildee
Bera	DeSaulnier	Kilmer
Beyer	Deutch	Kind
Bishop (GA)	Dingell	Krishnamoorthi
Blumenauer	Doggett	Kuster (NH)
Blunt Rochester	Doyle, Michael	Langevin
Bonamici	F.	Larsen (WA)
Boyle, Brendan	Ellison	Larson (CT)
F.	Engel	Lawrence
Brady (PA)	Eshoo	Lawson (FL)
Brown (MD)	Espallat	Lee
Bustos	Esty (CT)	Levin
Butterfield	Evans	Lewis (GA)
Capuano	Foster	Lieu, Ted
Carbajal	Frankel (FL)	Lipinski
Cárdenas	Fudge	Loeb
Carson (IN)	Gabbard	Loeb
Cartwright	Gallagher	Loftgren
Castor (FL)	Garamendi	Lowenthal
Castro (TX)	Gomez	Lowe
Chu, Judy	Gonzalez (TX)	Lujan Grisham,
Cicilline	Gottheimer	M.
Clark (MA)	Green, Al	Luján, Ben Ray
Clarke (NY)	Green, Gene	Lynch
Clay	Grijalva	Maloney,
Cleaver	Gutiérrez	Carolyn B.
Clyburn	Hanabusa	Maloney, Sean
Cohen	Hastings	Matsui
Connolly	Heck	McCollum
Cooper	Higgins (NY)	McEachin
Correa	Himes	McGovern
Costa	Hoyer	McNerney
Courtney	Huffman	Meeks
Crist	Jackson Lee	Meng
Crowley	Jayapal	Moore
Cuellar	Jeffries	Moulton
Cummings	Johnson (GA)	Murphy (FL)
Davis (CA)	Johnson, E. B.	Nadler
Davis, Danny	Jones	Napolitano
DeFazio	Kaptur	Neal
		Nolan

Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz

Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Snozzi

Swalwell (CA)
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

MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
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
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

Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine

Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—6

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)

Doggett
Kennedy

Pocan
Scott, David

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1411

So the resolution was agreed to.
The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING CONCERN AND CONDEMNATION OVER THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 259) expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 8, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 667]

YEAS—419

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Cann
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)

Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)

Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutsch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael
F.
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Fox
Frank (AZ)
Frank (NY)
Gale
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie

NOT VOTING—6

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)

Franks (AZ)
Kennedy

Pocan
Ryan (OH)

□ 1404

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 238, nays 188, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 666]

YEAS—238

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Cann
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)

Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huelskamp
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutsch
Dingell
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Española
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)

NAYS—188

Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebach
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowe
Lujan Grisham, M.
Lujan, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney,
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng

Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Snozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz

Engel	LaMalfa	Renacci	Welch	Wilson (SC)	Yoder	Meng	Rooney, Francis	Stewart
Eshoo	Lamborn	Rice (NY)	Wenstrup	Wittman	Yoho	Messer	Ross	Suozzi
Espallat	Lance	Rice (SC)	Westerman	Womack	Young (AK)	Moolenaar	Rothfus	Takano
Estes (KS)	Langevin	Richmond	Williams	Woodall	Young (IA)	Mooney (WV)	Royce (CA)	Taylor
Esty (CT)	Larsen (WA)	Roby	Wilson (FL)	Yarmuth	Zeldin	Moore	Ruppersberger	Thornberry
Evans	Larson (CT)	Roe (TN)				Moulton	Russell	Tiberi
Farenthold	Latta	Rogers (AL)		NAYS—8		Mullin	Sanford	Titus
Faso	Lawrence	Rogers (KY)	Amash	Duncan (TN)	Jones	Murphy (FL)	Scalise	Torres
Ferguson	Lawson (FL)	Rohrabacher	Biggs	Gosar	Massie	Nadler	Schneider	Trott
Fitzpatrick	Lee	Rokita	Brooks (AL)	Griffith		Napolitano	Schweikert	Tsongas
Fleischmann	Levin	Rooney, Francis				Noem	Scott (VA)	Wagner
Flores	Lewis (GA)	Rooney, Thomas J.		NOT VOTING—5		Norman	Scott, Austin	Walker
Fortenberry	Lewis (MN)		Barton	Brownley (CA)	Pocan	Nunes	Scott, David	Walorski
Foster	Lieu, Ted	Ros-Lehtinen	Bridenstine	Kennedy		O'Rourke	Sensenbrenner	Walters, Mimi
Fox	Lipinski	Rosen				Olson	Sessions	Walz
Frankel (FL)	LoBiondo	Roskam		ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE		Pascarell	Shea-Porter	Wasserman
Franks (AZ)	Loeb	Ross		The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.		Perlmutter	Sherman	Schultz
Frelinghuysen	Lofgren	Rothfus				Pingree	Shinkus	Webster (FL)
Fudge	Long	Rouzer				Polis	Shuster	Welch
Gabbard	Loudermilk	Roybal-Allard				Posey	Simpson	Westerman
Gaetz	Love	Royce (CA)				Ratcliffe	Sinema	Williams
Gallagher	Lowenthal	Ruiz				Reichert	Smith (NE)	Wilson (SC)
Gallego	Lowey	Ruppersberger				Rice (SC)	Smith (NJ)	Womack
Garamendi	Lucas	Rush				Roby	Smith (TX)	Yarmuth
Garrett	Luetkemeyer	Russell				Roe (TN)	Smith (WA)	Yoho
Gianforte	Lujan Grisham, M.	Rutherford				Rogers (KY)	Speier	Young (IA)
Gibbs	Lujan, Ben Ray	Ryan (OH)				Rohrabacher	Stefanik	
Gohmert	Lynch	Sánchez						
Gomez	MacArthur	Sanford						
Gonzalez (TX)	Maloney, Carolyn B.	Sarbanes						
Goodlatte	Maloney, Sean	Scalise						
Gottheimer	Marchant	Schakowsky						
Gowdy	Marino	Schiff						
Granger	Marshall	Schneider						
Graves (GA)	Mast	Schrader						
Graves (LA)	Matsui	Schweikert						
Graves (MO)	McCarthy	Scott (VA)						
Green, Al	McCaul	Scott, Austin						
Green, Gene	McClintock	Scott, David						
Grijalva	McCollum	Sensenbrenner						
Grothman	McEachin	Serrano						
Guthrie	McGovern	Sessions						
Gutiérrez	McHenry	Sewell (AL)						
Hanabusa	McKinley	Shea-Porter						
Handel	McMorris	Sherman						
Harper	Mitchell	Shimkus						
Harris	Mooney (WV)	Shuster						
Hartzer	Moore	Simpson						
Hastings	Moulton	Sinema						
Heck	Mullin	Sires						
Hensarling	Murphy (FL)	Slaughter						
Herrera Beutler	Nadler	Smith (MO)						
Hice, Jody B.	Napolitano	Smith (NE)						
Higgins (LA)	Neal	Smith (NJ)						
Higgins (NY)	Newhouse	Smith (TX)						
Hill	Noem	Smith (WA)						
Himes	Nolan	Smucker						
Holding	Norcross	Soto						
Hollingsworth	Norman	Speier						
Hoyer	Nunes	Stefanik						
Hudson	O'Halleran	Stewart						
Huffman	Johnson (GA)	Stivers						
Huizenga	Johnson (LA)	Suozzi						
Hultgren	Johnson (OH)	Swalwell (CA)						
Hunter	Johnson, E. B.	Takano						
Hurd	Johnson, Sam	Taylor						
Issa	Jordan	Tenney						
Jackson Lee	Joyce (OH)	Thompson (CA)						
Jayapal	Kaptur	Thompson (MS)						
Jeffries	Katko	Thompson (PA)						
Jenkins (KS)	Keating	Tiberi						
Jenkins (WV)	Kelly (IL)	Tipton						
Johnson (GA)	Kelly (MS)	Titus						
Johnson (LA)	Kelly (PA)	Tonko						
Johnson (OH)	Khanna	Torres						
Johnson, E. B.	Kihuen	Trott						
Johnson, Sam	Kildee	Tsongas						
Jordan	Kilmer	Turner						
Joyce (OH)	Kind	Upton						
Kaptur	King (IA)	Valadao						
Katko	King (NY)	Vargas						
Keating	Kinzing	Veasey						
Kelly (IL)	Knight	Vela						
Kelly (MS)	Krishnamoorthi	Velázquez						
Kelly (PA)	Kuster (NH)	Visclosky						
Khanna	Kustoff (TN)	Wagner						
Kihuen	Labrador	Walberg						
Kildee	LaHood	Walsh						
Kilmer		Walsh						
Kind		Walsh						
King (IA)		Walsh						
King (NY)		Walsh						
Kinzing		Walsh						
Knight		Walsh						
Krishnamoorthi		Walsh						
Kuster (NH)		Walsh						
Kustoff (TN)		Walsh						
Labrador		Walsh						
LaHood		Walsh						

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—2

Gohmert

Tonko

NOT VOTING—13

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)
Cramer
DeSaulnier
EshooKennedy
Lowenthal
Pocan
Quigley
Rice (NY)Rooney, Thomas
J.
Sewell (AL)
Vargas

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1425

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. 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 in consideration of H.J. Res. 123.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 647, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 647, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 123

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

DIVISION A—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

SEC. 101. FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.

The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018 (division D of Public Law 115-56) is amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting "December 22, 2017".

This division may be cited as the "Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018".

DIVISION B—CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (CHIP) ALLOCATION REDISTRIBUTION SPECIAL RULE

SEC. 201. CHIP ALLOCATION REDISTRIBUTION SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN SHORTFALL STATES DURING FIRST QUARTER OF FISCAL YEAR 2018.

Section 2104(f)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(f)(2)) is amended—

(1) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as follows:

"(B) DETERMINATION OF REDISTRIBUTED AMOUNTS IF INSUFFICIENT AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—

"(i) PRORATION RULE.—Subject to clause (ii), if the amounts available for redistribution under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year are less than the total amounts of the estimated shortfalls determined for the year under sub-

paragraph (A), the amount to be redistributed under such paragraph for each shortfall State shall be reduced proportionally.

"(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR FIRST QUARTER OF FISCAL YEAR 2018.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—For the period beginning on October 1, 2017, and ending December 31, 2017, with respect to any amounts available for redistribution under paragraph (1) for fiscal year 2018, the Secretary shall redistribute under such paragraph such amounts to each emergency shortfall State (as defined in subclause (II)) in such amount as is equal to the amount of the shortfall described in subclause (II) for such State and period (as may be adjusted under subparagraph (C)) before the Secretary may redistribute such amounts to any shortfall State that is not an emergency shortfall State. In the case of any amounts redistributed under this subclause to a State that is not an emergency shortfall State, such amounts shall be determined in accordance with clause (i).

"(II) EMERGENCY SHORTFALL STATE DEFINED.—For purposes of this clause, the term 'emergency shortfall State' means, with respect to the period beginning October 1, 2017, and ending December 31, 2017, a shortfall State for which the Secretary estimates, in accordance with subparagraph (A) (unless otherwise specified in this subclause), that the projected expenditures under the State child health plan and under section 2105(g) (calculated as if the reference under section 2105(g)(4)(A) to '2017' were a reference to '2018' and insofar as the allotments are available to the State under this subsection or subsection (e) or (m)) for such period will exceed the sum of the amounts described in clauses (i) through (iii) of subparagraph (A) for such period, including after application of any amount redistributed under paragraph (1) before such date of enactment to such State. A shortfall State may be an emergency shortfall State under the previous sentence without regard to whether any amounts were redistributed before such date of enactment to such State under paragraph (1) for fiscal year 2018.

"(III) APPLICATION OF QUALIFYING STATE OPTION.—During the period described in subclause (I), section 2105(g)(4) shall apply to a qualifying State (as defined in section 2105(g)(2)) as if under section 2105(g)(4)—

"(aa) the reference to '2017' were a reference to '2018'; and

"(bb) the reference to 'under subsections (e) and (m) of such section' were a reference to 'under subsections (e), (f), and (m) of such section'; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(D) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed as preventing a commonwealth or territory described in subsection (c)(3) from being treated as a shortfall State or an emergency shortfall State."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

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

I rise today to present H.J. Res. 123, a continuing resolution that maintains funding for Federal Government operations and prevents a shutdown.

Current funding legislation expires tomorrow, Friday, December 8. Con-

gress must act now to prevent a government shutdown and preserve vital Federal programs that Americans rely on. This action is critical to our Nation's stability, our national security, our economic health, and the well-being of the American people.

This simple, clean extension of funding provides fiscal year 2018 funding for government programs through December 22, an additional 2 weeks, and will allow time for leadership to reach a deal on overall topline spending levels for the 2018 fiscal year.

□ 1430

I would note that the executive branch supports adoption of this continuing resolution. Yesterday's Statement of Administration Policy says: "This legislation funds the Federal Government at current spending levels without unnecessary extraneous provisions."

It concludes that his advisers would recommend that the President sign the bill into law.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the December 6 Statement of Administration Policy regarding H.J. Res. 123.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.J. RES. 123—FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018—REP. FRELINGHUYSEN, R-NJ

The Administration supports House passage of H.J. Res. 123, the Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018.

This legislation funds the Federal Government at current spending levels without unnecessary extraneous provisions through December 22, 2017, while the Congress continues to work on a longer-term funding agreement. The legislation also includes language to ensure that States and Territories have adequate funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through December.

The Administration believes that funding for national security, including for our military, to secure the Southern Border, and to enhance missile defense capabilities, must be prioritized in a long-term funding agreement, and will continue working with the Congress to achieve that goal.

If H.J. Res. 123 was presented to the President in its current form, his advisors would recommend that he sign the bill into law.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, the House has completed our appropriations work over 80 days ago, passing all 12 bills before the end of the last fiscal year for the first time in nearly a decade. This included critical, important funding for national defense and other important matters.

Unfortunately, the Appropriations Committee cannot proceed without an agreement with the Senate on overall funding levels. The reality is that we are running into a deadline this week, and this resolution is our best and only option at this time.

Once a broader budget agreement has been reached, which I hope will be soon, the committee will continue its work to complete final negotiations with the Senate on all 12 of the regular appropriations bills that will fully fund the Federal Government through September of next year.

Our committee is also moving quickly to act on a third emergency supplemental funding bill to help our communities across the Nation recover from recent major disasters.

In the meantime, Congress must do its job and pass the continuing resolution and then another one into the new year to keep the government open and ensure that all important Federal services are available to all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this necessary and responsible legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

It is extremely regrettable that we find ourselves here today. Democrats have said all year that there must be a deal to raise statutory budget caps in a manner that allows responsible investments in both defense and nondefense priorities, because both are critical to our continued safety, security, and prosperity.

The majority failed to engage all year, choosing instead to pass partisan appropriation bills that can never be signed into law.

More than 2 months ago, President Trump and Democratic congressional leaders struck an agreement to avoid a government shutdown and buy time for negotiations on new spending caps that would make it possible to enact a responsible, bipartisan full-year spending law. Precious little has been accomplished since then.

Now here we are again with the majority asking support for a 2-week stopgap continuing resolution. So I ask the majority: What do you expect to accomplish in the next 2 weeks that we have been unable to accomplish in the last 2 months? I want to repeat that. I would really like to know what you expect to accomplish in the next 2 weeks, when we haven't been able to accomplish anything in the last 2 months.

The rationale to support a short-term stopgap continuing resolution is that the parties are engaged in good faith negotiations to develop a responsible, bipartisan spending package; negotiations are on a positive trajectory and additional time is simply needed to seal a deal. Can anyone in this Chamber claim that this is the case today?

The President continues to irresponsibly threaten a government shutdown and launch ad hominem attacks. Majority leadership is playing games with the contents of this and future continuing resolutions. Negotiations on new spending caps for defense and nondefense investments are stalled.

The majority is grasping for excuses as to why they have failed to protect 700,000 young Americans from deportation, reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, or move expeditiously on critical disaster assistance.

Is there any evidence whatsoever that this majority intends to fulfill these vital responsibilities to the American people?

Given these failures, I believe it is incumbent on Members of Congress to

say enough is enough. The American people are sick of the games. They want results.

It is time for the Republican leadership and President Trump to get serious, engage with Democrats. We stand ready and willing to help develop a framework for a responsible, bipartisan spending agreement and to negotiate the details of a full year's spending package.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), my colleague, and the distinguished chairman of the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in full support of the second fiscal year 2018 continuing resolution this year, which will fund the Federal Government through December 22 of this year.

This bill is a necessary measure to continue vital government programs and services. It also prevents uncertainty and harm in a shutdown.

This year, the committee worked at a historic pace to produce and then pass all 12 bills to fund the government. Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN should be recognized for this feat of leadership. It is important that we eventually send these bills to the President's desk.

As chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I want to highlight that the funding provided in our bill supports continued leadership by the U.S. and advances our national security and economic interests. This funding is critical to addressing the many challenges that we face around the world.

Mr. Speaker, while CRs are never our preferred course of action, the bill before us today will give us more time to complete our work with the Senate and put together a final bill that will support the American people. Our current continuing resolution expires tomorrow, so we must act today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the CR.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the ranking member of the Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, Congresswoman LOWEY from New York, for the phenomenal job that she has done this year, and commend Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN for trying to herd cattle on a very vast range.

Mr. Speaker, here we are again, mere hours away from a needless shutdown, a cliff created by the Republican majority.

Already we are 3 months into the 2018 fiscal year, and Congress is no closer to finalizing one of our chief constitutional responsibilities, and that is

funding the departments of our Nation to do their jobs.

For a nation at war, the Department of Defense, the largest Department in this bill, can't let contracts because of this adolescent dallying by Congress.

I rise with frustration today, as the Appropriations Committee's subcommittees did their job over the last year. They toiled away for months, chipping away in each subcommittee bill, but that proved to be a fruitless effort since we had no agreed upon budget caps within which to make those decisions, because the Republican majority produced no budget.

There is simply no good reason why we are here again kicking decisions down the road, and for 2 weeks. Let me remind my colleagues, we were over 7 months late last fiscal year before we fully funded our government.

This fits and starts, fits and starts surely is not what the American people deserve. For example, we know a million people, our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico, still don't have energy and power, and vast numbers lack access to fresh drinking water. We need that FEMA budget certain so contracts can be let for 2018. Federal funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program covering more than 220,000 children in Ohio expired 68 days ago.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this disruption to those responsible for managing healthcare adds an unnecessary burden under the circumstances they confront daily. Many States are now preparing to shut down their CHIP program in case Congress doesn't act. How is that for a Christmas or Hanukkah present to the children of America?

The Republican majority's priorities are out of line, and no leadership on budgetary caps, no leadership on working with Democrats to find common ground on funding priorities, no leadership to finalize government funding for the entire 2018 fiscal year, which began 3 months ago. Unacceptable.

Instead, Republicans choose to avoid doing what is critical. Rather than pass a tax bill that rewards the wealthiest in our country and wreaks havoc on America's hardworking middle class families, they ought to do the dutiful work of managing the funds to operate the departments that serve the people of the United States. The American people are worried, Mr. Speaker, and the majority has abdicated their leadership.

I urge my colleagues to keep their powder dry on any hasty vote on this bill, and demand the majority come to the table to finalize the fiscal year 2018 spending plan.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT), the chairman of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise also in support of H.J. Res. 123, which obviously would extend funding for the Federal Government for the next 2 weeks.

We have had a highly condensed schedule this year, but the Appropriations Committee has made tremendous progress in an open and very deliberative process as we have moved forward over the last several months.

As an example, the Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations, which I have the privilege to chair, received input from over 350 individual Members, and we produced our bill in less than 2 months.

Just a few months ago, as most of my colleagues here in the House know, the House took up and we passed all 12 appropriation bills. The chairman and the leadership delivered on the promise that they would do so.

Now we are coming to the end of the year; there are final negotiations to be done. I and my colleagues agree that a CR is not the best option; however, I would ask my colleagues to support this resolution to ensure that we have basic services that continue for our constituents until we have the final time to complete our work.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), the ranking member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this continuing resolution, which is yet again a complete abdication of our responsibilities.

Instead of adopting fully funded appropriations bills or an omnibus with an actual chance of passing this Congress, we remain mired in this unbreakable habit of passing continuing resolutions. This not only creates needless legislative and economic uncertainty, it costs the government, especially our military, billions in wasted taxpayer dollars. Moreover, this abdication reflects the Republican leadership's complete abandonment of our values and the needs of our constituents.

For one, we have yet to pass the Dream Act. Despite widespread support nationally and with growing fear of deportations, this Congress has ignored the 122 DREAMers who lose their protected status every day. These are Americans by any definition, and this is their home. I will not stand by as this President cruelly threatens to send these brave young people back to countries about which they have no memory.

When will this body fully address the horrific disasters that have ravaged Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and California? Countless communities, including my own, are anxiously awaiting vital recovery assist-

ance that only the Federal Government can provide. These abdications are simply immoral. It doesn't end there.

Congress has failed to renew the Children's Health Insurance Program. States and families across America are scrambling to find replacement funds and healthcare alternatives for their children.

□ 1445

When did CHIP and protecting the health of our children become a partisan issue?

My Republican colleagues want to add more than \$1 trillion to the deficit for tax cuts for big corporations and the top 1 percent, while they are at it; but then they say we can't afford to spend a fraction of that on healthcare for children?

These priorities are backward and morally indefensible.

Instead of protecting Americans from the scourge of gun violence, Republicans are weakening our already feeble gun laws by passing more legislation that ensures more deadly gun violence in our towns and cities.

We need to pass an omnibus budget that doesn't threaten programs for our veterans and children or make drastic cuts to the Medicare and Medicaid programs that our seniors rely upon.

Instead of handing massive tax cuts to millionaires and powerful corporations, we should pass a budget that supports education, expands women's health, and provides real economic relief to the middle class.

In short, we have to break this body's obsession with promoting the interests of the well-off and special interests, and ignoring the needs of children, DREAMers, seniors, and the middle class.

This continuing resolution does nothing more than provide another short-term fix for the Republican leadership's unhealthy addiction. It is abominable, it is irresponsible, and we should set it aside and focus on making long-term decisions for the American people.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER), the chairwoman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this continuing resolution.

Our most solemn responsibility as Members of Congress is to provide for our Nation's security.

The world is more dangerous and unstable than at any time in recent history. The threat from North Korea grows each day. Russia continues to create instability in Ukraine, the Baltics, and the Balkans. Chinese is militarizing the South China Sea and modernizing their military at an alarming pace.

Meanwhile, ISIS and al-Qaida continue to spread their perverted version of Islam across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

We must send a clear message to our adversaries that our military is prepared to confront anyone who threatens us at any time.

A shutdown in the Department of Defense will only embolden our adversaries and threaten our national security. Our military needs stable, predictable, and timely funding to ensure it is prepared to meet the threats we face now and in the future.

Members demonstrated their commitment to rebuilding our military this past summer by passing the Make America Secure Appropriations Act, which included the defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2018. Only a budget agreement that gives our men and women in uniform the funding they need and removes the threat of sequestration will provide them that certainty.

The House must pass this continuing resolution to allow time for an agreement to be reached that will fully fund our Nation's defense. Shutting down the government is not an option.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this very important legislation.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the ranking member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment on this continuing resolution and on the past year of this Congress.

The biggest economic challenge of our time is that people are in jobs that do not pay them enough to live on. Wages are not keeping up with rising costs for healthcare, childcare, and housing. Too many families struggle to make ends meet, let alone put money in a college fund or go on vacation. That is what we should be focused on. We ought to be creating jobs and raising wages.

Yet, for the first 9 months of this year, this Congress attempted again and again to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would have raised premiums and deductibles, thrown millions off insurance, and made healthcare unaffordable.

Then we spent our entire fall on the Republican tax scam. Big corporations, millionaires, billionaires write the rules to make this government work for them, and Republicans are their comrades-in-arms in rigging the game against the middle class.

Just a few days ago, Senator ORRIN HATCH said: "I have a rough time wanting to spend billions and billions and trillions of dollars to help people who won't help themselves, won't lift a finger, and expect the Federal Government to do everything."

Get out of the Senate Chamber. Understand what people's lives are about today. Walk in their shoes and understand their struggles.

But this is the ugly truth of the Republican tax bill. This is what the vote was about. These are their values on display.

This tax scam is going to raise the deficit, and the Republicans will use it as an excuse to cut vital social safety net programs: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, LIHEAP, TANF, education programs, SNAP, food stamps.

Right now, funding is insufficient to provide childcare assistance to all who are eligible; yet, if we pass this tax bill, we will be under intense pressure to cut this assistance. That is what they want to do. This is wrong.

Now we are punting one of our core obligations as a Congress: funding our government programs.

This is unacceptable. It is a disturbing pattern and it is unsustainable. We should be negotiating spending levels for 2018.

The majority can never again speak about regular order. This year has been one partisan attempt after another to harm working class and middle class Americans so that they could fulfill their campaign promises.

We have no budget agreement. We have no resolve on the Children's Health Insurance Program. We have no resolve on a myriad of programs that people rely on to live their lives every day. There is no resolve on the DREAMers.

Why would we need another 2 weeks when they have had all this time to work on these issues?

The American people deserve better. I say: Shame on this Congress, and vote "no" on this continuing resolution extension.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON), the chairman of the Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to acknowledge the chairman of the Appropriations Committee (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN). Under his leadership, the committee reported and the whole House considered and passed all 12 appropriation bills for fiscal year 2018. This year is the first time since 2010 that the House passed all 12 appropriations bills.

I would hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would listen for just a minute.

In 2010, the Democrats controlled both the House, the Senate, and the White House.

Guess what. They passed all of the appropriations bills on time.

But you know what they also did?

They passed a CR until December 19. When they hadn't completed their work yet, even though they had passed all 12 appropriations bills in the House, they passed another CR until December 22. When they hadn't completed their work, guess what. They passed another CR until January.

Then, when we took the majority, we ended up finishing the appropriations process. So their outrage now is a little bit misplaced.

Now we need to finish the final details with our colleagues in the Senate,

and we must do this to ensure that the government stays open.

Continuing resolutions at this time or of any length are not anyone's ideal solution to funding our government. Ideally, all 12 appropriations bills would be enacted by October 1. That process provides the Congress with its best opportunity to set priorities across government programs, and it provides the most stability for agencies to carry out these programs in an efficient and effective manner.

But when we need more time to complete those negotiations, supporting a CR to keep our government functioning is the only responsible vote for national security, for our economy, and for the general welfare of the American people.

As chairman of the Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, I am very familiar with the positive impacts the Federal Government has in each of these areas. Whether it is the Department of Energy maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile, the Corps of Engineers dredging our ports and waterways so that goods and materials can move freely, or the Bureau of Reclamation providing tens of millions of people with water, we must avoid disruptions to these vital activities by passing this continuing resolution before us today.

Will we get all our work done by December 22?

I don't know.

But one thing I can guarantee is that we will not get it done by tomorrow, and a vote against this resolution is a vote to shut down the government. So if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to shut down the government, all they have to do is vote "no."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I really rise on behalf of the American people. All it takes is a simple pen and cooperation between appropriators to get the job done.

Just a few days ago, I listened to representatives from the city of Houston. They are only a sample of the hurting people who have suffered after hurricanes—one of the toughest hurricane seasons in the history of the United States. They indicated that there are 300,000 single-family homes and multi-family homes still under.

In my district alone, among other districts, from one part of the State to the next, there are people living in shells of a house. We have yet had a response to be able to help those individuals who have either maxed out or don't have the insurance because they were not in a flood zone. That requires us to not do a CR, but to work on the appropriations.

I have got health clinics and the Texas Children's Hospital coming to me every day wondering about the

Children's Health Insurance Program because people are hurting.

You see, I am not trying to oppose a bill for myself. I am opposing a bill that doesn't have the needs of the American people. It doesn't have healthcare in it. It doesn't have the hurricane funding in it. It doesn't have the funding we need for the Army Corps for pending projects to stop the major catastrophic flooding in Houston, Harris County; and it has low non-defense spending.

Let me be very clear. I want a prepared military. I want them to have the training and the equipment that they need. It doesn't have that as well.

So, frankly, I believe that we have to stand against a war on the American people, a tax bill that is moving along, but the appropriations is not; \$1.4 trillion taken out of the fat that does not exist so the bones of the American people's budget—so that a tax cut can go to the top 62 percent and 80 percent, but we can't have the funding that we need for the American people.

This is a war on the American people and, for once, Mr. Speaker, I have got to be on the winning side and fight for the American people.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), the chairman of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, and I look forward to having her vote in support of this continuing resolution because she is committed, as I am, and everyone in Texas is committed to making sure the money continues to flow to the victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

As Congresswoman JACKSON LEE knows, if this continuing resolution is defeated, if she votes against it, she is voting to stop the flow of money to the hurricane victims in Houston, and I know she doesn't want that to happen.

That is one of many reasons I rise today in support of this continuing resolution, because we want to ensure that the military has the funds it needs to operate.

As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, I want to be sure that the FBI and the Department of Justice has the funds that they need to continue to protect the people of America against terrorism, to protect women and children against violence, to stop the scourge of human trafficking and sex trafficking, to stop the scourge of opioid trafficking and abuse, and to stop the international drug cartels from pouring their poison into this country.

I am proud of the work that this full committee has done, and the hard work of my subcommittee—the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee—to ensure that the law enforcement agencies in this country have the funds they need; to ensure the

Department of Commerce, the National Science Foundation, and NASA have the funds they need to make sure America continues to be the world leader in scientific and space exploration.

My colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, working along with the Houston delegation, including Ms. JACKSON LEE, we are working together arm in arm with the Florida delegation to create a hurricane relief package that will ensure that the people of Texas and Florida and Puerto Rico are adequately compensated for their losses, that we repair the damage to our flood control infrastructure.

But this is going to take time, Mr. Speaker. The Senate has not passed any appropriations bills, while the House has passed all 12 of them. We do not yet have an overall spending agreement on what level of funding is necessary for the military and for domestic purposes, and we have got to finish that hurricane relief package that Ms. JACKSON LEE and all of us have been such strong advocates for.

So I urge Ms. JACKSON LEE and the entire House to vote in support of the CR to make sure our hurricane victims are taken care of and the government continues to function.

□ 1500

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, my good friend just spoke on the floor of the House, and I certainly look forward to working with him and being committed to standing against any legislation that does not provide Hurricane Harvey funding, and the CR does not.

There is nothing in the CR that has anything to do with those who are suffering, with houses that are in disrepair or destroyed, as well as other items, Army Corps of Engineers items. That is why I stand ready not to be in a dispute, but to really raise the issue with my colleagues of how urgent it is to move to the appropriations process.

I mentioned in my remarks that I am concerned as much about military preparedness as I am about nondefense discretionary spending. I want everybody to be helped. I want the American people to be helped.

So my vote, whatever it might be, is going to be to drive this engine forward to make sure resources get down to Harris County, Houston, Corpus Christi, and all the parts of Texas that are in need, and my fellow brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Florida.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER), the chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this 2-week continuing resolution. This

short-term CR is a necessary stopgap to keep the government operating until we can finalize an agreement for the top line numbers and finish our work on all 12 appropriations bills.

As some of my colleagues have noted, the House Appropriations Committee completed its work several months ago, passing all 12 of the bills out of this Chamber back in September, about 80 days ago. The other Chamber has not made the same progress, and the resolution before us today will buy us a little time to negotiate with our counterparts who are behind.

Once our budget deal is done, we will be able to begin those negotiations, and I am very confident we will be able to quickly finish our work.

I cannot overstate the importance of getting all 12 appropriations bills conferenced and across the line, but I would be remiss if I did not emphasize the critical operations funded in my bill. A final FY18 bill for the Department of Homeland Security is necessary to ensure our Nation is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other threats.

Mr. Speaker, the American people count on us to get the job done. I urge my colleagues to support this short-term CR to avert a government shutdown and allow us to complete our work.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the continuing resolution, or the CR. I want to commend Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and the committee staff for their work on this legislation which provides for continuity of government operations through December 22. This CR will provide Congress time to work with the administration on a comprehensive budget agreement, which is necessary for Congress to complete its work on the fiscal year 2018 budget.

The House Appropriations Committee has worked tirelessly this year. Each of the 12 Appropriations subcommittees scrubbed the fiscal year 2018 budget request, held numerous oversight hearings, marked up individual bills in subcommittee and full committee, and each of those bills came to the House floor where they were amended and passed in the full House.

In the case of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, which I have the privilege to serve as chairman, 80 amendments were offered by both Republicans and Democrats prior to final passage. This is a demonstration that the House Appropriations Committee continues to be the workhorse committee in the House. Even with all this work completed, a great deal of work remains.

This CR provides a bridge necessary to give our bipartisan leadership the time it needs to determine the top line number in both defense and nondefense discretionary spending for fiscal year 2018. Once that agreement is in place, my Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee and other subcommittees will get to work negotiating a comprehensive fiscal year 2018 budget. It is vitally important that we complete this work.

Another reason why I support this short-term continuing resolution is so we have time to determine the needs to ensure that sufficient funds are available to respond to the fires burning in my home State of California. There are three major fires burning today in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The largest, the Thomas fire, which is north of Santa Paula, has already burned 96,000 acres. Earlier this morning, there was only 5 percent contained.

All Californians know about the infamous Santa Ana winds. They are blowing now. When these hot winds mix with the high temperatures and low humidity we are experiencing now in southern California, they make for very dangerous conditions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, just one spark can result in devastating wildfire, putting life and property at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the continuing resolution.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), the chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, and I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge support for H.J. Res. 123, the short-term continuing resolution.

I want to begin my remarks by, frankly, congratulating the chairman. It is his leadership, and my good friend on the other side, they have put together the bill in April that actually is funding the government today. A majority of Democrats voted for that in the House and the Senate. A majority of Republicans voted for it. The President signed it.

Under the chairman's leadership, all 12 bills passed well before the deadline that fund the government of September 30. He has been prepared to negotiate for 80 days. He hasn't been sitting around in those 80 days. He also passed two disaster relief bills and is working on a third one right now. I think you probably have the hardest working chairman and committee in Congress. The rest of the government, the Senate

in particular, needs to catch up with us.

Now, to their credit, they are actually sitting down with the President today, and we are beginning to see some progress. We need this additional time to allow us to fund the government.

To my friends who oppose it, what is your alternative? Shutting down the government? I know they don't want to do that. They have always argued against it. I have always thought they were right when they argued against it, but if we follow their advice and reject this amendment, the government will shut down on Friday. That doesn't do any American any good.

Mr. Speaker, the chairman has offered the responsible alternative here. I urge its passage.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank the chairman for, again, bringing the 12 bills, once again, through the process. This is just a short-term continuing resolution. It is a clean date extension, and this CR will give an opportunity to continue to move forward quickly, by the way, towards finalizing appropriations bills.

It is important to note that, for example, in the Transportation and HUD bill, we considered 22 amendments in committee, 39 amendments here on the floor. You see, this has been an open and fair process the entire way. Now we must—we must—move quickly to finish the job and conference all 12 of these bills.

In the meantime, however, we must keep the government open and funded. This is especially, by the way, important now that our communities are pulling together to recover from three devastating hurricanes, as well as the thousands of families threatened by raging wildfires in California.

Look, we can't take the risk of short-changing our first responders, our military, given the natural disasters at home and the threats from our adversaries abroad. A vote against this CR would do just that.

Again, just for the Transportation and Housing segment, this CR will support ongoing transportation and safety missions, air traffic control, housing for vulnerable citizens, including our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge a "yes" vote on the CR. We cannot let those folks down. We cannot shut the Federal Government down, and it allows us to finish the job, and I thank the chairman for his steadfast leadership.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), the

chairman of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to join my colleagues in urging the House to pass the continuing resolution before us. This is not the course of action any of us would prefer, obviously, but the House passed all 12 appropriations bills, and it was on the path to complete action on appropriations before the start of fiscal year 2018, but our ambition was overtaken by events, whether you want to blame the ponderous pace of the Senate or time devoted to important issues like ObamaCare or tax reform.

In any event, we need to pass this short-term continuing resolution to prevent disruption of important governmental programs and create a window in which budget caps discussions can occur.

All of us stand ready to conference our appropriations bills once a debate on budget caps is resolved.

I want to emphasize how important it is for us to pass each of the 12 appropriations bills. It is important that each be enacted rather than cherry-picking a few that may have the broadest support. It is dangerous to allow any part of the government to run on CR autopilot for a full year, when we have worked hard to include oversight provisions and targeted funding reductions in our bills. All of these would be lost with a yearlong CR.

And speaking about the programs in the Military Construction-VA bill, which I chair, a full-year CR prevents DOD from starting 204 new projects. This is the core of our MILCON program. Each year we appropriate funding for hundreds of new projects. DOD can manage in a short-term CR, but a full-year CR would be devastating.

On the VA side of our bill, while some of the VA programs are advance-funded to prevent a government shutdown from cutting off services to veterans, there are important new VA activities that would be blocked by a full-year CR, like the new electronic health record VA is unveiling, or the Choice Program, or its successor for care outside the VA system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to vote "yes" for this short-term measure to give us the time and tools we need to move forward on passage of all 12 appropriations bills, and also to avert a government shutdown. Again, I urge an affirmative vote on the CR.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the distinguished chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee from New Jersey for his great work on this and so many other issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the continuing resolution and espe-

cially to highlight a very important short-term provision in here that provides certainty for children, families, and States that rely on the Children's Health Insurance Program, known as CHIP.

This adjustment, which was introduced by Mr. COSTELLO from Pennsylvania and Mr. EMMER from Minnesota, will provide the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services with greater flexibility over existing dollars so that the agencies can ensure that CHIP programs across the country, including now in my home State of Oregon, can continue to have vital Federal funding that they need this month to continue CHIP.

This emergency funding will help families and States while Congress finishes the job of providing funding for children's health insurance, public health priorities, our community health centers, Medicare extenders that seniors rely on. All that work needs to get done.

It is important to note, we did not arrive at this place of needing a stop-gap funding resolution because this House failed to act. We acted. We did our part. We did our part. I am disappointed that the House has passed CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act, which passed this Chamber a couple months ago with bipartisan support, has yet to be hammered out in the Senate. Of course, over there they need 60 votes to get anything done. So a minority of the minority can lock things up, which they have done.

What makes the inaction on CHIP even more frustrating is that the House-passed bill mirrors the bipartisan policy framework that was voted out of the Senate Finance Committee under the able leadership of Chairman HATCH more than 2 months ago. Unfortunately, though, again, Democrats over there have failed to agree on how to fund these programs. That is different than what we did.

Here in the House, the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act delivers high-quality healthcare, peace of mind to millions of Americans, providing 5 years of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is one of the longest extensions ever for the program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, it would mean continued access to healthcare for approximately 9 million children across the country who are enrolled in CHIP, another 122,700 in Oregon alone.

Our House bill was fully funded. We did the heavy lift. We funded it through responsible reforms like asking seniors who make \$40,000 a month, that is \$480,000 a year, to pay about \$135 more for their Medicare. Rich seniors pay a little more, and I am sure these grandmothers and grandfathers would do that to help kids afford their health

insurance, and that is what happened here.

Mr. Speaker, we paid it. It is ready to go. We need the Senate to act. I commend the Appropriations Committee and the leadership there for putting this provision in so we won't let kids fall through the gap.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), chairman of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess, today I was astonished to read an article in one of the online magazines that House Democratic leadership had asked their Members to vote against this stopgap funding bill because of the stalemate over the funding of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We just heard the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee detail the work that has already been done on this bill.

Let me assure this Congress, there are probably people in here saying: What do you mean? We voted on this bill. We voted this bill out of the House weeks ago. It was offset. Everything that the Senate asked for, they were delivered: the 5-year timeframe, the funding levels the Senate asked for. They got everything they wanted.

Yes, it was offset in a responsible fashion, but now we are told House Democratic leadership says vote "no" on this continuing resolution because we don't like the stopgap funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

What in the devil do they want to happen? We did our work. We did our work. We had our legislative hearings on this bill in the summertime. We did delay things, unfortunately, 1 day. There was a shooting at a House baseball game—you may remember that—that caused us some delay, but we came back 2 weeks later. We got our work done.

We had a responsible bill. It was reflective of everything that was requested by the Senate. It was offset, as was requested by a number of Members of this body, and it has languished over in the Senate since the early part of October. It is time for the Senate to take up and pass that bill so we don't have to have this continued discussion.

This continuing resolution is important because it stops a problem that some of our States are going to face. It was completely unnecessary. The other body could fix it, and they should.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER).

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee. I appreciate the time.

Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Minnesota, the Children's Health Insurance Program, better known as CHIP, provides coverage for thousands of low-income, pregnant women as well as new mothers and their children.

When funds for my State's CHIP program ran out, these Minnesotans were left wondering the fate of their healthcare. That is why we teamed up with Representative RYAN COSTELLO, Chairman WALDEN, and Subcommittee Chair BURGESS to introduce the CHIP Stability Act to bring certainty and support to Minnesotans and millions of families across the country. I am so grateful that our responsible, short-term funding solution is incorporated into this continuing resolution today.

But let me be clear: This is not enough. When the House passed the Championing Healthy Kids Act, a fully paid-for and long-term CHIP reauthorization solution, we put politics aside and America's most vulnerable first. It is my hope that the Senate will do the same very soon.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this continuing resolution so CHIP recipients are able to receive the coverage they need.

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

I reiterate, the Democrats have said all year there must be a deal to raise spending caps in order to enact appropriation bills. Instead of heeding that advice, the majority is once again stumbling from crisis to crisis trying to fund the government 2 weeks at a time.

Without a path forward to keep our country secure and make investments to grow our economy, we should immediately lift the caps on defense and nondefense spending.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this responsible, necessary legislation. Let's keep the Federal Government open for business to serve our constituents across the Nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I voted against H.J. Res. 123, a stop-gap resolution that keeps the government open for another two weeks, through December 22, 2017. Once again Republicans, who control both the House and the Senate, cannot get their work done. Instead they continue to kick the can down the road.

The resolution keeps funding transportation at last year's levels rather than the higher funding levels provided by the FAST Act for 2018, meaning it cuts the mandated increases in transportation investment by more than \$950 million for Federal-aid highways and almost \$200 million for public transit investment. As a result, this bill withholds \$1.2 billion from

Federal highway, public transit, and highway safety investments—preventing States, local governments, and public transit agencies from making critical investments, letting contracts, creating good-paying jobs, and working to relieve the Nation's crippling traffic congestion.

A two-week resolution gives Republicans more time to complete their massive tax scam bill, which benefits corporations and the wealthy at the cost of middle class workers, seniors, students, and our national debt. PAUL RYAN has said after the bill passes, Republicans will move to cut Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

Further, the resolution does not reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Instead, it includes a technical fix to ensure no state runs out of CHIP funding in December. If Congress does not reauthorize CHIP by December 31st, Oregon will not have enough funds to fully fund CHIP on January 1, 2018.

The resolution does not include a permanent fire borrowing fix or additional disaster aid for communities devastated by wildfire or other natural disasters. Oregon suffered through one of the worst fire seasons in decades. Congress has twice provided USFS emergency funding to repay non-wildfire accounts this year. Without a permanent fire borrowing fix, USFS will continue to have to rob forest management accounts to pay for fire suppression—meaning our forests will continue to be overgrown and infested with insects and disease, powder kegs waiting to burn next year.

Finally, the resolution does not include any solutions for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Roughly 800,000 law-abiding individuals are at risk of deportation otherwise. Congress must work together to ensure that individuals who were brought illegally into this country as children, through no fault of their own, are not targeted for deportation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is extremely disheartening that this Congress is once again debating the merits of a temporary funding measure to keep the federal government funded. The American people sent their elected representatives to Washington to fulfill basic promises to fund the federal government and provide for the safety and prosperity of all Americans. A stopgap funding bill like the two-week extension before us today falls drastically short of our responsibilities to properly serve our constituents.

A continuing resolution should only be used as a temporary measure. Instead, the passage of CRs has become regular order. That is not how Congress was intended to work. This continued inaction is costing taxpayers billions in wasted dollars, not to mention the opportunity costs associated with short-term extensions. I find the complete lack of bipartisan talks in Congress alarming, particularly since countless families, seniors, and others rely on these programs for their wellbeing and safety.

In addition to our basic responsibility to fund the government, it is vitally important that we work to lift the crippling budget caps that have

been holding back critical investments in our nation's infrastructure, benefits for our veterans, and other defense and nondefense priorities. Democrats in Congress were promised an opportunity to negotiate new spending caps after the last CR was adopted in September. Instead, the only spending measures we have seen leave this Chamber are partisan bills that can never reasonably expect to make it into law.

There also needs to be a recognition that many Americans have come to rely on the federal government for basic services or benefits they were promised after serving in our military. For example, I was deeply troubled by the Administration's recent effort to eliminate \$460 million for the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program, which provides rent assistance to homeless veterans and their families. It was only until veterans' advocates, state officials, and Members of Congress protested the dramatic reduction did VA Secretary Shulkin reverse course on the planned cuts.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans in Congress are putting politics over the wellbeing of our nation by passing temporary spending bills while also proposing dramatic cuts to social programs. Ultimately, it will be the American people and the U.S. economy who will be stuck dealing with the consequences. I urge my colleagues across the aisle to come together to engage in good-faith negotiations with me and my Democratic colleagues on bipartisan, full-year legislation to fund the federal government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 647, the previous question is ordered on the joint resolution.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution 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 joint resolution.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. 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.

SMALL BUSINESS MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, SALES, AND BROKERAGE SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 647, I call up the bill (H.R. 477) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 647, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee

Print 115-43 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 477

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 "Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REGISTRATION EXEMPTION FOR MERGER AND ACQUISITION BROKERS.

Section 15(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78o(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(13) REGISTRATION EXEMPTION FOR MERGER AND ACQUISITION BROKERS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an M&A broker shall be exempt from registration under this section.

"(B) EXCLUDED ACTIVITIES.—An M&A broker is not exempt from registration under this paragraph if such broker does any of the following:

"(i) Directly or indirectly, in connection with the transfer of ownership of an eligible privately held company, receives, holds, transmits, or has custody of the funds or securities to be exchanged by the parties to the transaction.

"(ii) Engages on behalf of an issuer in a public offering of any class of securities that is registered, or is required to be registered, with the Commission under section 12 or with respect to which the issuer files, or is required to file, periodic information, documents, and reports under subsection (d).

"(iii) Engages on behalf of any party in a transaction involving a public shell company.

"(C) DISQUALIFICATIONS.—An M&A broker is not exempt from registration under this paragraph if such broker is subject to—

"(i) suspension or revocation of registration under paragraph (4);

"(ii) a statutory disqualification described in section 3(a)(39);

"(iii) a disqualification under the rules adopted by the Commission under section 926 of the Investor Protection and Securities Reform Act of 2010 (15 U.S.C. 77d note); or

"(iv) a final order described in paragraph (4)(H).

"(D) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to limit any other authority of the Commission to exempt any person, or any class of persons, from any provision of this title, or from any provision of any rule or regulation thereunder.

"(E) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

"(i) CONTROL.—The term 'control' means the power, directly or indirectly, to direct the management or policies of a company, whether through ownership of securities, by contract, or otherwise. There is a presumption of control for any person who—

"(I) is a director, general partner, member or manager of a limited liability company, or officer exercising executive responsibility (or has similar status or functions);

"(II) has the right to vote 20 percent or more of a class of voting securities or the power to sell or direct the sale of 20 percent or more of a class of voting securities; or

"(III) in the case of a partnership or limited liability company, has the right to receive upon dissolution, or has contributed, 20 percent or more of the capital.

"(ii) ELIGIBLE PRIVATELY HELD COMPANY.—The term 'eligible privately held company' means a privately held company that meets both of the following conditions:

"(I) The company does not have any class of securities registered, or required to be registered, with the Commission under section 12 or with respect to which the company files, or is required to file, periodic information, documents, and reports under subsection (d).

"(II) In the fiscal year ending immediately before the fiscal year in which the services of the M&A broker are initially engaged with respect to the securities transaction, the company meets either or both of the following conditions (determined in accordance with the historical financial accounting records of the company):

"(aa) The earnings of the company before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization are less than \$25,000,000.

"(bb) The gross revenues of the company are less than \$250,000,000.

"(iii) M&A BROKER.—The term 'M&A broker' means a broker, and any person associated with a broker, engaged in the business of effecting securities transactions solely in connection with the transfer of ownership of an eligible privately held company, regardless of whether the broker acts on behalf of a seller or buyer, through the purchase, sale, exchange, issuance, repurchase, or redemption of, or a business combination involving, securities or assets of the eligible privately held company, if the broker reasonably believes that—

"(I) upon consummation of the transaction, any person acquiring securities or assets of the eligible privately held company, acting alone or in concert, will control and, directly or indirectly, will be active in the management of the eligible privately held company or the business conducted with the assets of the eligible privately held company; and

"(II) if any person is offered securities in exchange for securities or assets of the eligible privately held company, such person will, prior to becoming legally bound to consummate the transaction, receive or have reasonable access to the most recent fiscal year-end financial statements of the issuer of the securities as customarily prepared by the management of the issuer in the normal course of operations and, if the financial statements of the issuer are audited, reviewed, or compiled, any related statement by the independent accountant, a balance sheet dated not more than 120 days before the date of the offer, and information pertaining to the management, business, results of operations for the period covered by the foregoing financial statements, and material loss contingencies of the issuer.

"(iv) PUBLIC SHELL COMPANY.—The term 'public shell company' is a company that at the time of a transaction with an eligible privately held company—

"(I) has any class of securities registered, or required to be registered, with the Commission under section 12 or that is required to file reports pursuant to subsection (d);

"(II) has no or nominal operations; and

"(III) has—

"(aa) no or nominal assets;

"(bb) assets consisting solely of cash and cash equivalents; or

"(cc) assets consisting of any amount of cash and cash equivalents and nominal other assets.

"(F) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—On the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017, and every 5 years thereafter, each dollar amount in subparagraph (E)(ii)(II) shall be adjusted by—

"(I) dividing the annual value of the Employment Cost Index For Wages and Salaries, Private Industry Workers (or any successor index), as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the adjustment is being made by the annual value of such index (or successor) for the calendar year ending December 31, 2012; and

"(II) multiplying such dollar amount by the quotient obtained under subclause (I).

"(ii) ROUNDING.—Each dollar amount determined under clause (i) shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$100,000."

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and any amendment made by this Act shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part A of House Report 115-443, 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 Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, if it weren't for the last moment, a lot of things wouldn't get done in life, but last evening, the ranking member and I came to a meeting of the minds on a path forward for H.R. 477. So in the interest of efficiency of time for the House, I want to thank the ranking member for her willingness to work on a bipartisan basis to move this bill forward.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, our small businesses labor under a gazillion regulations, some of which are quite good and quite helpful; but, in the aggregate, they can be a very heavy burden and cost upon our small businesses. One is an unnecessary registration system for small business brokers.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) for his leadership to ensure that they have a simplified registration regime, which can help our small businesses as they are ready to engage in sales or mergers or other transactions. It is a good, bipartisan piece of legislation. I thank him for his leadership.

Again, I thank the ranking member for working on a bipartisan basis, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

H.R. 477 seeks to provide a statutory exemption from registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, for certain brokers who facilitate the merger or acquisition of small businesses, known as M&A brokers.

When Congress first considered this exemption in a similar bill during the 113th Congress, our goal was to prompt the SEC to provide regulatory relief for these brokers from ill-fitting restrictions designed for persons helping companies raise capital rather than facilitating their transfer of ownership.

We succeeded. Two weeks after the House passed that bill, the SEC issued a no-action letter, which contained staff's view that, if an M&A broker complied with the terms and conditions of the letter, it would recommend that the SEC not take enforcement action against that broker for failing to register with the Commission.

Specifically, the no-action letter required the M&A broker to abide by certain commonsense restrictions to prevent such an exemption from being misused to raise capital or abused by bad actors.

According to the bill's proponents, H.R. 477 is still necessary to provide legal certainty since the no-action letter is merely the nonbinding opinion of SEC staff. I understand that concern; however, the bill inexplicably omits several of the conditions contained in the no-action letter that protect small businesses and their investors.

I am pleased that this Congress, Representative SHERMAN and Representative HUIZENGA have worked on a bipartisan basis to add these protections back in through an amendment. If so amended, I will support H.R. 477, which would strike the right balance between regulatory relief and the protection of small companies and their investors.

In particular, the amended bill would require an M&A broker that represents both the seller and the buyer to provide them with clear, written disclosures and obtain their consent to that conflict of interest; prohibit M&A brokers from misusing the exemption to raise capital rather than transfer ownership of small businesses; prohibit shell companies from using the exemption as a backdoor way to take a small business public; and prohibit fraudsters and other bad actors from using the exemption.

In addition, the bill would not change the statutory definition of broker, thereby preserving the SEC's ability to investigate and bring enforcement actions for violations of the antifraud provisions in the securities laws.

The bill also would limit the relief to mergers and acquisitions involving companies with less than \$250 million in annual gross revenues, which is the total income of the company, or \$25 million in annual earnings, which is the amount of income minus expenses. The amendment would then provide the SEC with the authority to modify these thresholds as necessary or appropriate in the public interest or for the protection of investors.

As our Nation's baby boomers head into retirement and look to sell their privately owned businesses to a new generation of entrepreneurs, it is important that they are able to do so in

an efficient and cost-effective manner. If amended, H.R. 477 would allow them to do just that, and so I would support the bill.

I would like to thank my colleagues. I would like to thank Mr. HENSARLING. I would like to thank Mr. SHERMAN.

This is an important bill for all of us. We are all so supportive of our small businesses. We want them to do well, and we do not want them to be hindered by unnecessary regulations.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the distinguished chairman of the Small Business Committee.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 477, and I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING and Chairman HUIZENGA for their hard work on this effort.

While we are finally seeing improvements in our economy, we will not experience its full potential until we fully unleash American small businesses.

As chairman of the House Small Business Committee, I frequently hear from small-business owners that regulations are preventing their growth and expansion. The bill before us today addresses one of the many regulatory hurdles that stand in the way of small business development. Reducing red tape on brokers would decrease the burdens on small businesses that are going through the next phase of their growth, including transitions in ownership.

This should be a time of expansion and increased opportunities, not higher cost and bureaucratic red tape. Let's work together on behalf of our Nation's small businesses so they can continue to grow today and create the jobs of tomorrow.

□ 1530

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), who is the sponsor of the legislation and the chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investments.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman's hard work on this.

The mission of the Securities and Exchange Commission is to protect investors; maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets; and facilitate capital formation. As part of that mission, the SEC was mandated by law to conduct an annual forum focusing on small business capital formation.

For nearly a decade, the SEC Government-Business Forum on Small Business Capital Formation has highlighted the merger and acquisition broker proposal as one of its top recommendations to help small businesses.

The MAB proposal would address securities regulation of business brokers

and merger and acquisition advisers who are in the business of facilitating the purchase and sale of privately held small companies. This proposal would significantly reduce their Federal regulation compliance costs, which can initially exceed \$150,000 per broker and, after that, cost \$75,000 per additional year. However, the SEC has never acted on this, despite their recommendation.

As we see more and more baby boomers retire, it has been estimated that \$10 trillion—with a T—of equity is locked up into these small, family-owned typically privately held businesses.

Today the Federal securities regulations require an M&A broker to be registered and regulated by the SEC and FINRA just like a Wall Street investment banker buying or selling publicly traded companies.

Anyone who is trying to sell a hometown business, like a family hardware store, a jewelry store, or even a pizza parlor, suddenly has to be treated like they are being sold or bought by a Wall Street investment bank regardless of their size. We don't think that is right.

But the impact of this legislation is meaningful because it reduces transaction costs, promoting competition among those small business brokers and facilitating private business merger, acquisitions, and sales of these small businesses. This small business initiative promotes economic growth and development.

So we have worked very closely across the aisle with our colleagues, and I thank them. Even in today's politically charged environment that we have, it is nice to show the American people that we can actually do some positive, efficient, and effective initiatives with bipartisan support.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives POSEY, HIGGINS, SHERMAN, and MALONEY, as well as Chairman HENSARLING and Ranking Member WATERS for their efforts to reach a bipartisan consensus and to get the important legislation across the finish line.

I have been working on this now for three Congresses, and we believe that we have a very positive spot here where we can all support this. I want to encourage my colleagues to support and vote for H.R. 477 and demonstrate that Congress can actually work in a bipartisan manner and get some things done for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift consideration.

Mr. HENSARLING. How much time do I have remaining, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying that, again, this is a commonsense reform. It is a balanced reform. It is good for small business. It is bipartisan. I urge all of my colleagues to adopt H.R. 477.

Again, I thank the ranking member and the gentleman from California for

their leadership to work on a bipartisan basis.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. SHERMAN

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. 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 2, line 18, strike "public".

Page 2, line 19, insert before the period the following "other than a business combination related shell company".

Page 2, after line 19, insert the following:

(iv) Directly, or indirectly through any of its affiliates, provides financing related to the transfer of ownership of an eligible privately held company.

(v) Assists any party to obtain financing from an unaffiliated third party without—

(I) complying with all other applicable laws in connection with such assistance, including, if applicable, Regulation T (12 C.F.R. 220 et seq.); and

(II) disclosing any compensation in writing to the party.

(vi) Represents both the buyer and the seller in the same transaction without providing clear written disclosure as to the parties the broker represents and obtaining written consent from both parties to the joint representation.

(vii) Facilitates a transaction with a group of buyers formed with the assistance of the M&A broker to acquire the eligible privately held company.

(viii) Engages in a transaction involving the transfer of ownership of an eligible privately held company to a passive buyer or group of passive buyers. For purposes of the preceding sentence, a buyer that is actively involved in managing the acquired company is not a passive buyer, regardless of whether such buyer is itself owned by passive beneficial owners.

(ix) Binds a party to a transfer of ownership of an eligible privately held company.

Page 3, after line 16, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent clauses accordingly):

"(I) BUSINESS COMBINATION RELATED SHELL COMPANY.—The term 'business combination related shell company' means a shell company that is formed by an entity that is not a shell company—

"(I) solely for the purpose of changing the corporate domicile of that entity solely within the United States; or

"(II) solely for the purpose of completing a business combination transaction (as defined under section 230.165(f) of title 17, Code of Federal Regulations) among one or more entities other than the company itself, none of which is a shell company."

Page 4, line 1, strike "officer exercising" and insert "corporate officer of a corporation or limited liability company, and exercises".

Page 4, line 4, strike "20" and insert "25".

Page 4, line 7, strike "20" and insert "25".

Page 4, line 12, strike "20" and insert "25".

Page 5, after line 18, insert the following flush-left text: "For purposes of this subclause, the Commission may by rule modify the dollar figures if the Commission determines that such a modification is necessary or appropriate in the public interest or for the protection of investors."

Page 7, strike lines 15 through 25 and insert the following:

"(v) SHELL COMPANY.—The term 'shell company' means a company that at the time of a transaction with an eligible privately held company—

"(I) has no or nominal operations; and
"(II) has—".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 647, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 477, the Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) for working with me on this amendment. It has been a pleasure to work with him on this bill over a period of three Congresses.

With the adoption of this amendment, the bill will be in a form that will secure support from both sides of the aisle, not only my support, but, more importantly, the ranking member's support.

In the 113th Congress, the House of Representatives supported a similar bill to provide relief to the M&A community by providing that, in certain circumstances, a small business merger or acquisitions broker would not have to register.

As a result of that action by the House, which was not matched by action in the Senate, the Securities and Exchange Commission understood the wisdom of this House and introduced a no-action letter dated January 2014 to provide the same level of relief requested by the House.

In their no-action letter, however, the SEC placed several limitations on the exemption from registration that were not included in the House bill, but, with this amendment, will be included in this year's bill.

These limitations provided additional protections for investors and small businesses. It excluded bad actors and shell companies. It prohibited passive buyers in the M&A transaction to ensure that companies cannot use this exemption from registration as a capital-raising mechanism. It prohibited an M&A broker from providing financing for the transfer. It prohibited M&A brokers from binding a party to a transfer of ownership. I think this is most important: it required that, to be eligible, a broker would have to disclose to both parties and get their consents if they are being paid by both parties. So if there is both a seller's commission and a buyer's commission, you have to tell the buyer and the seller.

Now, those who want to step outside this safe harbor can simply register. But those who will be exempt from registration need to comply with these six elements.

The Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act will codify the SEC's no-action letter and provide certainty to

small business merger and acquisition brokers.

In the last Congress, I opposed the bill because it included only two of the six restrictions that were included by the SEC. With this amendment, the bill will include all of the restrictions. This is a bipartisan amendment and it includes all the limitations of the SEC's no-action letter. It has been a pleasure to work with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) on it.

In addition, our amendment provides that the SEC has the rulemaking authority to determine the correct thresholds for gross revenues and of EBITDA—that is to say, earnings of the company before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization—in determining whether a company qualifies as an eligible company under this bill.

The SEC is the agency with the expertise to do this. I encourage them to examine this issue closely and to ensure that any threshold in place is evidence-based. I encourage them in future years to inflation-adjust whatever limitation dollar figures they have in their regulations.

I am pleased to offer this amendment with my colleague, Mr. HUIZENGA, whom I may have previously identified as the gentleman from Michigan. I offer it also with the support of the ranking member. I urge the passage of this amendment, as it will ensure bipartisan support for the bill.

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

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the amendment and the work of Mr. SHERMAN, Mrs. MALONEY, the ranking member, and, obviously, our chairman as well. So I do agree and accept this amendment as a friendly amendment.

It does confirm what the no-action letter has put in place. I believe it properly makes sure that the SEC's role is preserved but that Congress has its imprimatur on this as well. It aligns the bill with the principles outlined in the SEC's no-action letter.

I think this is a good, reasonable amendment. I am pleased to work with the gentleman from California as well. I am glad that we can get this settled in a timely manner.

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan, 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 gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

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. HENSARLING. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1614

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at 4 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passage of H.R. 477;

Passage of H.J. Res. 123; and

The motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2658.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

SMALL BUSINESS MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, SALES, AND BROKERAGE SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 477) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies, 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.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 426, nays 0, not voting 6, as follows:

Abraham	DeGette	Johnson (GA)
Adams	Delaney	Johnson (LA)
Aderholt	DeLauro	Johnson (OH)
Aguilar	DeBene	Johnson, E. B.
Allen	Demings	Johnson, Sam
Amash	Denham	Jones
Amodei	Dent	Jordan
Arrington	DeSantis	Joyce (OH)
Babin	DeSaulnier	Kaptur
Bacon	DesJarlais	Katko
Banks (IN)	Deutch	Keating
Barletta	Diaz-Balart	Kelly (IL)
Barr	Dingell	Kelly (MS)
Barragán	Doggett	Kelly (PA)
Barton	Donovan	Khanna
Bass	Doyle, Michael	Kihuen
Beatty	F.	Kildee
Bera	Duffy	Kilmer
Bergman	Duncan (SC)	Kind
Beyer	Duncan (TN)	King (IA)
Biggs	Dunn	King (NY)
Bilirakis	Ellison	Kinzinger
Bishop (GA)	Emmer	Knight
Bishop (MI)	Engel	Krishnamoorthi
Bishop (UT)	Eshoo	Kuster (NH)
Black	Espallat	Kustoff (TN)
Blackburn	Estes (KS)	Labrador
Blum	Esty (CT)	LaHood
Blumenauer	Evans	LaMalfa
Blunt Rochester	Farenthold	Lamborn
Bonamici	Faso	Lance
Bost	Ferguson	Langevin
Boyle, Brendan	Fitzpatrick	Larsen (WA)
F.	Fleischmann	Larson (CT)
Brady (PA)	Flores	Latta
Brady (TX)	Fortenberry	Lawrence
Brat	Foster	Lee
Brooks (AL)	Fox	Levin
Brooks (IN)	Frankel (FL)	Lewis (GA)
Brown (MD)	Franks (AZ)	Lewis (MN)
Buchanan	Frelinghuysen	Lieu, Ted
Buck	Fudge	Lipinski
Bucshon	Gabbard	LoBiondo
Budd	Gaetz	Loeb
Burgess	Gallagher	Loftgren
Bustos	Gallego	Long
Butterfield	Garamendi	Loudermilk
Byrne	Garrett	Love
Calvert	Gianforte	Lowenthal
Capuano	Gibbs	Lowey
Carbajal	Gohmert	Lucas
Cárdenas	Gomez	Luetkemeyer
Carson (IN)	Gonzalez (TX)	Lujan Grisham,
Carter (GA)	Goodlatte	M.
Carter (TX)	Gosar	Luján, Ben Ray
Cartwright	Gottheimer	Lynch
Castor (FL)	Gowdy	MacArthur
Castro (TX)	Granger	Maloney,
Chabot	Graves (GA)	Carolyn B.
Cheney	Graves (LA)	Maloney, Sean
Chu, Judy	Graves (MO)	Marchant
Ciçilline	Green, Al	Marino
Clark (MA)	Griffith	Marshall
Clarke (NY)	Grijalva	Massie
Clay	Grothman	Mast
Cleaver	Guthrie	Matsui
Clyburn	Gutiérrez	McCarthy
Coffman	Hanabusa	McCauley
Cohen	Handel	McClintock
Cole	Harper	McCollum
Collins (GA)	Harris	McEachin
Collins (NY)	Hartzler	McGovern
Comer	Hastings	McHenry
Comstock	Heck	McKinley
Conaway	Hensarling	McMorris
Connolly	Herrera Beutler	Rodgers
Cook	Hice, Jody B.	McNerney
Cooper	Higgins (LA)	McSally
Correa	Higgins (NY)	Meadows
Costa	Hill	Meehan
Costello (PA)	Himes	Meeks
Courtney	Holding	Meng
Cramer	Hollingsworth	Messer
Crawford	Hoyer	Mitchell
Crist	Hudson	Moolenaar
Crowley	Huffman	Mooney (WV)
Cuellar	Huizenga	Moore
Culberson	Hultgren	Moulton
Cummings	Hunter	Mullin
Curbelo (FL)	Hurd	Murphy (FL)
Curtis	Issa	Nadler
Davidson	Jackson Lee	Napolitano
Davis (CA)	Jayapal	Neal
Davis, Danny	Jeffries	Newhouse
Davis, Rodney	Jenkins (KS)	Noem
DeFazio	Jenkins (WV)	Nolan

[Roll No. 669]

YEAS—426

Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
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)
Richmond
Robby
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)
Sanchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sevel
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suzuki
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney

Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barietta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Culberson
Luetkemeyer
Curtis
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
Foxy
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Gianforte
Gibbs
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy

NOT VOTING—6

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)

Green, Gene
Kennedy

Lawson (FL)
Pocan

□ 1640

Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Messrs. CAPUANO, LYNCH, Miss RICE of New York, Messrs. SIRE, HUFFMAN, and CARDENAS changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 235, nays 193, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 670]

YEAS—235

Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Ryan (WI)
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suzuki
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney

Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barietta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Culberson
Luetkemeyer
Curtis
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
Foxy
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Gianforte
Gibbs
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barietta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Culberson
Luetkemeyer
Curtis
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
Foxy
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Gianforte
Gibbs
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Biggs
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.

Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Ryan (WI)
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney

Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Robby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Russell
Rutherford
Ruth (WI)
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney

Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)

NAYS—193

Brady (PA)
Brooks (AL)
Brown (MD)
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)

Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio

DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espallat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallo
Garamendi
Garrett
Gohmert
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gosar
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harris
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating

Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebach
Loftgren
Lowenthal
Lowe
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi

Perlmutter
Perry
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schultz
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Suzuki
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman
Schultz
Schultz

NOT VOTING—5

Bridenstine
Brownley (CA)

Kennedy
Lawson (FL)

Pocan

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1647

So the joint resolution was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the purpose of making a scheduling announcement.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank all the Members for their flexibility in coming back to town this past Monday. As such, Members are advised that votes are no longer expected in the House tomorrow, Friday, December 8.

Members are further advised to be prepared for the House to be in session the week of December 18. First votes of that week will be expected at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 18.

We all know we have important work to do, including passing the historic Tax Cuts and Jobs Act for the American people. I think that will be an excellent Christmas present.

If there are any further changes to our schedule, I will be sure to let all Members know.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCCARTHY. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for yielding.

Normally, of course, we would have a scheduling discussion tomorrow at the end of business, but in light of the fact that we are not meeting tomorrow, we will not have that colloquy.

Mr. Speaker, can the leader give us some indication of what might be considered next week? As we know, there are numerous items that need to be resolved before we leave here this year, and we need to obviously have some BCA, Budget Control Act, numbers arrived at so that the Appropriations Committee can move forward either on an omnibus or appropriations bills. We need to do flood insurance. We need to do FISA section 702. We need to do, obviously, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and other matters.

Mr. Speaker, can the leader, who has just said that we will be in—is he anticipating 4 days next week? Four days next week, and presumably 4 days or 5 days the following week? So let's say we have 9 legislative days.

Mr. Speaker, can the leader give us some idea of how we might accomplish the work that needs to be done in that timeframe?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I will miss the colloquy tomorrow. I always look forward to speaking with my friend.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman knows, the Rules Committee has met, so we will see a Financial Services bill that they met on. Members will also get a list of all the suspensions. That will be by close of business tomorrow.

But the gentleman is right. There is a lot of work to be done. We have passed CHIP going forward. As the gentleman knows, in this bill that we just voted on, for those who voted yes, it continues funding for them for the rest of this year.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman knows, this House has passed all 12 appropriations bills, but we have more work to get done.

Knowing my friend is concerned, coming from the Appropriations Committee as well, I would hope you join with us. We would like to see the Senate take some actions. I know leadership from both sides of the aisle has just visited with the President. I hope we can come to an agreement so we can finish this out.

I also hope the gentleman would join with me in encouraging the Senate, not just on the appropriations bills, but the 352 bills that we have out of this House sitting over there.

Mr. Speaker, the part that the American people must know, most of those bills have very broad bipartisan support.

I am looking forward to a busy 9 days. It will not come up next week,

but if it could, I would bring it up as soon as we come out of conference because I do believe the American people are waiting for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to continue what we have gone through.

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

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I hear the majority leader's hope that we will move appropriations bills on the Senate side. Obviously, one of the things that we have been trying to work on for the last 90 days, Mr. Speaker, has been trying to get to an agreement on the numbers that will replace the sequester numbers that certainly many people on your side don't want for the defense side of the budget.

Obviously, we believe that we had an agreement over the last 4 years for parity in spending. We would hope that we could reach an agreement similar to that agreement.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Mr. McCONNELL, the majority leader, could bring appropriations bills to the floor, and he has not done that. We don't control the Senate, and those bills have not been brought to the floor. You can't pass them if they aren't brought to the floor.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, they need to be bipartisan bills, because the history is that the majority party, Mr. Speaker, has not been able to get a majority of votes. They did today, but the history is, since 2011, that has not happened; therefore, failing that, you need to work in a bipartisan fashion, Mr. Speaker, the Senate does, in order to get these bills done.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I won't go into all the pieces of legislation that are pending that need to pass for the welfare of our country, the security of our country, and the assistance to our people. I would hope that we could proceed and proceed now. Frankly, I am available tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure others are, to start talking about how we reach agreement on these critical issues, because 9 days, as we all know, is not very much time.

We have had 90 days. We unanimously voted for a continuing CR. Ninety of your members voted against it. I say respectfully, the reason we got 90 days to hopefully reach agreement on a number of critical issues, critical to us, and I think critical to you, was because every one of us on this side of the aisle voted for the CR, and 90 of the Republicans voted against it. It could never have gotten to a majority but for our votes.

I would hope that now that we have another 2 weeks that we start sitting down together, reaching agreement, and are prepared next week to start voting on bipartisan bills that both sides can support. Neither side will get

all it wants, but that is the way I think that this House will proceed as a credit to the House and a credit to the American people.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is right, we have a great amount of work to do. We just voted on a bill that, I will guarantee you, 221 Members on this side who carried it, was not the bill they were seeking. They do not want to look at the troops and say they are not funded and they are not getting their pay raise that we voted on earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman, my friend, has told me, time and again, funding government is not a game. There was nothing in the bill that we just passed that both sides could not say that it was a bipartisan bill. There was nothing on our side of the aisle that we put into that bill that would give anybody on either side heartache.

But it was not a bill that we should have to have voted on, on this floor. We did 12 appropriations bills. We should not be voting for continuing resolutions. That is not why we are elected.

So let's do this. As we make our travel plans back, knowing that we will be back next week, let's make a commitment to one another, let's make a commitment to this country, that we will get our work done, that we will find the common ground, that we will not whip against a bill just to try to shut a government down, but will find the very best that this body could come to conclusion with, and that means funding our troops, and I look forward to working with all of you in the coming weeks.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, my presumption is that the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, who voted against the CR in September, did not do it because he wasn't for funding the troops; did not do it because he didn't want to protect the security of our country; did not do it because he wanted to shut down the government, I presume. None of us did either.

We did it because we are very concerned about the fact that 90 days ago we voted for a CR that was noncontroversial, notwithstanding the fact that 90 on your side voted against it. It was noncontroversial, however. The President agreed to it. You agreed to it. I agreed to it. We had an agreement.

But the fact of the matter is that we have not used those 90 days productively in a bipartisan way to get to constructive resolutions of these issues. I agree with the gentleman, we ought to do that.

I will pledge to the gentleman that I and my leadership here and our Members will come at least 50 percent of the way. You are in charge. You have the responsibility. We understand that. But, as we have in the past, almost every time, whether it was Speaker

Boehner or Speaker RYAN, it was this side of the aisle that kept the government open. It was this side of the aisle that made sure we didn't default on our debts.

So I want to be constructive. There is no point in further argument on this. It is to say, however, to all of us, I have talked to some of your Members privately. They are shaking their heads.

Why are we in this position?

We ought not to be in this position. Every one of us who sits in this body—every one of us ought to be saying to ourselves: we need to act constructively. Confrontation is not constructive; the failure to reach agreement.

You say you passed SCHIP. I pleaded with the gentleman not to put a partisan bill on the floor. We had agreed on the authorizing side. Unfortunately, we couldn't agree on the funding side because you wanted to cut things we thought ought not to be cut. Clearly, we could have gotten to an agreement.

In fact, you passed a bill on IPAB, \$17.6 billion unpaid for that would have paid for all of that. So, Mr. Leader, I will yield to you, if you want to; but I just plead with every one of the Members of this body: This is not good for the American people. You say you don't want a CR. You had 90 days to come to an agreement with us or with yourselves. You have 218 votes. You just showed us.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, not to continue a debate, because I know people have places to go, but you said we needed 218 to show it. We just showed 221. But the one thing I will tell you, when you talk about bipartisan, when you talked about that CR, 133 on this side voted for it; more than the majority of the majority. That is where bipartisanship comes.

I can sit back and we can rehash how many times we met about SCHIP. We can rehash coming to you and saying: Tell me where you want to go with that at the end of the day.

We can rehash where your ranking member asked us to pull back on the markup, and we did. But they still never came. I don't need to rewrite history and I don't need to walk away from where we tried to get to.

I am proud of the fact that we were able to pass it, with or without you. But we wanted you with us. You made the decision not to be with us, and that is okay. That is your decision. But, today, when you talked and bragged about all of the other times you were there, my only question is: What is different today?

Let's not make today continue for the future. Let's find the way that we work together. But at the end of the day, when they look back in history, there will be 221 on this side and there will be 175 on the other side that said government should shut down; and I don't think that is right.

I hope you have a good weekend.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear my friend saying that when John Boehner, Eric Cantor, and the whip asked for votes to keep the government open.

They got 84 of their colleagues on your side of the aisle to join them, making a total of 87, and the majority of your Members voted against your own leadership on the bill that they were proposing. So don't lecture me about voting "no."

I voted "no" because I think we should not have had a CR. I voted "no" because I think there are too many things left undone. I voted "no" because the American people expect us to get our work done, not to twiddle our thumbs while Rome is burning.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to each other in the second person.

VENEZUELA HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ACT OF 2017

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2658) to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, and for other purposes, as amended, 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 motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 388, nays 29, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 671]

YEAS—388

Abraham	Bost	Castro (TX)	Courtney	Jenkins (KS)	Paulsen
Adams	Boyle, Brendan	Chabot	Cramer	Jenkins (WV)	Payne
Aderholt	F.	Cheney	Crawford	Johnson (GA)	Pearce
Aguilar	Brady (PA)	Chu, Judy	Crist	Johnson (LA)	Pelosi
Amodei	Brady (TX)	Cicilline	Crowley	Johnson (OH)	Perlmutter
Arrington	Brooks (IN)	Clark (MA)	Cuellar	Johnson, E. B.	Peters
Babin	Brown (MD)	Clarke (NY)	Culberson	Johnson, Sam	Peterson
Banks (IN)	Buchanan	Clay	Cummings	Joyce (OH)	Pingree
Baretta	Buck	Cleaver	Curbelo (FL)	Kaptur	Pittenger
Barr	Bucshon	Clyburn	Curtis	Katko	Poe (TX)
Barragán	Budd	Coffman	Davis (CA)	Keating	Poliquin
Barton	Burgess	Cohen	Davis, Danny	Kelly (IL)	Polis
Bass	Bustos	Cole	Davis, Rodney	Kelly (MS)	Posey
Beatty	Butterfield	Collins (GA)	DeFazio	Kelly (PA)	Price (NC)
Bera	Byrne	Collins (NY)	DeGette	Khanna	Quigley
Bergman	Calvert	Comer	Delaney	Kihuen	Raskin
Beyer	Capuano	Comstock	DeLauro	Kildee	Ratcliffe
Bilirakis	Carbajal	Conaway	DelBene	Kilmer	Reed
Bishop (GA)	Cárdenas	Connolly	Demings	Kind	Reichert
Bishop (MI)	Carson (IN)	Cook	Denham	King (IA)	Renacci
Bishop (UT)	Carter (GA)	Cooper	Dent	King (NY)	Rice (NY)
Blumenauer	Carter (TX)	Correa	DeSantis	Kinzinger	Richmond
Blunt Rochester	Cartwright	Costa	DeSaulnier	Knight	Roby
Bonamici	Castor (FL)	Costello (PA)	Deutch	Krishnamoorthi	Rogers (AL)
			Diaz-Balart	Kuster (NH)	Rogers (KY)
			Dingell	Kustoff (TN)	Rohrabacher
			Doggett	LaHood	Rokita
			Donovan	LaMalfa	Rooney, Francis
			Doyle, Michael	Lamborn	Rooney, Thomas
			F.	Lance	J.
			Duffy	Langevin	Ros-Lehtinen
			Duncan (SC)	Larsen (WA)	Rosen
			Dunn	Latta	Roskam
			Ellison	Lawrence	Ross
			Emmer	Lee	Rothfus
			Engel	Levin	Rouzer
			Eshoo	Lewis (GA)	Roybal-Allard
			Espallat	Lewis (MN)	Royce (CA)
			Estes (KS)	Lieu, Ted	Ruiz
			Esty (CT)	Lipinski	Ruppersberger
			Evans	LoBiondo	Rush
			Farenthold	Loeb sack	Russell
			Faso	Lofgren	Rutherford
			Ferguson	Long	Ryan (OH)
			Fitzpatrick	Loudermilk	Sánchez
			Fleischmann	Love	Sarbanes
			Flores	Lowenthal	Scalise
			Fortenberry	Lowey	Schakowsky
			Foster	Lucas	Schiff
			Fox	Luetkemeyer	Schneider
			Frankel (FL)	Lujan Grisham,	Schrader
			Frelinghuysen	M.	Schweikert
			Fudge	Luján, Ben Ray	Scott (VA)
			Gabbard	MacArthur	Scott, Austin
			Gallagher	Maloney,	Sensenbrenner
			Gallego	Carolyn B.	Serrano
			Garamendi	Maloney, Sean	Sessions
			Garrett	Marino	Sewell (AL)
			Gianforte	Marshall	Shea-Porter
			Gibbs	Mast	Sherman
			Gomez	Matsui	Shimkus
			Gonzalez (TX)	McCarthy	Shuster
			Gottheimer	McCaul	Simpson
			Gowdy	McClintock	Sinema
			Granger	McCollum	Sires
			Graves (GA)	McEachin	Slaughter
			Graves (LA)	McGovern	Smith (MO)
			Graves (MO)	McHenry	Smith (NE)
			Green, Al	McKinley	Smith (NJ)
			Green, Gene	McMorris	Smith (TX)
			Grijalva	Rodgers	Smith (WA)
			Grothman	McNerney	Smucker
			Guthrie	McSally	Soto
			Gutiérrez	Meadows	Speier
			Hanabusa	Meehan	Stefanik
			Handel	Meng	Stewart
			Harper	Messer	Stivers
			Harris	Mitchell	Suozi
			Hartzler	Moolenaar	Swalwell (CA)
			Hastings	Moulton	Takano
			Heck	Mullin	Taylor
			Hensarling	Murphy (FL)	Tenney
			Herrera Beutler	Nadler	Thompson (CA)
			Higgins (LA)	Napolitano	Thompson (MS)
			Higgins (NY)	Neal	Thompson (PA)
			Hill	Newhouse	Thornberry
			Himes	Noem	Tipton
			Holding	Nolan	Titus
			Hollingsworth	Norcross	Tonko
			Hoyer	Norman	Trott
			Hudson	Nunes	Tsongas
			Huffman	O'Halleran	Turner
			Huizenga	O'Rourke	Upton
			Hultgren	Olson	Valadao
			Hurd	Palazzo	Vargas
			Issa	Pallone	Veasey
			Jackson Lee	Palmer	Vela
			Jayapal	Panetta	Velázquez
			Jeffries	Pascarell	Visclosky

Wagner	Watson Coleman	Wittman
Walberg	Weber (TX)	Womack
Walden	Webster (FL)	Yarmuth
Walker	Welch	Yoder
Walorski	Wenstrup	Yoho
Walters, Mimi	Westerman	Young (AK)
Walz	Williams	Young (IA)
Wasserman	Wilson (FL)	Zeldin
Schultz	Wilson (SC)	

NAYS—29

Allen	DesJarlais	Labrador
Amash	Duncan (TN)	Marchant
Bacon	Gaetz	Massie
Biggs	Gohmert	Mooney (WV)
Black	Goodlatte	Perry
Blackburn	Gosar	Rice (SC)
Blum	Griffith	Roe (TN)
Brat	Hice, Jody B.	Sanford
Brooks (AL)	Jones	Woodall
Davidson	Jordan	

NOT VOTING—15

Bridenstine	Larson (CT)	Pocan
Brownley (CA)	Lawson (FL)	Scott, David
Franks (AZ)	Lynch	Tiberi
Hunter	Meeks	Torres
Kennedy	Moore	Waters, Maxine

□ 1711

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADMIRAL LLOYD R. "JOE" VASEY PACIFIC WAR COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY ESTABLISHMENT ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 4300) to authorize Pacific Historic Parks to establish a commemorative display to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4300

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 "Admiral Lloyd R. 'Joe' Vasey Pacific War Commemorative Display Establishment Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASSOCIATION.—The term "Association" means Pacific Historic Parks, a corporation that is—

(A) a cooperating association with the National Park Service;

(B) organized under the laws of the State of Hawaii; and

(C) described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of that Code.

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term "Director" means the Director of the National Park Service.

(3) COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY.—The term "commemorative display" means the Pacific Theater of World War II Commemorative Display authorized to be established under section 4(a).

SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) honor the brave members of the United States Armed Forces who fought on behalf of the United States of America in the Pacific Theater during World War II;

(2) provide a place to mourn the more than 150,000 American and allied lives lost in the Pacific Theater during World War II; and

(3) educate the public about United States battles in the Pacific Theater and its role in World War II.

SEC. 4. PACIFIC THEATER COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY.

(a) AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY.—The Association may establish and maintain a commemorative display to honor the members of the United States Armed Forces and Allies who served in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

(b) USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS PROHIBITED.—Federal funds may not be used to design, procure, prepare, install, or maintain the commemorative display, but the Director may accept and expend contributions of non-Federal funds and resources for such purposes.

(c) LOCATION OF COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director may allow the commemorative display to be established at a suitable location at the Pearl Harbor site of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Honolulu, Hawaii.

(2) CONDITION.—The commemorative display may not be established at any location under the jurisdiction of the Director until the Director determines that an assured source of non-Federal funding has been established for the design, procurement, installation, and maintenance of the commemorative display.

(d) DESIGN OF THE COMMEMORATIVE DISPLAY.—The final design of the commemorative display shall be subject to the approval of the Director.

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

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2017, TO MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

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

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

There was no objection.

□ 1715

CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jack Hong from Edina High School who won this year's Congressional App Challenge in Minnesota.

Every year, the Congressional App Challenge encourages students to create an original app by writing computer code. The competition inspires students across the country to explore computer science and STEM fields, fos-

ters innovation, and promotes involvement by some who are historically underrepresented in tech fields.

Jack won this year's competition by designing an app called Pomo Timer that blocks distracting websites on the user's computer for short periods of time.

I would also like to recognize Madiha Rizvi of Brooklyn Park who won runner-up for creating an app called Jobscope that helps young adults find jobs in their communities.

Zara Thomas and Omar Elamri from Minnetonka Middle School were also both honorable mentions for their apps.

Mr. Speaker, these students have shown ingenuity, imagination, and intellectual curiosity, and their inventive talent will take them far. I congratulate them on their achievement and wish them the best in future academics.

CONGRATULATING THE SHABAZZ HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Shabazz High School Bulldogs football team for winning their State championship game against the Weequahic High School Indians. These schools—both in my neighborhood and in my district—have been rivals since 1938.

This is the second year in a row that they have gone head to head in the championship, but this year Shabazz beat Weequahic with a score of 35-0 to win the State championship for north Jersey, section 2, group 1. The Shabazz Bulldogs had a perfect season, finishing the year with a 12-0 record. It was their first perfect season since 1966.

The Shabazz Bulldogs were led to victory by Coach Darnell Grant, whose brother Barris Grant coached the Hillside High School Comets football team to its State championship this year as well. Both teams are in my district.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Coach Grant and the Shabazz High School Bulldogs football team for their perfect year in sports this weekend.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to plead on behalf of our country for immediate Senate action on the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017. The House passed this bipartisan bill on November 1, following a record wildfire season with millions of acres going up in smoke and ash.

Just this week, fires have flared up again in southern California with more than 110,000 acres currently burning

and more than 200,000 individuals forced from their homes. Many schools are closed, residents hundreds of miles away are advised to stay indoors to avoid the smoke, and, more urgently, lives and property are at risk across Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

The time for the Senate to act was 2 years ago when they failed to act on similar legislation. We can't afford for the Senate to continue to do nothing. Pass the Resilient Federal Forests Act. Give the Forest Service the tools it needs to prevent and combat catastrophic wildfires. Fires are raging, lives are in danger, and the situation will get worse in the future if the Senate continues to fail to act.

HONORING RICHARD CULLEN OF VIRGINIA

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

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a fellow Virginian, Richard Cullen, who is in the midst of transitioning his law practice into "becoming one of the boys" again.

Richard Cullen is a dedicated public servant who has served our great Commonwealth in different capacities during his longstanding career at both the Federal and State levels.

Mr. Cullen was raised in Staunton, Virginia—located in our State's cherished Shenandoah Valley—and completed his education at the University of Richmond's T.C. Williams School of Law where he served as the editor-in-chief of the school's law review.

Richard began his career at the Federal level with former Congressman Butler of the Sixth Congressional District. He continued to serve Virginians at the State level when he was appointed in 1991 as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Richard also served at the State level, from 1997 to 1998, as the attorney general of Virginia. He is a Virginian's Virginian who values his community.

On behalf of our great Commonwealth, we thank Richard Cullen for his continued service.

HONORING PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR AND WORLD WAR II VETERAN CLARENCE VAROS

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

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, on this historic day in this Chamber where President Roosevelt appeared the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, I rise to honor a World War II veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor, Mr. Clarence Varos, who will turn 100 this weekend.

Born on December 10, 1917, Mr. Varos has served our country and State in many ways. As a member of the U.S. Navy, Mr. Varos fought through and

survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. He risked his life in the defense of freedom as a gunner on the USS *Hyde*, transporting marines in the Pacific theater. After bravely serving our Nation in uniform, Mr. Varos went on to dedicate 30 years of his life to the Union Pacific Railroad.

I want to thank Mr. Varos for all he has contributed to our great Nation and State. His sacrifice, bravery, and grit are an example to us all. I look forward to congratulating Mr. Varos in person at celebrations in his honor this weekend in Cheyenne. I would like to say happy birthday to Mr. Varos and thank him for his service.

OPPOSING OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION IN THE EASTERN GULF OF MEXICO

(Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to, once again, vigorously and unrelentingly oppose offshore oil and gas exploration in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. I know this is an imperfect graphic, but what I have got here is a map of the Gulf of Mexico showing the Military Mission Line, longitude 86 degrees, 41 minutes, where the military doesn't want offshore drilling east of it, and neither do we citizens of Florida.

This big blob here is where the oil companies want to go get oil and gas and tear up our Gulf of Mexico and change our coast from high-quality residential development to things like this: huge, steel-hulled offshore supply vessels coming in our residential bays and estuaries.

This is Sanibel Lighthouse. We don't want to see a commercial vessel like this in Sanibel Lighthouse, nor do we want to see one in the Gordon River of Naples surrounded by beautiful homes, trees, and second homes of retirees who have come to Naples to make it their home. This thing could be replicated in Fort Myers as well.

We can't let our coast be changed irreparably by industrialization to support unnecessary offshore drilling.

HONORING JOE GEORGE, AN AMERICAN HERO

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

Mr. BANKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joe George, a sailor who showed exceptional bravery during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Joe defied direct orders from his superior officer and saved the lives of six men trapped on the embattled USS *Arizona*.

Mr. Speaker, for years, Joe's family and two veterans he saved have petitioned the Navy to acknowledge his bravery. I first heard his story from Warsaw, Indiana, middle school students Keller Bailey, Jason Benyousky, Ryun Hoffert, Geoffrey Hochstetler,

and their adviser, Richard Rooker, regarding the National History Day project.

I introduced a resolution that highlights Joe's courage and calls for the Navy to recognize his selfless actions during the attack. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Navy has recently announced that Joe George will be posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for his heroism. Joe George was an American hero and a shining example of the courage of the Greatest Generation.

TO ATTACK STUDENT LOAN DEBT, EMPOWER STUDENTS

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

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this Chamber and, indeed, America about the challenges that we face at this time in our country. There are many. Some exist within this Nation, some exist overseas, and some have many answers being batted around in Washington; whereas, others have nearly none.

One of those challenges that has hamstrung our youngest generation is the massive, dark cloud of student loan debt. When our colleague, Senator SANDERS, from the other side of the aisle addressed student loan debt during the Presidential campaign last year, he was correct in identifying a problem. The way that he chose to address it I would disagree with, as he suggested that we should provide for people something from the government. I would suggest that the people should provide for themselves.

There are two schools of thought, one that the people rely on the government, and one that the government should rely on the people.

So how do you address this massive black cloud of student loan debt that is handicapping our youngest and most creative generation? That is something that we have started to do today with the filing of H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act.

I speak to you tonight about a brighter future, a future where individuals are empowered to make decisions for themselves and where they can escape this looming cloud of debt so they might be free to do things that we have, heretofore, perhaps taken for granted in this country, like buy a new car, like start a family, or, in the words of former Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, move out of mom and dad's basement.

But the most important thing that they are not able to do because of the black cloud of debt that faces them, Mr. Speaker, I would submit, is harness the creativity and the energy that is embodied by their ideas. This is a nation of ideas, and certainly when you

are encumbered with over \$40,000 of loan debt per person on average, you are not able to get that small business loan, and you are not able to start that new business to put those ideas into action and create jobs.

In fact, a recent poll last month indicated that the majority of millennials would sacrifice their very franchise, that is the right to vote, in exchange for relief from their student loan debt. All too often, heretofore, the words "student debt" in the Halls of Washington have scared up images of free college. Anyone knows—even Mr. SANDERS knows—that nothing is free; someone pays. But that is no excuse to ignore the problem. Why not allow individuals the option and opportunity to pay their own debt?

Over 40 million Americans—myself included—are paying back \$1.3 trillion in student debt, yet we have done nothing realistic to address this problem.

How do you address new problems? You must address new problems with new ideas. H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act, is just that.

I will stop as an aside to take a moment to thank a young man, Elliot Harding, a recent student from Charlottesville, Virginia, who came to me with this idea: What do we do as a nation if we lose the creativity of an entire generation because of this burdensome debt? Because that is what we are on the precipice of.

I contemplated it and decided that this isn't something I was able to let happen on my watch. So as a result, I was all ears as he explained the idea that became student security.

It is as follows: right now we know that the Social Security plan that our seniors—indeed, my very mother—rely upon to get by on a day-to-day basis is facing an imminent bankruptcy, that solvency is in question, and that by 2034, according to most estimates, there will be no solvency. That is a problem, too.

Many of you at home are wondering how I moved from student loan debt to Social Security, and that is the beauty of this idea. To empower individuals to make decisions for themselves and address these very real challenges, the Student Security Act would allow a student to write off \$550 of student loan debt for every month that they were willing to voluntarily forgo a Social Security benefit. The time value of money, my friends. We have forced no one to do anything. We have in no way, shape, or form changed one scintilla of the promise that is Social Security that we have made for generations to our seniors. But at the same time, we have provided an 11 percent increase in the solvency of that program, extending the life of that promise without raising taxes and without forcing a single soul to do a single thing against their will.

That would translate into \$6,600 per student, per year, that they were willing to voluntarily forgo receipt of Social Security benefits.

The bill would cap at a maximum of \$40,150 in debt relief. This would correspond to a 6-year delay in receipt of Social Security benefits, and, again, no one would be forced to do a thing, but students who sought to remove from their lives the black cloud of student loan debt would be empowered to, at their own discretion, make this decision for themselves.

□ 1730

As they say in the TV world: But wait; there is more.

We ran this program past the Congressional Budget Office and then later past the Social Security Administration. What would the impact on Social Security be when empowering people to make decisions for themselves? And, by the way, how would we defray the costs as to people who are young now, who won't invest in Social Security until later, versus the fact they are students now?

The numbers are not good; they are great. We would allow cosigners on loans this option as well, to avail their children or grandchildren of these benefits should they choose to defer receipt of Social Security benefits, again to the amount of \$40,150. That would begin immediately.

That would also save, according to the Social Security Administration, \$700 billion, while also addressing the very real needs of American students currently hamstrung by a broken college finance system.

So what do we do with the Student Security Act?

We are delighted to welcome Congressman FERGUSON, Congressman BRAT, Congressman ROKITA, and Congressman MESSER. We invite our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to look at this outside-the-box, dynamic new way of addressing the solvency of Social Security and the insolvency of our youngest, most creative generation.

The data indicates that we would extend the viability of the Social Security program by 11 percent of what is needed to make it wholly solvent in perpetuity. That would be the equivalent of a 0.3 percent increase in the payroll tax, but without a tax increase and without taking anything from anyone without their voluntary entry into the program.

It would lift the black cloud of student loan debt to the tune of over \$40,000 per person in a world where 90 percent of debtors have less than \$40,000 in debt, and it would return to the coffers of this indebted Nation, by the Social Security Administration's estimates, \$700,000,000,000—seventenths of \$1 trillion.

So I stand here today and ask you to ask yourselves:

Do you trust people to make good decisions for other people?

Do you believe that people should rely on government or that government should rely on people?

Do you believe that this country can harness the ideas and the vision and

the energy of what is inherently the most creative generation if we are able to free these young people from burdensome debt that stops them from engaging in key life events like buying a home and buying a car and getting married and starting a business?

Do you believe that we need to think outside the box to ensure that we keep the promise that is Social Security, which has been made in this country for generations?

If you, like me, believe this and are a Member, I invite you to join as a patron of H.R. 4584, regardless of your party affiliation or ideology. If you, like me, as a citizen, believe this is a good idea, I invite you to speak to your Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity not only to change how we do business, but to empower people to empower themselves to create greater opportunity and prosperity in this country by harnessing the energy and ideas of our youngest and largest living generation and to keep the promise that we have made for generation after generation and to people like my mother that Social Security will remain reliable and solvent.

Again, I invite you to join on this legislation or contact your Representative and encourage them to join. H.R. 4584, the Student Security Act, is a new way of addressing an old problem that relies on the oldest solution, and that is individuals empowered to work for themselves.

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

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: GOP TAX SCAM

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

We are going to have some discussion about recent developments in Congress over this week, and we are going to focus on the proposed tax legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), vice chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. She is going to talk about what that plan means for working people in America.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RASKIN for his continued leadership in our caucus. It is such a pleasure to serve next to him on the Judiciary Committee. We have a lot of work to do. It is really terrific to be able to do it with him, to talk about the tax plan.

I don't think this is a tax plan. I think it is tax scam. I think it is a heist. I think that the middle class in this country is not going to benefit from this. Middle class Americans who are hoping for a tax break for the holidays are going to be sorely disappointed. Maybe they get a few lumps of coal.

In fact, polling shows, across the country, that this is the singularly most unpopular bill that Congress has considered in a very long time. Seventy-five percent of Americans across this country don't think it is a good idea. They are not fooled by the promises that are being made about what this bill does.

Let's really talk about what this bill does.

We know that the wealthiest will benefit. The wealthiest 1 percent will receive 50 percent of the tax cuts. In 2019, 18 percent of the tax cuts in this bill will go to the wealthiest 1 percent. But by 2027, that number climbs to 62 percent, with an average tax cut of \$33,000.

What else do we know about this bill?

We know that the largest corporations will benefit. To pay for this massive tax cut for corporations, the Senate tax bill will repeal the individual mandate part of the Affordable Care Act, something that Republicans have tried to do over and over again this year.

The American people have spoken up and said: No, we know that healthcare is a right, not a privilege. We want our healthcare. We know the Affordable Care Act is not perfect, but it has done much to protect the healthcare of people across this country.

Yet, in spite of that, the repeal of the individual mandate has been put into the Senate tax bill, and it would result in 13 million more people being uninsured. It would also result in a 10 percent increase in premiums for Americans across the country, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

We know, also, that this bill is wholly fiscally irresponsible. It is funny. For years, Republicans have yelled and screamed about the huge deficits we have, yet this bill would add between \$1 trillion and \$1.5 trillion in deficits to what we already have. That would lead to a mandatory cut in critical programs.

Let's just talk for a minute about what exactly this tax scam will mean for ordinary Americans across the country.

In order to pay for the tax cuts that we have talked about for the wealthiest and the largest corporations, it means that millions of working families and poor folks across this country are going to end up paying more. Not only that, there are incentives in this bill that would actually create an incentive for American companies to take jobs off of Main Street, close factories here in the United States, and move those jobs overseas. It will make it harder for families to make ends meet.

The Senate bill would raise taxes on 78 million middle class families, and millions of families across the country would lose their healthcare. In my district alone, nearly 31,000 constituents would lose their healthcare.

This bill would also put real roadblocks in the way of young people looking to get ahead.

Two of the eliminations of tax exemptions in this tax bill that offend me the most and should offend all Americans across the country are, number one, there is, essentially, a tax on being sick. There is a tax on long-term care for Americans across this country.

Right now, if you have a family member who is in long-term care or has a serious illness, the expenses that you pay for that individual, that family member, you can deduct those medical expenses. With this tax scam, the tax heist that is being proposed, you would no longer be able to deduct those medical expenses. So you are being taxed for being ill or for needing care as you get older.

In addition, we are taxing education. We already know that there is \$1.4 trillion in student loan debt across this country, more than even credit card debt in this country. Young people have to make these terrible choices about whether they are going to go \$80,000 into debt or whether they are not going to get higher education. That is wrong.

This tax bill would actually take away some of the tax benefits that we give to graduate students, for example, when they get help to be able to complete their graduate education. It would take away the exemptions that currently exist.

If you are a teacher and you buy pencils or paper or supplies for your classroom, that is currently a deductible expense. It would take that away for teachers, but not for corporations. If corporations buy supplies, that is tax deductible, but not if you are a teacher. That is just crazy.

It prioritizes the wealthy by allowing wealthy families to avoid the estate tax. Let's talk about the estate tax for just a minute.

There are 5,400 families across the country that pay the estate tax. It is a very small number of the wealthiest families. But, in fact, what this does is say that is even too much. We are going to double the exemption. Now, \$11 million, even fewer families are going to pay that, but it is going to cost middle class families a couple of hundred billion dollars in revenue.

The experts across the spectrum are arriving at the same conclusion: this bill is bad for regular working families.

The National Association of Realtors has said this: The Senate tax bill "puts home values at risk and dramatically undercuts the incentive to own a home . . . our estimates show that home values stand to fall by an average of more than 10 percent, and even greater in high-cost areas."

How about the Fraternal Order of Police? "The FOP is very concerned that the partial or total elimination of SALT deductions," something very important to my home State of Washington, "will endanger the ability of our State and local government to fund these agencies and recruit the men and women we need to keep us safe."

That is a quote from the Fraternal Order of Police.

The American Council on Education has said this: "As a result, we are deeply concerned that at a time when post-secondary degrees and credentials have never been more important to individuals, the economy, and our society, the tax reform proposal approved by the Senate could make college more expensive and undermine the financial stability of higher education institutions."

Let's be clear about what is happening here. The Republicans have a plan, and it is like a little three-step dance:

First, transfer trillions of dollars of wealth from middle class families and the poorest amongst us to the wealthiest corporations who are already not paying their fair share.

Second, when you do that transfer, explode the deficit. The estimates are that \$1.4 trillion, \$1.5 trillion would be added to the deficit.

Finally, use the fact that you are exploding the deficit to actually cut programs that are critical to Americans across the country, like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. We know that, as written, this bill would trigger mandatory spending cuts to Medicare and Medicaid of significant amounts.

So the reality is that we are in a situation where this is incredibly unpopular. The polling shows right now that Americans are not buying this tax scam: 68 percent say that the tax bill helps the wealthiest; 54 percent say the tax bill favors big Republican donors; 61 percent say that Medicare and Social Security cuts would ultimately end up being the vehicle that is used to pay for these tax cuts to the wealthiest; and 68 percent say that changes to the Affordable Care Act should not be in this tax bill.

□ 1745

Here is where we are. The House passed its bill on November 16. In the early hours of December 2, just last Friday, the Senate passed its version.

We are going into conference committee now, which means that a group of legislators from the House and a group of legislators from the Senate get together and they try to work out the differences between the two bills. Then, ultimately, whatever that compromise is, if it is worked out, would come back for a vote in the House and the Senate.

So, now, more than ever, we need the voices of people across the country to call and to talk about the concerns that working people across this country have. We do need a real reform of the tax system to simplify it, to make sure that people are paying their fair share. But that is not what this is. This is a tax scam. It is a heist. It is transfer of trillions of dollars in wealth from middle class families and the most vulnerable to the wealthiest who do not need that money.

The reality is that we need to be investing in the American people. We

need to be investing in jobs and in education. We need to be making sure that middle class families are getting a break, that they can actually think about a future for their kids, for the next generation, that is better than the one they have.

We have very little time, but, Mr. Speaker, I am very sure that we in the Progressive Caucus and we in the Democratic Caucus are going to do everything we can to fight for working people, for the most vulnerable among us, and to protect things like CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program, to protect temporary protected status for immigrants across the country, and to make sure we are passing a clean Dream Act. These are the kinds of priorities we should be focusing on, not lining the pockets of the wealthiest corporations and transferring jobs from the United States to tax havens elsewhere.

We have a lot of work to do to make sure that, in this very short period of time, people speak up and speak out and make sure that we do not pass this bill, make sure that we, instead, work together in a bipartisan way for tax reform that actually benefits working families.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative RASKIN for his leadership on the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative JAYAPAL for her wonderful remarks and her terrific leadership here on behalf of the people of Washington and on behalf of middle class and working class Americans all across the country.

Mr. Speaker, may I trouble you to ask how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida). The gentleman from Maryland has 47 minutes remaining.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Caucus greatly appreciates this time to talk with the American people. For me, it is always one of my favorite moments in the tremendously busy weeks that we have got here on Capitol Hill and in Congress.

I represent 800,000 people in Maryland's Eighth Congressional District, which includes Montgomery County, Frederick County, and Carroll County. I have the honor of going to work for them, essentially, 7 days a week. I live just about 25 minutes from Capitol Hill, and I take the Metro or drive to work, come back home, and I get to spend pretty much every day both with my district and with my colleagues here in Congress.

This is a special time of the week for me because so many of my colleagues are on airplanes or on trains going back to where they come from, and they spend a lot of their time on Mondays and Fridays traveling. I get to be here, and I get to work. I have a little more time to think, Mr. Speaker.

Because we are so buffeted by events, tweets, conflicts, and controversies, we don't always have time to think. I get

to use the time on Mondays, Thursday nights, and Fridays to be a little bit more reflective and deliberative about what it is we are doing here in Washington.

I want to start by just bringing everybody up to date about an alarming new legislative development before I get back to the tax bill, which will be next week's problem.

Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed something that they call the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017. The entire bill is fraudulent, beginning with its name, because it asserts that it has something to do with reciprocity, but it doesn't.

Right now, any State that has a law governing the issuance of concealed carry permits to its citizens can decide to work with its neighbor to allow a reciprocal arrangement. About half of the States have done that; they have deals with their neighbors.

But this act would wipe all of the reciprocity agreements out. It would impose one national standard on everybody in America, reducing everybody to the lowest, most permissive States in the Union in terms of concealed carry.

Now, in my State, in Maryland, we have a number of very serious hurdles to get over before you get the right to carry a loaded concealed weapon. You can't be mentally unstable or dangerous. You can't be a domestic offender. You can't be a violent criminal convict, a felon, or a misdemeanor. You have got to show that you know how to use weaponry, and so on. We take it very seriously.

Several dozen States have similar laws; others have much laxer and much looser laws. That is federalism. Everybody decides for themselves.

But this legislation that they passed yesterday would wipe out the State laws of every State in the country and drag us down to the bottom. It is not a race to the bottom; it is a plunge to the bottom.

They say that if you can get a concealed carry permit in any State—and in some States like Florida, there are 1.7 million people with concealed carry permits—you can go anywhere in the country. It is a passport to override the laws of every other State in the Union.

There are more than 14 million concealed carry permits in the United States, and now, suddenly, that is 14 million more people with guns who can come to your State, over your State laws, when you don't want it.

Oh, and guess what else they have snuck in here. The people who claim not to like litigation have created a whole new cause of action. They can sue the police officers if they feel the police officers have detained them too long. But, of course, the police officers are going to detain them too long because they have to figure out whether or not they have a right to the gun.

In the nationalization of concealed carry, have they created a bureaucracy, a computer where we are able to

figure out whether someone is carrying a real concealed carry permit or a fake ID concealed carry permit? No, not at all. That is put upon you, your State, to try to figure it out. If you hold the person too long, they can sue you, and guess what: attorneys' fees for the police officers, attorneys' fees awarded against the sheriffs, attorneys' fees against our law enforcement officers for trying to keep us safe by trying to enforce our State laws.

Now, we have two opportunities to stop this. One is in the U.S. Senate.

I already spoke to one Senator who was absolutely dumbfounded and amazed that such legislation would even be introduced, after more than two centuries of the history of the United States, somebody would put in a bill to try to extinguish the State concealed carry laws all across the country and give other people who wouldn't have the right to get a gun in your State the right to come there; and this after some of the worst firearms massacres and disasters in our history: the Las Vegas attack, which led to the deaths of 59 of our countrymen and countrywomen, and the attack in Sutherland Springs, Texas, which killed dozens of people.

The gun violence has even come here to Washington and to the Capitol and to the Members of Congress, ourselves, and still we haven't done anything.

We don't take up a universal criminal background check to close the internet loophole, to close the private sale loophole of people selling guns in the parking lot at 7-Eleven, so we close the loopholes that make us an absolute outlier in terms of the civilized world. We don't take that up.

We don't take up legislation to ban military-style assault weapons, like the ones that were used in Newtown, Connecticut, to assassinate 20 schoolchildren at pointblank range. We don't take up that legislation.

We don't even take up the legislation that they promised, which we thought that they wanted to do, which was to get rid of the bump stocks. No, that faded away, too.

Instead, they bring us this proposal to drive us deeper into the cycles of gun violence and misery that the NRA and the GOP have taken us to in America.

So, there are two opportunities to stop this madness. One is in the United States Senate, but the other is this: the pretended champions of the U.S. Constitution are violating the Constitution; they are trampling the Constitution.

Why?

Well, the Congress of the United States is an institution with limited enumerated powers. We don't have the right to do whatever we want as Congress. We have to exercise a real power.

Well, what power is being exercised here?

Well, there are only a couple of possible candidates. One, they say we are regulating commerce, but that is patently absurd. There is no commerce

that is being regulated in any way at all. It doesn't say anything about business and it doesn't say anything about money. There is no commerce.

The Supreme Court authority is very clear about that. That is why the Supreme Court struck down the Gun-Free School Zones Act, which my friends across the aisle were totally opposed to. They said: Well, that has nothing to do with commerce. The possession of a gun within a school zone has nothing to do with commerce. You have to strike it down.

Well, equally, the possession of your concealed carry weapon has nothing to do with commerce either. So that doesn't help them.

Then they would say: Well, really what we are doing is we are vindicating the Second Amendment. The Second Amendment gives you the right to do it.

There are a couple of odd things about that. One is that, if the Second Amendment gave you the right to take a concealed carry gun anywhere you want in the country, why has no court ever said that, and why aren't they just bringing a lawsuit?

The Federal courts across the land have been overwhelmingly clear that the Second Amendment does not give you a right to carry a loaded concealed gun. You don't get that right under the Second Amendment. If you have that right, you get it from your State government.

I thought that was something that my friends across the aisle believed in: federalism and State powers and State rights. But, no, they would say: Well, this is an enforcement of the Second Amendment.

I suppose the Supreme Court also struck down that bit of trickery in a case called *City of Boerne v. Flores*, which dealt with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. There, Congress said, overwhelmingly—I think it was unanimous—we are going to overrule, essentially, the laws of the States and say that any burden on people's religious free exercise is presumptively unconstitutional, unless you can show that there is a compelling interest in your State against it.

The Supreme Court said: Wait, where does Congress get the power to do that?

Congress said: Well, we are just enforcing people's free exercise rights.

The Supreme Court said: You don't enforce people's rights by changing the meaning of the right.

Similarly, you don't enforce the Second Amendment right, which, undoubtedly, exists under the 2008 *Heller* decision, which said you have a right to a handgun for self-defense, you have a rifle for purposes of hunting and recreation, but you don't extend those rights, change the meaning of those rights in the name of the Second Amendment and then say that is where Congress gets its power. On that theory, the Supreme Court said in the *RFRA* case—striking down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as it

applies to States—there would be no limit at all to Federal power, and that can't be right.

My friends celebrated yesterday having passed an unconstitutional bill—unconstitutional. We have no power to trample the handiwork of the States all over the country. The State legislatures have the power under the 10th Amendment, and Congress lacks the power in Article I to define what concealed carry policy is going to be in the States. That is up to the States.

So, if they want to become the absolute enemies of the State legislatures and State power and State rights, be my guest. But what they have is an unconstitutional piece of legislation as well as a deeply dangerous and ill-thought-out piece of legislation.

The last thing I want to say about it is, like almost everything else they bring to us now, there were no hearings on it.

Now, think about that. Here we are, one of the greatest legislative bodies on the planet Earth—Abraham Lincoln sat in this body; John F. Kennedy sat in this body; some of the greatest legislators who ever existed were here—and they are passing bills without so much as a single hearing. They just bring it up for a vote.

So we whip out our phones, and we are trying to google to find out about the issue. That is how I found out, for example, that more than 1,100 people carrying concealed carry weapons had committed homicides or mass shootings or killing of police or suicides—with their guns. And now they want open season.

If you want to allow anybody in your State to get a concealed carry weapon, be our guest. Don't impose that rule on the people of Maryland. We don't want it, thank you very much. We have already decided what we have got, and that is true of State legislatures all across the land.

□ 1800

Their so-called reciprocity legislation is actually a demolition of reciprocity, because lots of States have entered into reciprocal agreements that will be extinguished by their law.

So without so much as a hearing, without any real debate or discussion, without them even realizing that they are violating the Constitution, they go ahead and pass this law.

All right. But that, of course, is just a distraction from the main order of business this month, which is demolition of America's middle class. I am sorry to put it in such cogent and compressed terms, but there is no other way to describe what The New York Times calls the worst piece of tax legislation ever introduced in the history of our country.

Now, America has gotten the point about the GOP tax plan. People know it is highway robbery. People know it is a mugging of the working class and the middle class by the largest corporations and the richest people in the

country. They know it is an outrageous decision to drive the country into \$1.5 trillion more deficit, more debt, all to enrich the robber barons and the cyber barons of our time.

They want to cut corporate taxes from 35 percent to 20 percent at a time of record corporate profits.

Why? Why would you do that?

They say that if we bestow this extraordinary windfall, bonus present on corporate America, that somehow we are going to get more jobs out of it. But wait a second. We are at a time of record corporate profits right now. If all they needed was more profits, more dividends to create jobs, then we would be seeing them right now.

We are in a time of economic growth, and any economist you ask, who is not in the pay of the proponents, will tell you it is a deranged thing to cut corporate taxes at a time of record corporate profits.

Why would we do that?

They say it will lead to economic development. Nonsense. Show me one example where trickle-down economics has ever worked. It doesn't work, for a very simple reason. You give more money to the people at the top of society, they pocket it, they send it overseas to their Swiss bank accounts or to the Cayman Islands or more yachts. That is what they do with it.

If you want economic growth, you do what Franklin D. Roosevelt did. You invest in the middle class, you invest in working people.

Business growth comes from demand, and demand comes from a strong middle class that is able to buy stuff. If you starve the middle class, there is no demand. The rich take their money and they park it overseas. That is what our oligarchs do. That is what the Russian oligarchs do.

That is how Donald Trump has stayed in business. The Russian oligarchs have been renting out his condos and offices in the Trump Tower in New York and coming to the Trump Hotel. They have got their surplus profits they are exporting from Russia going right into the Trump enterprises. Our oligarchs do the exact same thing.

You want real growth, you want strong growth, you want fairness, you want a democratic society, you invest in the middle class, not the largest corporations, not the wealthiest people in the country.

Now, there is a strong link here to our campaign finance regime. Again, every public opinion poll shows Americans know it. You think you can fool the American people. You cannot fool the American people.

Americans know this tax bill is a great deal if you have your own lobbyist; it is a great deal if you have your own Political Action Committee; it is a great deal if you are in the Trump Cabinet, it is going to be perfect for you; and if your last name is Trump, this is absolute utopia. But if you don't have your own PAC, if you don't have your own lobbyist, watch out, watch out in this bill.

The Boston Globe's Annie Linskey had a great article with the title: "The Koch brothers (and their friends) want President Trump's tax cut. Very badly."

Tim Phillips, president of Americans for Prosperity, a Koch group, said: "It's the most significant Federal effort we've ever taken on."

Congratulations to the Koch brothers. They are about to get their own signature tax bill. All the GOP politicians are saying the same thing in the newspapers. You can just check it out.

They say the same thing: We are calling up the millionaires and billionaires for campaign contributions, and they say, "You deliver us that tax bill first. You get nothing from us until you deliver us that tax plan. You guys haven't done anything in Washington. You haven't thrown 30 or 40 million off their healthcare yet. We haven't gotten what we wanted. You deliver us that tax bill. That is what we want."

Of course, Trump's Cabinet needs no outside push even from the campaign donors. It is the wealthiest Cabinet in U.S. history.

Guess what it is worth. \$20 million? \$50 million? \$100 million? \$1 billion?

No. The Trump Cabinet is worth \$4.3 billion. \$4.3 billion is what their Cabinet is worth.

They all love the tax plan, and they should.

You know why?

They wrote it.

You know who they wrote it for?

Them.

Just like for the Trump family, they are going to abolish the estate tax, which applies to only 2 out of every 1,000 richest people in the country. It is only the wealthiest people who pay the estate tax now, and they want to wipe it out, costing the rest of us \$65 billion or \$70 billion.

They want to collide, they want to contradict, they want to trample an essential principle of America that our Founders started off with, which is opposition to hereditary government, like kings, and opposition to hereditary wealth, hereditary aristocracy. The Founders, like Ben Franklin and Tom Paine and Alexander Hamilton, they knew that the intergenerational transmission of huge fortunes was a threat to democracy.

At a certain point, people don't want to just buy a bigger house or another house or a third house or a fourth house or a yacht. At a certain point, they want to buy a governorship, they want to buy a U.S. Senate seat, they want to buy the Presidency of the United States.

So what is at stake here is not just whether we are going to have some semblance of fairness in the economy. It is bad enough that we have got one of the most unequal economies on Earth today. That is bad enough. They want a government that is plutocratic, a government that responds only to the wealthiest class in society.

So they want to abolish the estate tax. They want to abolish the alter-

native minimum tax. That is the only reason that Donald Trump paid any taxes at all in the one year that we know he paid any taxes in the last 2 decades, the alternative minimum tax. So of course they want to get rid of that.

For the middle class, well, no breaks there. They want to get rid of the college student loan interest deduction. If you are struggling to get into the middle class, to go to college, if you had a deduction on the college student loan interest: Gone. They don't want it.

Healthcare expenses. You spend more than 10 percent of your income on healthcare expenses, long-term care for someone in your family who has Alzheimer's disease; you have a kid in your family who has autism going into a private school for kids with special needs, right now you can deduct that. They want to get rid of that.

They want to get rid of the State and local tax deduction, which half of my communities use, targeted right at those States, like Maryland, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, California, and Illinois, that invest heavily in education and infrastructure. So they just want to get rid of that.

Here's something else, another snake writhing in the grass of this terrible bill. They want to repeal the Johnson amendment. This is named after Lyndon Johnson when he was a Senator. So we are taking you back to the 1950s and 1960s. It was a very simple amendment that is essentially a logical corollary to the First Amendment, to the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. It says that 501(c)(3) organizations, churches, universities, not-for-profit entities cannot engage in political campaigning, in electioneering.

Guess what the Koch brothers and the Mercers have tucked into this one. They are going to get rid of the Johnson amendment. So the Koch brothers, if they want to spend \$1 billion trying to define American politics in the name of plutocracy, now it will be tax deductible. Right now, they can spend it under Citizens United, they can spend whatever they want, but they have got to pay for it.

Now they put it into a church or to churches, the "Church of the Golden Plutocracy," and then they can deduct it on their taxes and the church can now be involved in politics, it can spend money in politics, it can electioneer, it can endorse candidates for office, and it remains a tax-exempt entity.

Now, the smart churches, which is most churches, have opposed it. They said: Don't give us that power, because the next step is people are going to turn around and say, "Wait a second. Why are we getting tax deductible contributions in churches? Why are we tax exempt if we are getting involved in politics like everybody else?"

That will be the logical question. Indeed, it threatens the very existence of the 501(c)(3) organization by tearing down that wall over tax-exempt con-

tributions, which Sheldon Adelson and the Koch brothers and the Mercers want so badly. Very clever, their divine dark money loophole, very clever.

They are going to find a way that they can control our politics, deduct it from their taxes, and corrupt the entire not-for-profit sector, the churches and the synagogues and the mosques and so on.

I wish I could leave you with cheerier news tonight, but the U.S. Congress is on the verge of passing the worst tax proposal in American history that offends every value that we cherish in this country.

Why are the people who are pushing it, who are doing quadruple backflips in the middle of the night, hiding it from us?

It took us 2 years and 10 months to pass the 1986 bipartisan tax legislation. Here, this is behind the scenes in the dark, speed of light, dark of night, the whole thing.

Why are they willing to do it even though it is rejected now by 2-1 or 3-1 in every public opinion poll?

People understand it is highway robbery.

Why are they willing to do it?

Well, what is the worst that could happen to them?

Think about it. The worst that could happen to somebody who votes for this is they lose and they go to work for the Koch brothers, they go to work for the Mercers, they go to work for Sheldon Adelson, and the highway robbery is complete.

Now, popular protests stopped the plan to throw tens of millions of people off their healthcare. Despite the fact that the GOP controls the House, the Senate, the White House, and even the Supreme Court—they control all of it—yet popular protests around the country stopped it.

Mr. Speaker, that is the only thing that can stop us now, because so many of my colleagues across the aisle have decided to walk the plank for the Koch brothers and for the billionaire cabinet. They have decided to throw in with the oligarchs, the American oligarchs, and the plutocrats.

So popular protests, people speaking out and contacting their Members, will be our only hope of showing that this is an absolute insult and affront to American democracy; not just middle class economics, economics for everybody, but democratic politics; politics for everybody, not just the elite.

I thank the Speaker for granting us this opportunity to allow us to express our intense anxiety about what might happen next week. I wish the Speaker a good weekend. I hope that everyone will have the opportunity to consider the implications of what is taking place.

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

□ 1815

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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, there are a lot of big things going on. More things will be coming out. We have had an interesting day of it today.

Hopefully, the House and Senate—I think we are going to get a tax cut bill done. I think it is unfair to just call it a tax reform because it doesn't explain. We did tax cuts for everybody. We didn't change the percentage on the wealthiest Americans.

And I understand the thinking. Look, if we, as Republicans, change, we lower all the tax rates, then the Democrats will say: See, you're doing a big tax cut for the wealthy.

So I get it. But as the old saying in Washington goes: No matter how cynical you get, it's never enough to catch up; not in Washington.

Okay, so we didn't change the top percentage rate of tax on the wealthiest Americans. That is the only one we didn't change. And so what has happened?

Our friends across the aisle have said: See, this is a tax cut to help the rich. That is the one tax rate we didn't change, so it wouldn't have mattered.

I would love to have just seen—all right, we are getting rid of all of these tax rates. We are going to have one tax rate, and I would love it to be the tax rate that the Bible suggests in the synagogue or church; and that is 10 percent of your firstfruits. And why not 10 percent to the government after 10 percent of the firstfruits to the church or synagogue, if those are your religious beliefs?

Let's see. I forget which candidate, one of the candidates used to say: Hey, if 10 percent is good enough for God, why shouldn't it be good enough for the government?

But anyway, it was a nice thought. But we are still doing a little bit of social engineering by trying, apparently, in the tax bill, to give a lot of help to the folks who need it. There are some things that I hope will return.

I have heard from folks in my district, some accountants who have clients that, they do pay enough in medical expenses. If they don't get to deduct that, they are going to be bankrupt so, hopefully, that will be something that comes back and gets put in our version.

The last people we need to harm are the people who have got no other place to go. They are on Social Security, they are heading toward the end of life on this planet, and then the government stabs them in the back. I mean, that is what Bill Clinton did back in 1993. Not only did he put a tax on their Social Security in 1993, he made it retroactive. So it wasn't just taxing Social Security for the future, it made it

retroactive, and that was terribly tragic.

I wish we were making our tax cuts retroactive so that the working poor would get the help much quicker. But everybody in America is going to get some help with reduction, massive reduction of the largest tariff that any industrialized nation puts on its own goods when they are produced. It is called the corporate tax.

They make you think, oh, these greedy corporations, they are paying that tax. They don't pay that tax.

Just like Warren Barnett—Warren Buffett. Warren Barnett was a great trial lawyer. I don't know if he is still alive or not. I have heard him; he is an amazing guy, Democrat, amazing lawyer, really amazing trial lawyer.

But Warren Buffett, although he keeps saying publicly he wouldn't mind paying more taxes, his actions seem to indicate that they are paying massive amounts of money to lawyers to keep his company from paying the billions of dollars that I am told is owed. But anyway, we will see what happens there.

I am very hopeful that we are going to get a tax deal done, and we are going to bring it to the floor of this House, and we are going to pass it, and we will sing God bless KEVIN BRADY and the Ways and Means Committee, at least those who made it possible, made it happen. PAUL RYAN has been very helpful in moving that direction on the tax bill, so that will be a great thing if we can get it done.

I am also grateful to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee today for the hearing that he required that we have. We had the FBI Director, Director Wray, come over and testify in front of us, and I am optimistic, with Director Wray. Of course, I was optimistic with Director Comey when I first got to question him because I saw Comey, oh, this is great. Finally, we have gotten rid of Mueller and all the damage he has done to the FBI.

As I pointed out to Director Wray today, he took over a very weakened FBI from the one that he took over as FBI Director under Bush, because when Director Mueller took over as FBI Director—I have tried to figure out why he would do this, and the only thing I can figure is he wanted a bunch of young, "yes people" working for him; because it goes pretty common sense that people with the most experience are going to be in a position to tell you, as the new FBI Director, when you are choosing to go down a road that is going to create problems; because FBI agents who have been there for 25 years, like so many of ours were, had been, they are an oddity now, but that was because Mueller wanted young, fresh, saluting "yes men" who would salute the flag, salute him, and not be in a position to say: Well, Director, could I make a suggestion, sir? You know, we did exactly what you were suggesting back in 1996, or 1993, or 1988, or 1986. We did that back then, and here

is what happened. So if you would allow me, sir, I would recommend that we look at this, that, or the other.

Apparently, Director Mueller didn't want those kind of people in the FBI, so he started a 5-year, up-or-out program. So our thousands of FBI agents across the country, in the hundreds of offices that are apparently around—the 5-year, up-or-out program is basically this: if you are in a supervisory position anywhere in the world for 5 years, at the end of the 5 years, you either must get out of the FBI, or, the way it was interpreted by so many FBI agents, you are going to have to come ride a cubicle up here in Washington.

People all over the country and world who were working for the FBI said: I'm not taking my family to Washington, D.C., and, with all my training and experience, going to ride a cubicle somewhere. I need to be out protecting people, helping people.

As The Wall Street Journal pointed out in an article that wasn't—didn't seem like it was all that far into his 10 years—actually, it turned into 12, I believe, Director Mueller had, in devastating the FBI.

He made some huge mistakes, cost millions of dollars. Whether it was a software program, this program, that program, he had all these ideas, and there were plenty of people who had had enough experience in the different areas that, if he hadn't run them off, could have said: This is not a good idea, sir, if I could suggest—

He didn't want to hear from those people. He ran them off; thousands and thousands of years of law enforcement experience. He ran them off.

It would be interesting to see what the average age of the FBI agents were when he left, compared to when he started. And I realize, there are so many old goats that get long in the tooth, but you don't run them off because they are older. Those are some of the most valuable people you could have. The only reason you should run anybody off is if they have just been so cantankerous that it is a problem, they are not doing their job.

But he ran them off because they had been in a supervisory position for 5 years.

So you would see offices that had an agent in charge, 20, 25, 26 years of experience, and they would finish their 5 years and say: I'm getting out. I didn't want to get out. I wanted to serve my country, even though I make a lot less in the FBI. But you are forcing me out, so I will go make a whole lot more money. Wish I could still be here.

But FBI Director Mueller had other ideas. Director Mueller severely hampered the FBI. There was a lot of damage that was done. And perhaps if he hadn't run off so many good, experienced people, all those thousands and thousands of years of experience, perhaps there would have been more elder statesmen in the FBI when he was allowing FBI agents to manufacture, fabricate evidence, hide evidence, and just

fabricate a case out of whole cloth against Senator Ted Stevens.

I have met him. He was kind of short with me, but that is no reason to prosecute somebody. But it was for the FBI, as Director Mueller created it, the way he wanted it.

But there was, apparently, nobody who would step up. The people who had enough experience and enough confidence in their positions to say: Director Mueller, you have got a grave injustice going on here. You are creating a case where there was none. You hammered this guy. You took all his evidence. You took his computer, all his documents. You raided his bank, got his bank records. You got all his records. He has got nothing except what you allow him to have back. You took everything.

And all of the evidence is pretty clear. He overpaid by hundreds of thousands of dollars for the improvement. There is no case here for saying he got \$600,000, \$700,000 improvements, whatever it was, to his home for free. He overpaid dramatically more than the improvements were worth or cost anybody else.

Supposedly, there was even a message that the contractor said: You are overpaying. And the Senator made clear: They watch me like a hawk. Just cash the check. I'd rather overpay than have them come after me someday.

□ 1830

And what happened?

You had an FBI that had run off too much experience—well, Director Mueller did—and there was nobody before the verdict that would step up and say: The FBI is doing the wrong thing here. This is injustice. We have rogue FBI agents that have got to be reined in. At least one.

Fortunately, there were FBI agents with consciences, unlike the lead agent that Mueller allowed to stay on, even after he got rid of the whistleblower. Mueller didn't want a whistleblower around; not somebody that would be honest, not somebody that would step forward and say: You created a case against a U.S. Senator when there was no case. He had done nothing wrong, and you tried it the week before his election, and he lost by, what, 1,000 or so votes?

And he would have won but for the FBI, under Director Mueller, destroying a man and robbing him of his finances, destroying his reputation, and Director Mueller, as FBI Director, got this man fired for nothing. Because the truth was he overpaid. He should have gotten adoration for what he did. But not in Mueller's FBI.

I haven't seen anything to indicate the prosecutors knew of the fabrication and the fraud by the lead FBI agent. If that ever materializes, then I would want to find out where those prosecutors are and make sure the world knows of the injustice that they participated in—actually, crime. It is a crime when you fraudulently charge

and convict somebody of a crime and you know there is no crime. You know you fabricated the case, but such was Director Mueller's FBI.

I had great hope for James Comey coming in. Some things were asked today in our hearing about: Well, did President Trump ask for a loyalty oath from you?

Something like that.

I mean, there is nothing wrong with a President saying to a person that he has the power to remove or put in office: Now, I expect you to be loyal to me. What that would mean for a normal person is I expect you to come tell me if there is a problem. And I expect you to be loyal to me so that if there is some problem I am creating, you come tell me, and you don't go do a memo and twist the memo around to try to make it look like I did something wrong. I expect you to be loyal to me and not do anything to me different than you would any other President; that you would serve your country and the President with distinction and just not go leaking things to try to hurt me. You know, just be loyal. That is not asking for anybody to commit a crime. It is not asking for anybody to obstruct justice. It is asking that you just be fair to me as your boss. Will you do that?

It makes sense to ask a question like that when you have already seen so much injustice done to you by the Justice Department.

We didn't even know when President Trump took office just how horrendous the injustices were that were lurking behind the closed doors at the Justice Department because it wasn't a Justice Department. It was a "Just Us" department. The way it sounds like it was going is: We will protect the people who we think will be in the next administration, and heaven help the people if they knock our chosen out of the executive office at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, because we will perform a coup, we will get them out. We will use the Justice Department because, let's face it, after all, there is just a very thin veneer at the top of political appointments. We are just under that level. We will still really control things.

That is kind of the way it sounds like it was going.

When you have got a guy like Andrew McCabe—you know, the Bible says, when you are married, the two become one—his wife running for office, getting hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to what we understand from Donna Brazile, you know, Hillary Clinton basically took over the Democratic National Committee. So if the DNC was giving money to McCabe's wife, they all knew who to thank. Let's face it, they knew Hillary Clinton deserved a thank-you note.

And the one who owed the thank-you note to Hillary Clinton has a husband who is going to prosecute her?

Probably not. Probably not.

Those are the kinds of things we are finding.

Today, in our hearing, FBI Director Wray was asked a series of questions about Peter Strzok. I thought about asking some questions about Strzok, but I figured so many people would have questions, I would go a different direction.

But Strzok was a former number two for counterintelligence. He was removed from Mueller's investigation team this summer after an inspector general discovered he was exchanging politically charged messages with a mistress, Lisa Page, who is an FBI Attorney in the Office of the General Counsel.

We heard from Director Wray today that: Though many of us think of the FBI and think of "Federal Bureau of Investigation," that many FBI agents think the F doesn't stand for "Federal," but stands for "fidelity."

But apparently in the case of the number two person in counterintelligence, Peter Strzok, that fidelity was not an F; it was an I, "infidelity," because he was being unfaithful. He was engaged in infidelity and not fidelity. Nobody is selling that to us. He was engaged in infidelity and was enjoying, in the course of his infidelity, being disloyal to the man who would be and ultimately was his boss, the President of the United States, Donald Trump.

But instead of being fired for his improprieties, for his bias that was clearly affecting his job, Director Mueller, the man who did so much damage, ran off thousands of years of experience that could step forward and guide younger agents away from pitfalls. He ran them off. You are going to have younger agents without the proper guidance from the white hairs or no hairs. He ran them off. He didn't want people with too much experience and might question something that he ordered.

And when there is no accountability, there is nobody with more experience that can come alongside and say: Look, I have been here. I have seen a lot of things. Let me tell you, I see how you are going in this direction. Let me encourage you. Don't go there. I have seen too many people go that way.

No. Mueller made sure the consciences of the FBI, at least as many as he could run off, were gone. So instead of being fired, though, when they found out that Strzok hated President Trump's guts and worshipped Hillary Clinton and skewed the case—I mean, Strzok knew that if FBI Director Comey went out and said that Hillary Clinton had been grossly negligent, then he would have been stating on the record that Hillary Clinton had committed a crime. And since he wanted to protect Hillary Clinton so she could be President, he changed the language. So that Director Comey would not implicate Hillary Clinton in committing a crime, he changed the words "grossly negligent" to "excessively careless," as I understand it, and that wasn't necessarily a crime.

He was covering up. The man should have been gone.

So what do they do?

Well, he was reassigned to the FBI's HR department. It is unclear what Strzok's job duties were in his new position, but when he was asked about the nature of that move today, Director Wray stated that he did not consider it to be a demotion. It wasn't a disciplinary action. Director Wray did not want to discipline the guy for covering up for Hillary Clinton, for skewing the case, for mishandling the case to make sure that Hillary Clinton wasn't implicated. No, no, no. Clearly, he has a bias. Clearly, he hates Donald Trump before and after he is President, but that is no problem.

We sure don't want to lose a guy just because he hates Donald Trump and loves Hillary Clinton and excuses the Justice Department to suit his love for Hillary Clinton and his hate for Donald Trump. No, let's not demote him, let's not fire him. Let's just have a move here, maybe even make his life easier, I guess.

But in quoting from the response of Director Wray to a question posed by my friend ANDY BIGGS from Arizona, Mr. BIGGS said: "Okay. Mr. Strzok was reassigned. It seems it was an odd lateral move. Are you saying that was a lateral move for him?"

Director Wray said: "Reassigned away from the special counsel investigation to the human resources department. I understand that may sound to some of you like a demotion, but I can assure you that in a 37,000-person organization with a \$9 billion budget and offices all around the country and in 80 countries around the world, that I think our human resources department is extremely important, and a lot of what they do is cutting edge, best practice stuff. So it is a very different kind of assignment, certainly, but that is why I don't consider it disciplinary or a demotion."

So based on what Director Wray said, Peter Strzok was neither punished nor demoted after the IG discovered him engaging in politically biased conduct during the course of a key investigation that was of a political nature.

Look, nobody is demanding that our FBI agents not go vote on election day. They have that right. In some cases, they have an obligation because they know so much about what is going on. It is just very unfortunate when they know so much of what is going on and they know the people they are voting for appear to have committed crimes so we have got to change language and cover for them.

Not only was he not punished nor fired, but Peter Strzok was put into a position that Director Wray described as extremely important.

Strzok was sending these messages to a fellow FBI agent that he was having an extramarital affair with.

Why on Earth would you give someone who was caught sleeping around on his wife with a fellow employee an extremely important position? Why would you give them an extremely im-

portant position in the human resources department if you are Director of the FBI?

□ 1845

Mr. Speaker, I want to start fresh with a great FBI Director, but I am a little concerned here. Do you think it is a good qualification when someone is caught being engaged in infidelity—not the fidelity you talked about the F in FBI standing for, but engaged in infidelity.

They broke their marriage oath, their marriage vow, and that is who you want handling your human resources? Because that is an extremely important position. So we need the guy who was skewing justice, that is who we need? It is kind of ridiculous. Strzok wasn't punished.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your indulgence.

I yield back the balance of my time.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 123. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

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

S. 1266. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 06, 2017, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 228. To amend the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 to facilitate the ability of Indian tribes to integrate the employment, training, and related services from diverse Federal sources, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, December 11, 2017, at noon for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

3332. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Report to Congress entitled "Corrosion Policy and Oversight Budget Materials for FY 2018", pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2228; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3333. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter stating that the report on the amount of Department of Defense purchases from foreign entities, for FY 2017, will be submitted by the end of May 2018; to the Committee on Armed Services.

3334. A letter from the Acting Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, Public Law 95-452; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3335. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a notification of a designation of acting officer, change in previously submitted reported information, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3336. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting a notification of a designation of acting officer, change in previously submitted reported information, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3337. A letter from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting the Commission's Inspector General's Semiannual Report to Congress, for the period April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3338. A letter from the Acting Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's Semiannual Management Report to Congress for the period of April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3339. A letter from the Chairman of the Board, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's Semiannual Report to the Congress by the Office of Inspector General and the Corporation's Management Response for the period April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3340. A letter from the Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's Inspector General's semiannual report for April 1, 2017, through September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3341. A letter from the Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting the Agency's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period ending September 30, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

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. 4015. A bill to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry (Rept. 115-451). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 4324. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-452). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 1638. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-453, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Foreign Affairs discharged from further consideration. H.R. 1638 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. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. KATKO, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. GARRETT, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 4581. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop best practices for utilizing advanced passenger information and passenger name record data for counterterrorism screening and vetting operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. OLSON (for himself, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 4582. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to rehabilitation innovation centers under the Medicare program; 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. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4583. A bill to suspend all diplomatic presence in Cuba, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GARRETT (for himself, Mr. MESSER, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. FERGUSON, and Mr. BRAT):

H.R. 4584. A bill to provide loan forgiveness to borrowers of Federal student loans who agree to delay eligibility to collect social security benefits, and for other purposes; 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. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4585. A bill to prohibit the Federal Communications Commission from relying on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the matter of restoring internet freedom to adopt, amend, revoke, or otherwise modify any rule of the Commission; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCNERNEY (for himself and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas):

H.R. 4586. A bill to provide for the National Academies to study and report on a research agenda to advance the understanding of albedo modification strategies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4587. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to award grants to fund research on orthotics and prosthetics; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. COOK (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. O'HALLERAN, and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 4588. A bill to establish the Abraham Lincoln Medal for Public Sacrifice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CORREA (for himself, Mr. COFFMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. SIRE):

H.R. 4589. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to expand the military student identifier program to cover students with a parent who serves in the reserve component of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. COLE, and Mr. WENSTRUP):

H.R. 4590. A bill to provide an exception to certain mandatory minimum sentence requirements for a person employed outside the United States by a Federal agency, who uses, carries, or possesses the firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence committed while on-duty with a firearm required to be carried while on-duty; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KINZINGER (for himself, Mr. SUOZZI, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. NUNES, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. STEFANIK, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER):

H.R. 4591. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iranian persons that threaten the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq; 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 Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4592. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the two-year

waiting period for divorced spouse's benefits following the divorce; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4593. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for full benefits for disabled widows and widowers without regard to age; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4594. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for increases in widow's and widower's insurance benefits by reason of delayed retirement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4595. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the 7-year restriction on eligibility for widow's and widower's insurance benefits based on disability; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJAN of New Mexico (for himself and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico):

H.R. 4596. A bill to make funds available to the Department of Energy National Laboratories for the Federal share of cooperative research and development agreements that support maturing Laboratory technology and transferring it to the private sector, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. MACARTHUR (for himself, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana):

H.R. 4597. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow for the deferment of certain student loans during a period in which a borrower is enrolled in a drug treatment program; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. MENG (for herself, Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Mr. SOTO, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico):

H.R. 4598. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to require public communications about disaster assistance resources to be made in multiple languages; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4599. A bill to redesignate Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as Rock Creek National Park; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SIRE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. PASCRELL, Miss RICE of New York, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. NADLER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER):

H.R. 4600. A bill to waive and repay certain debts relating to assistance provided to individuals and households; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 4601. A bill to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, 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. POLIS:

H.R. 4602. A bill to authorize the full funding of part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by making certain spending cuts to the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, 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. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. DONOVAN):

H.R. 4603. A bill to provide for the continuation in effect of sanctions with respect to Yemen, 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. WALBERG (for himself and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

H.R. 4604. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide a fiduciary safe harbor for the selection of a lifetime income provider, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H. Res. 648. A resolution expressing support for the designation of August 3, 2018, as "National Ernie Pyle Day"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself and Mr. EVANS):

H. Res. 649. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to Marcus Garvey; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DIAZ-BALART (for himself, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. KILMER):

H. Res. 650. A resolution recognizing the results of the free and fair elections for the new Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands held on November 9, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. HULTGREN, and Ms. BASS):

H. Res. 651. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Burundi is at risk of mass atrocities, and that the Government of Burundi should comply with constitutional limits on presidential terms and re-engage in regionally-brokered peace talks; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CLAY, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. MOORE, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. NORTON):

H. Res. 652. A resolution supporting the practice of community-oriented policing and encouraging diversity hiring and retention in law enforcement; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. LEE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CORREA, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SOTO, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. HULTGREN, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. SANCHEZ, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H. Res. 653. A resolution recognizing the 69th anniversary of the Universal Declara-

tion of Human Rights and the celebration of "Human Rights Day"; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mr. LANCE):

H. Res. 654. A resolution expressing support for the designation of January 23, 2018, as "National Handwriting Day" and recognizing the importance of handwriting for cognitive, artistic, and educational benefit; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

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. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 4581.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

ARTICLE 1, SECTION 8, CLAUSE 1

By Mr. OLSON:

H.R. 4582.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4583.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 4584.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4585.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 4586.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4587.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I; Section 8; Clause 1 of the Constitution states 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 Mr. COOK:

H.R. 4588.

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 rules for the government as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 4589.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

(1) The U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 4590.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The attached language falls within Congress' enumerated authority to provide for

the common defence and general welfare of the United States, found in Article I, Section 8, clause 1, and to make rules for the government, found in Article I, Section 8, clause 14 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. KINZINGER:

H.R. 4591.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 3 and 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4592.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4593.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4594.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mrs. LOWEY:

H.R. 4595.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 4596.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MACARTHUR:

H.R. 4597.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States of America

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 4598.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4599.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 2 of section 3 of article IV of the Constitution.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 4600.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 4601.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 4602.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 4603.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 08

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 4604.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

- H.R. 51: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 113: Mr. PALLONE.
H.R. 154: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 169: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 377: Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 435: Mr. ROYCE of California and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.
H.R. 544: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 632: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. REED, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. HIMES, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LYNCH, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 681: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 731: Ms. MATSUI, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Mr. BERA.
H.R. 798: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 867: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 930: Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 1044: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1114: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 1192: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 1204: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 1406: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 1444: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 1456: Mr. ISSA and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 1457: Mr. CRIST.
H.R. 1458: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1552: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 1563: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 1614: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 1734: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 1802: Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 1898: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 1987: Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.
H.R. 1997: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 2166: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. MEADOWS, and Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 2215: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 2267: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 2319: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2412: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2421: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 2431: Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 2472: Mr. LANGEVIN and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2514: Mr. NADLER, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 2616: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 2651: Ms. DELBENE and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 2670: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 2707: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2790: Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 2820: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 2899: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 3079: Mr. FASO and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3092: Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. HULTGREN, and Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 3095: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3224: Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.R. 3314: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 3338: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 3395: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 3397: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3442: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 3445: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 3477: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 3495: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 3510: Ms. NORTON and Mr. JONES.
H.R. 3558: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEFazio, and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 3596: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. WALZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HUDSON, Mrs. ROBY, and Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 3600: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 3635: Mr. HARPER, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 3654: Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. LEE, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. BASS, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 3692: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 3730: Miss RICE of New York, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 3759: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 3767: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 3776: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia.
H.R. 3780: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 3842: Mr. LANGEVIN and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 3931: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 3976: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SIREs, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. PALAZZO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4006: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 4007: Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CORREA, Mr. CRIST, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KILMER, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PETERS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. TITUS, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VARGAS, Mrs. COMSTOCK, and Mr. LUTKEMEYER.
H.R. 4022: Mr. LAHOOD, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. POE of Texas, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 4058: Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 4143: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. RUSH, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 4152: Mrs. DEMINGS and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 4202: Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 4215: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 4229: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 4238: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 4271: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 4323: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 4324: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
H.R. 4369: Ms. NORTON and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 4392: Mr. COMER, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. TURNER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CORREA, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 4396: Mr. WELCH, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. CRIST, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 4397: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 4446: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 4473: Mr. PANETTA.
H.R. 4485: Ms. NORTON and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 4505: Mr. VISCLOSKEY.
H.R. 4507: Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. FLORES, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DAVIDSON, Mr. GRIFFITH, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4513: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 4518: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. EVANS, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KIND, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. CRIST, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 4526: Mr. GOSAR and Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 4535: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 4536: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 4541: Mr. PETERSON, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. HECK, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 4548: Mr. LAWSON of Florida and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4570: Mr. BACON and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H.R. 4573: Ms. LEE and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 4577: Mr. KING of New York and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H. Con. Res. 72: Mr. COOK and Mr. ENGEL.
H. Con. Res. 89: Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. SIREs.
H. Con. Res. 95: Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 69: Mr. PERRY and Ms. MATSUI.
H. Res. 199: Mr. ROUZER.
H. Res. 252: Mr. DUFFY.
H. Res. 257: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H. Res. 269: Mr. RUIZ.
H. Res. 466: Mr. CRIST and Mr. POE of Texas.
H. Res. 495: Mr. YARMUTH.
H. Res. 564: Mr. SANFORD and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.
H. Res. 637: Mr. GROTHMAN.



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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LUTHER STRANGE, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by Father Steven E. Boes, executive director of Boys Town in Boys Town, NE.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Lord God, we recognize today, on Pearl Harbor Day, the sacrifices of those young men and women who gave their lives for their country.

Lord God, in these troubled times of fires and floods and hurricanes and terror attacks and mass shootings, help us to rely on Your strength to envision and build a stronger and more secure America. Give us more visionaries like Father Edward Flanagan, who founded Boys Town on December 12, 100 years ago. Father Flanagan was an Irish immigrant who lived the American dream and taught us all that even the most troubled child could grow up to be a useful citizen if given half the chance. He saw the best in the kids whom others rejected as useless.

Help us but especially each of our Senators to see the best in those who have different political or social views so that we can, together, build an America that enables and calls forth the best in its citizens.

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 senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 7, 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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to thank Father Steven Boes from Boys Town for delivering our opening prayer this morning. The work he does to help at-risk youth across America is awe-inspiring, and I am proud to say that he is a Nebraskan.

Boys Town is a special place, and it is located in the heart of our country. In the late 1910s, while ministering to the homeless of Omaha, Father Edward Joseph Flanagan became interested in young people and their struggles to grow into responsible, productive adults. He wanted to help them improve their lives, and he soon founded Boys Town on December 12, 1917, as an orphanage for boys.

A few years later, Father Flanagan purchased Overlook Farm on the outskirts of Omaha, which soon became known as the Village of Boys Town. He knew that children would thrive if given love, a home, and a purpose. His message that every child deserves a loving home and a chance to create a positive future for themselves is one that resonates across social boundaries.

Today, Boys Town is one of the largest nonprofits in the country, serving underprivileged and at-risk children. Father Boes's leadership at Boys Town is a tribute to Father Flanagan's mission to build better communities by promoting stronger families. For nearly 100 years, Boys Town has worked tirelessly to nurture troubled children and heal broken families. Every year, the organization helps more than 2 million children and families across the United States.

Boys Town also has a renowned school, which offers a year-round traditional academic curriculum that focuses on helping students, especially those who are behind in their school work. It helps children in difficult circumstances find success in the classroom, as well as get back on track toward graduation.

The school's motto echoes that of the organization as a whole: "He ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother." I believe that motto is a great explanation of why we are celebrating Boys Town's 100th anniversary next week. For a century, through terrible depressions, horrible world wars, droughts, and snowstorms, Boys Town has served as a glimmer of hope for many who are looking for help.

I don't think Father Flanagan would be surprised to learn that Boys Town has grown to include 12 regional headquarters across our great Nation or that his charity really has become a jewel of the nonprofits. His outlook created a firm foundation for helping our communities, and it is one that Father Boes continues to build on.

That deserves to be celebrated. I am happy that on July 6, 2015, the Boys Town Centennial Commemorative Coin Act was signed into law. This bill authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to mint five-dollar gold coins, one-dollar silver coins, and half-dollar coins in honor of Boys Town's 100th anniversary. Adorned with designs and sayings that capture the spirit and mission of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Boys Town, these coins can act as good reminders of those who once helped us. I hope they also serve as encouragement to improve our communities and think about those who are less fortunate.

I wish Father Boes continued success going forward. We in the Senate are all rooting for him. Boys Town exemplifies the spirit of America, and it is the prize of the State of Nebraska. I am honored to be its Senator.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

THANKING THE SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA AND THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to thank our colleague from Nebraska and our guest this morning for reminding us of the wonderful story of Boys Town. We were discussing the movie from the late 1930s starring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, as well as learning what has happened to Boys Town since then.

Thank you so much, Senator FISCHER and our guest, for bringing us up to date on the latest on Boys Town.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2199

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2199) to authorize appropriations for border infrastructure construction, to provide conditional resident status to certain aliens, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include grounds of inadmissibility and deportability for alien members of criminal gangs and cartels, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH BALASH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in addition to our important work on tax reform and to fund the government, this week the Senate is also continuing our efforts to confirm President Trump's nominees to his administration.

Soon the Senate will consider the nomination of Joseph Balash to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management.

Through his career in both State government and as the Alaska commissioner of natural resources and his service here in the U.S. Senate, Mr. Balash has shown his talent and passion for affordable sources of energy and environmental protection.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources manages one of the largest portfolios of land, water, oil, gas, renewables, timber, and minerals in the world. Mr. Balash's leadership of the department required collaboration with many diverse stakeholders and a dedication to the protection of Alaska's natural beauty. He worked closely with the Interior Department and the commissioner, and he has the skills necessary to fulfill this leadership role at the Department.

As the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Balash will be responsible for many of the Interior Department's critical functions, including the management of all Federal lands and waters, the management of their associated resources, and the appropriate regulation of surface coal mining. I look forward to working with Mr. Balash on many of these issues, especially those important to the coal miners in my home State of Kentucky.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this nomination.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on another matter, yesterday the Senate formally voted to join our colleagues from the House to consider our tax reform bills in a conference committee. It is another important step toward delivering much needed relief to the men, women, and families we represent. Now the committee members will reconcile the differences between the bills. When they finish their work, Members of both Chambers will have the opportunity to pass this tax reform legislation and send it to President Trump.

As I have said before, tax reform represents the single most important thing we can do right now to grow the economy and boost middle-class families. It will also incentivize businesses to bring investment and jobs home and keep them here. We want a tax bill that works for hard-working American families, one that can bring opportunity, help create new jobs, and keep more money in workers' paychecks. That means a typical family of four earning a median income could see a tax cut of approximately \$2,200.

This tax reform plan is our way of helping families get ahead and plan for their future. It has taken a lot of hard work to get to this point, and I wish to thank my Senate colleagues and our friends in the House and in the Trump administration for their efforts to fundamentally rethink our Tax Code.

I look forward to the conference committee's report so we can complete our efforts and deliver relief to those who need it most.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on one final matter, the Senate must act before the end of the week to pass a clean, short-term funding bill to maintain critical operations of the Federal Government. Our colleagues in the House will send us the non-controversial provision soon, and then we will have an opportunity to consider it. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass it. This short-term continuing resolution will provide us with the time we need to complete discussions on a long-term solution. It will also provide certainty to States to continue funding the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Later today, Speaker RYAN, Leader SCHUMER, Leader PELOSI, and I will meet with President Trump to continue discussing an agreement to fund the Federal Government. I look forward to working together with colleagues in a serious, bipartisan way to address a number of the priorities of our Nation in the coming weeks. I hope all Members will join me.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ISSUES BEFORE CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I first would like to talk today about year-end business.

Congressional negotiators are making good headway on a budget deal that would meet our commitments to our military and also our urgent priorities here at home. I hope this progress continues this week.

Unfortunately, the progress in Congress is in stark contrast to the rhetoric coming from the White House.

President Trump again suggested yesterday that a “shutdown could happen.” If a shutdown happens, as the President seemed to be rooting for in his tweet earlier this year, it will fall on his shoulders. His party controls the Senate, the House, and the Presidency.

Nobody here wants to see a shutdown. We Democrats are not interested in one. That is why we are working with our Republican colleagues in good faith to resolve all of the issues we have to solve before the end of the year, and it is in this spirit that Leader PELOSI and I will go to the White House this afternoon to discuss all of the issues before us.

It is no secret that one of the major sticking points—if not the major sticking point—in the negotiations is funding levels for programs that invest directly in economic growth and a social safety net for the middle class. Democrats are pushing for sorely needed funding to combat the opioid crisis, to shore up pension plans, to support veterans’ health, to relieve student loan debt, and build rural infrastructure.

Without a budget agreement that lifts spending caps on both defense and economic development in a fair and equitable manner, programs I have mentioned, and so many others—medical research comes to mind—could see their funding cut. Our veterans deserve better. People seeking recovery from opioid addiction deserve better. Hard-working pensioners deserve better. We must do both things—support the military and programs that create jobs and growth here at home—in equal measure. Both are very important.

I know there are some on the far right who say all the jobs programs and economic growth programs are unimportant, but most of us, Democrats and Republicans, believe both are important. The idea that both are important has been the basis of successful budget agreements going back several years, including the agreement we reached last April, where the military side and the domestic job, economic growth side were treated equally.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Freedom Caucus—a rather small bloc of hard-right House conservatives—is trying to derail another successful parity agreement. According to press reports, the Freedom Caucus is pushing for a very short-term extension of funding for jobs and economic development, while pushing for a long-term extension and a large increase for funding in defense. That is a ruse designed to slash funding for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and scientific research—all the things the Freedom Caucus, against the will of the overwhelming vast majority of Americans, doesn’t want the government to fund.

Make no mistake, the Freedom Caucus is gearing up to hurt the middle class on the budget, just like so many Republicans way beyond the Freedom Caucus did with their tax bill—just like on the tax bill. We Democrats are

going to defend the middle class because they need our help, too, and they have been forgotten by our Republican colleagues throughout the year, but this time, the Freedom Caucus’s actions, if they had their way, could lead to a disaster. Speaker RYAN must stand up and tell the Freedom Caucus, no, they cannot be allowed to hold hostage productive bipartisan budget negotiations with outrageous demands that hurt the middle class. If Speaker RYAN lets them have their way, it will cause a shutdown. It will be on the Freedom Caucus’ shoulders, Leader RYAN’s shoulders, and the President’s shoulders because such a bill could not pass either the House or the Senate—we are giving them fair warning right now—not right at the deadline.

DREAM ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, let me say a word about the Dream Act. Earlier this week, my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois, came to the floor to update the Senate on the progress he is making in his negotiations with Senate Republicans on an agreement that would provide a significant investment in border security in exchange for the Dream Act.

As I have said in the past, Democrats support real border security. We will be happy to join with Republicans to pass legislation to secure our border in exchange for the Dream Act. Those talks continue to make good progress. I hope we can reach an agreement soon.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, a word on the special counsel. Over the past few weeks, I have continued to hear Republican lawmakers and partisan media hosts attack the integrity of Special Counsel Mueller in a shameful display meant to undermine his investigation into the connections between the Trump campaign and Russia. Spuriously attacking Robert Mueller, one of the most respected and trusted civil servants in our country, is the surest route to losing all credibility.

I remind everyone on the right who are trying to muddy the waters on the Mueller investigation that Robert Mueller was a career prosecutor who has served both Republican and Democratic administrations in the most trusted of roles. He was appointed by President Trump’s own Deputy Attorney General. It defies credulity to lambaste him as partisan or biased. He is as straight a shooter as they come. This is bigger than one man. The attacks on Special Counsel Mueller and his investigation erode faith in the rule of law, that bedrock principle at the heart of our civic life.

If independent investigations into matters as grave as foreign interference in our elections succumb to intimidation and partisan slander, we will be no better than a third-world country. Rule of law will be gone, at

least for the President of the United States, which is something Americans have treasured for centuries. What has always defined American democracy is an unyielding faith in the rule of law—its power to check our people, as well as our Presidents. Special Counsel Mueller is the rule of law at work in our 21st century American democracy. Intentionally and spuriously impugning his integrity—not because he has done anything wrong but because they don’t like what he is doing; very partisan, very biased, very one-sided is their view—is not only inaccurate but damaging to a core ideal in our country—the independent and impartial rule of law. We must loudly reject the strident voices who engage in these attacks on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, on the issue of taxes, with the passage of the Republican Senate bill last Friday, the Republican Party has shrugged off its history as the party of tax cuts and become the party of tax hikes on the middle class. The Republican tax bill will end up raising taxes on millions of middle-class families to pay for corporate welfare.

As our Republican colleagues march us toward an enormous corporate tax cut, we have seen numerous companies start to announce plans to buy back more of their stock—not build factories, not create jobs, but to buy back their stock, which, of course, benefits the CEOs because the stock price goes up.

T-Mobile has announced \$1.5 billion in stock buybacks; Mastercard, \$4 billion; Bank of America, \$5 billion. Just this morning, three or more companies announced hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of buybacks. These companies, I would say to President Trump and I would say to my Republican colleagues, are not announcing new investments in their workforce or wage increases, as Republicans promised they would. They are announcing stock repurchasing programs that benefit their wealthy investors.

The tax bill will also saddle the next generation of leaders with larger deficits and debts, limiting our ability to make the kinds of investments we need to be making in education, infrastructure, and scientific research—a far surer path to good-paying jobs and raising wages than giving corporate America, already flush with cash, even more stock buybacks. For the same reason, those increased deficits, Republicans are now coming back and saying that they want to slash Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, making it even harder in America to access affordable healthcare and retire with dignity.

Speaker RYAN admitted it yesterday. He said: “We’re going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and

the deficit," and he specifically mentioned Medicare. They first create the deficit by these huge tax cuts for the wealthiest corporations and individuals, and then they take it out on the middle class by saying: We have no choice but to cut Medicare. What is the matter? I hope the American people will see this. I hope some of the news channels and radio commentators will note this, since those are the people who listen to them.

By the way, that is only what we know about the bill. It was muscled through the Chamber with such reckless haste, we are finding errors and consequences every day. In yesterday's *POLITICO*, Greg Jenner, a former top tax official in Bush's Treasury Department who helped write the 1986 tax reform bill, was quoted as saying:

The more you read [of the Republican tax bill], the more you go, "Holy crap, what's this?" We will be dealing with unintended consequences for months to come because the bill is moving too fast.

That is a Republican, a former tax official from President Bush's Treasury Department.

When we were debating the Affordable Care Act—a process that took over a year—the esteemed majority leader admonished: We need to slow down and get this right.

The tax bill, by comparison, spent hardly 2 weeks in the House and 3 weeks in the Senate, and it is a lot worse for the average middle-class person. I would say the same thing to the majority leader that he said to us: Slow down and get this right. There is no need to rush this hastily considered, highly complex, hugely consequential tax bill before some artificial deadline.

We have a responsibility to get this right for the American people, particularly the American middle class. I still believe the way to do it is through an open, transparent, and bipartisan debate.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on December 10 of this week, we will celebrate International Human Rights Day. It is the 69th anniversary of the United Nations' adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It provided inalienable rights for everyone in this world to be entitled to basic human rights, regardless of their religion, regardless of their race, their color, their gender, their language, their politics, their national origin, their property, wealth, birth, whatever. You are entitled to basic human rights.

The declaration further goes on to say that the ignoring and contempt of human rights have been among the principal causes of the suffering of humanity. That clearly has been the case throughout the history of the world

and is still relevant today—very relevant today.

The interesting thing about the universal declaration is that it acknowledges that we all have responsibilities. This is not just a country responsibility; we, as citizens of the world, have an obligation to challenge when human rights are violated anywhere in the world. That is our responsibility. It is interesting that one of the responsibilities I have as the ranking Senate Democrat on the Helsinki Commission, which is the organization that monitors our participants and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe—that declaration, the Helsinki accords, which was entered into in 1975, was an acknowledgement of basic human rights; it is a responsibility of all the participating countries to adhere to basic human rights. The Helsinki accords also make it very clear that any member country of the OSCE has the right to challenge what is happening in any other country. We have a responsibility as global citizens to speak out when basic human rights are being violated.

I also point out that this is one of the basic tenets of America's strength. One value embodied in our Constitution, embodied in our history, is a respect for human rights, and it makes America the unique Nation it is. Yes, we are looked upon as a global power because of our military and economy, but I must tell you, the real trademark of America, the real value we give to the international debate is the fact that we bring a commitment to basic human rights and values as part of our DNA. That has been very much demonstrated in so many ways.

I am proud of many of our accomplishments on behalf of international human rights. America's leadership on trafficking in persons—there have been Democrats and Republicans who have taken the lead on this to make it clear that we will not tolerate modern-day slavery. We took the lead on that; Congress took the lead on that. We passed the "Trafficking in Persons Report." We now monitor activities in every country in the world, including the United States, in order to protect against modern-day slavery.

I am proud of the passage of, first, the Magnitsky statute, which dealt with Russia, and now the global Magnitsky statute, which says: If a country does not hold accountable their gross violators of human rights, we will not give them access to our banking system or the ability to visit our country. When we passed that law, other countries followed suit. Europe has enacted the Magnitsky statute, Canada has enacted it, and individual countries have enacted it. We show leadership, and the world follows. We have effective tools to say that we will stand up and live up to our commitments to enforce human rights.

What we often do is put a spotlight on those human rights defenders who are being persecuted around the world.

By putting a spotlight on it, we give them hope. That is what we did in regard to the human rights defenders in China, human rights defenders in so many places around the world.

Quite frankly, one of the principal functions of our missions in countries around the world is to be there to speak out for basic human rights, to speak out in support of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I am proud of our Foreign Service officers who carry that mission every day in every country around the world.

When potential nominees for Ambassadors come before our committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we question them as to their commitment to support American values on human rights and what they will do in the country they will be representing America in order to advance those causes. This is part of our responsibility based upon the United Nations declaration, but it is also part of what we need to do in order for us to stay safe.

We know there is a direct correlation between a country's respect for human rights and the amount of conflict, the amount of violence, the amount of insurgency that takes place within that country. Violent extremists will have a place to breathe if a country doesn't respect the human rights of its citizens. It is in our national security interests, in addition to doing what is right as a nation and as a global citizen.

We have challenges today. We have autocratic leaders around the world who are violating every day the human rights of their citizens. We need to help lead the international community. We see attacks on journalism and the rights of free press, where it is, in many places in the world, not safe to comment freely about what is happening in a country.

The LGBT community has been under constant attack in many parts of the world, and we need to defend their rights. Human rights defenders are being imprisoned in so many countries around the world. We need to stand up for their rights. Yes, in trafficking in persons, Senator CORKER and I recently put a spotlight on what is happening in Libya, where they actually have slave auctions that are taking place, where people are being sold. We can't be silent about those types of activities or, in our own hemisphere, about what is happening in Venezuela, where there is a government that is denying its own people the right of access to international humanitarian aid. People are dying in hospitals because they can't get medical supplies. We need to speak out about that.

Many of us have come to the floor to talk about the challenges we have as global citizens on the number of refugees, the displaced persons we have. We have numbers now that we haven't seen since the end of World War II of people who do not have a home, who are refugees. We need to do something

about that. The most recent mass number left Burma because of the persecution of the Rohingya Muslims, and they are now in Bangladesh in horrible conditions. We all have a responsibility to respond. There are a number of refugees from Syria—huge numbers—and it requires U.S. leadership.

This has been a bipartisan commitment in the Senate and a bipartisan commitment in the Congress, but I must tell you that I am disappointed by President Trump's failure to lead on this issue. He recently visited Asia. What an opportunity that would have been to have brought up the human rights struggles, whether they are in North Korea, which is the worst country in the world on human rights, or China, which has significant challenges, particularly with respect to its religious minorities, but also as to the right of its people to have economic freedom. There are major problems in China and problems in the Philippines with its President and what he does in regard to extrajudicial killings. The President hardly mentioned human rights at all during his trip to East Asia.

He embraces leaders like Mr. Putin of Russia, who is a gross violator of the rights of his own people, and President Duterte of the Philippines, whom I already mentioned. President Trump embraces those types of leaders. We should be pointing out that Mr. Putin should be held accountable for his violations of human rights, and President Duterte should be held accountable for the extrajudicial killings that take place under his watch. The United States should be in the lead in bringing these issues to the public's attention.

Then there is the President's immigration policies. We have always been the leader in the world's effort to welcome those who have been persecuted in other countries. We talk about our historical commitment of welcoming the huddled masses who are yearning to breathe free. That is America. Now we are closing our borders to refugees—to those who are being persecuted? We say to the countries in the Middle East: Open up your borders to the refugees from Syria or open up your borders to the refugees from that region. Yet, in the United States, we cannot handle a few numbers?

We need to have much stronger and enlightened policies as we are now talking about people who have been long-term Americans. They only know America as their home. We are now telling the Dreamers or those under temporary protected status, because they have fled the gang violence in El Salvador or Honduras: You are no longer welcome in the only country you know, America. President Trump needs to lead on this issue because it is our global responsibility, and it is in the interest of our country.

Yes, Human Rights Day is coming up this week. Let's rededicate ourselves to fight on behalf of human rights globally. That is our responsibility. It is who we are as a nation, and it is who we are as global citizens.

I urge my colleagues to remember the words of John F. Kennedy when he said that, here on Earth, God's work must be our own. That is true. Let us carry on the work of respecting the human rights of all people in the world.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. STRANGE. Mr. President, I rise today to address my colleagues for the last time. After nearly a year in this Chamber, I am both its newest Member and the next to depart. As such, I have both the optimism of a young student and the battle scars of a man in the arena. Today I would like to offer my colleagues some observations from the perspective of my unique circumstances.

My fellow Senators and I come from different places. We were raised differently, and we have lived differently. In coming to serve in the world's greatest deliberative body, we have carried and tested different notions of America.

There is, however, one reality that transcends our individual experiences. In this Chamber, we are each humbled by history. The Senate has been a forum for some of the great debates of our Republic. It has shaped—and has been shaped by—citizen legislators from every State in the Union. We are awed by the strength of an institution that has weathered great challenges and the wisdom of those who first envisioned it.

As I rise today in that spirit, I would like to shed some light on a page of Senate history that bears great significance in our current political climate. As we know, across the aisle behind us is a space known as the Marble Room. In a building that is home to so many breathtaking historic sites, this alcove has a singular beauty and a story worth telling.

As part of the 1850s expansion of the Senate's Chambers, the Marble Room began as a public gathering place and has been frequented over the decades by politicians and protesters alike. When the Union Army camped on the grounds of the Capitol, soldiers even used its fireplaces for cooking.

For over 60 years, the Marble Room was steeped in the life of the American citizen. It hosted meetings with advocates, constituents, and the free press. It became a very tangible example of our Nation's experiment in representative government. In March of 1921, it took on a new, equally important purpose. The space was reserved by the Rules Committee as an escape for Senators from the crowded halls of the Capitol and the windowless, smoke-filled rooms where they often had to

gather off the floor. It became the place where Senators of all stripes would come to catch their breath and take their armor off. Some would nap, some would eat lunch, some would read the newspapers, and all would end up forming bonds that rose above politics.

Today the Marble Room is almost always empty. This emptiness symbolizes something that worries me about today's politics. It is likely both a symptom and a cause of the partisan gridlock that often dominates this Chamber.

But the story of that room—the interplay between citizens and institution, between pragmatism and principle—is the story of the Senate and in some ways the story of republican government in America.

What was once an incubator for collegiality and bipartisanship has become a glaring reminder of the divisions that we have allowed to distract us from the business of the American people. We each remain humbled by the history of the Marble Room. We stand in awe of the traditions of this hallowed body, but too often we fail to let this history be our guide through today's political challenges.

My time in the Senate has reinforced for me what it means to balance principle and pragmatism and to serve the people of my State honorably, and it has taught me how to navigate the turbulent waters of Washington. I imagine that our predecessors who spent time together in the Marble Room wrestled with similar questions.

After all, the issues we face today are not all that different. This body has been strained before—it has bent but has not broken. Finding lasting solutions to our Nation's problems does not require reinventing the wheel. Our forefathers have done it before, and they have done it right across the hall.

I spent my early years growing up in Sylacauga, AL—familiar to my friend the senior Senator—about 40 miles outside of Birmingham. My first hometown is known as the Marble City for the swath of high-quality stone it sits upon, 32 miles long and as much as 600 feet deep.

Sylacauga marble is recognized for its pure white color and its fine texture. Here in the Nation's Capital, we are surrounded by it. It is set into the ceiling of the Lincoln Memorial and the halls of the Supreme Court, and it was used by renowned sculptor Gutzon Borglum to create the bust of Abraham Lincoln that is on display in the crypt downstairs.

Sylacauga marble is used in places infused with tradition and deep history. It is used to enshrine important landmarks. It ensures that memories of the past will stand the test of time to inform the decisions of the future.

In a small house in the Marble City, I was raised by a family that instilled in me a deep and abiding reverence for

history and tradition. My father was a Navy veteran and my only uncle, a West Point graduate killed in service to our country in World War II, was, ironically, born on the Fourth of July.

As you can imagine, I didn't need to observe parades, flags, and fireworks to understand the sacrifice people have made to preserve our freedom. I just had to look in my mother's eyes on her only brother's birthday to remember that sacrifice. Forged in service and sacrifice, my family understood the blessing of living in America and the price of passing its freedoms on to the next generation.

Thanks to this generation before me, the "greatest generation," I grew up strong in Alabama. At a young age, I was introduced to the Boy Scouts of America, as many of my colleagues were. From volunteer troop leaders to the older scouts I looked up to, the Boy Scouts created an environment of selfless service. As a scout, I learned to appreciate the institutions of American society and my role as a citizen. By the age of 13, I was an Eagle Scout traveling to Washington, DC, on a school trip to see this great experiment in representative government up close. As I tell every young person who comes to see me, that made an enduring difference in my life.

I often wonder, if we all approached our duties here with the wide-eyed wonder of a young student on a field trip, whether we couldn't accomplish a little more in Congress.

Of course, the strength of this body and the remarkable foresight of our Founding Fathers run deeper than an elementary school civics class or a trip to Washington. For me, the next pivotal moment came as an undergraduate student at Tulane University in the spring and summer of 1973.

I know many of my colleagues will not be surprised to know that I played basketball in college, and there is a reason why. I am the tallest Senator in history, as I have come to understand it. In between practice and part-time jobs, I did find time to watch the newly formed Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities begin its investigation of the Watergate scandal.

In that moment, our Nation stepped into uncharted territory. The strength of our Constitution was tested like never before. Would the pursuit of justice overcome politics? Would the institution of the Presidency be forever changed? What are the responsibilities of citizens in the Republic when the Republic's institutions are tested?

It was during that spring semester of 1973 that I began to understand the tremendous power of the rule of law. It is guarded by representatives who swear to protect, preserve, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

When my basketball playing years ran out, it was this realization that led me to go to law school. My new game would be learning the ins and outs of this system that ensured the rights our

Founders envisioned. My new team would be my fellow classmates and students who would go on to practice law and serve our Nation at all levels of government.

As so many of our colleagues know, the path from practicing law to writing it is well traveled. I was fortunate to travel it with the help of some of Alabama's finest public servants. As a young attorney, I first met one of them for breakfast in the cafeteria at the Department of Justice. In those days, you could go to the Department of Justice without having to show an ID, and I quickly discovered, after I had gotten my breakfast, that I had forgotten my wallet. So Jeff Sessions had to pay for my meal. He has continued to pay it forward to this day, as a dear friend and mentor, and, of course, he is now the Attorney General of the United States of America.

Jeff Sessions is a gracious statesman and a man of principle, and it is not farfetched, in my opinion, to say that some of his temperament rubbed off on him from our State's senior Senator and my dear friend, Senator RICHARD SHELBY. I so appreciate his presence here in the Chamber today.

Over 30 years ago, I was introduced to then-Congressman SHELBY by my friend, former Secretary of the Senate Joe Stewart, a person who revered this institution. As a young lawyer, I learned from a man fast becoming a legendary legislator. He would become one of my most treasured friends, sharing many days hunting together in the fields of Alabama and elsewhere and many more stories shared here in the halls of the Capitol.

Together, Jeff Sessions and RICHARD SHELBY represent the finest Alabama has to offer to our Nation. Following in their footsteps here in the Senate is an honor I will forever treasure.

The example of these men inspired me to get involved in public service. As the attorney general of Alabama, Jeff Sessions set an example. As the most influential, revered Senator in our State's history, RICHARD SHELBY has guided the way, each with an unparalleled reverence for the rule of law.

I spoke earlier about the balance of pragmatism and principle. In doing so, I had my friends in mind. When I was elected attorney general for the State of Alabama in 2010, I drew heavily on their examples of principled conservative leadership.

In this body we are too often convinced that standing for deeply held principles is incompatible with pragmatism. In the 6 years I have served as attorney general, I learned that this could not be further from the truth.

Serving my State in that capacity required balance above all else, as the Presiding Officer, having been an attorney general himself, would understand. I had an obligation to the people of Alabama who elected me to fight for the conservative victories they were counting on, but I also had a solemn duty to rise above politics and follow the law and truth wherever it led.

Make no mistake, during my two terms as attorney general, I took every opportunity to defend the Constitution and the people of Alabama against Federal Government overreach—in other words, defending the rule of law, the oath that we take.

Together with other State attorneys general, I worked to protect farmers and ranchers from an EPA rule that would turn puddles in their fields into federally regulated ecosystems. We stood up against threats to religious liberty and the Second Amendment, and we took the fight over illegal executive amnesty all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. On these and many other issues, we stood for the rule of law, and we won.

I don't have to prove my commitment to conservative principles. At the same time, I have a record of upholding the rule of law even when my own party goes astray. I have the scars to show for it, believe me. Over my 6 years in the State capitol of Montgomery, I assembled a nationally renowned team of prosecutors behind a common goal: to root out public corruption.

This pursuit led to the convictions of several corrupt public officials in the State of Alabama, including a county sheriff complicit in human trafficking—the first successful prosecution of its kind in decades.

My team took on Alabama's Republican speaker of the house for ethics violations, leading to his removal from office and a prison sentence. As you might imagine, we didn't make any friends in the political establishment by doing so, but we shored up public trust in our representative government.

For their commitment to fighting public corruption, my team has been recognized by the National Association of Attorneys General as a gold standard. I personally had the opportunity to address my former colleagues from both sides of the aisle who are focusing on the same goal in their States. More than any fleeting partisan achievement, it is work like this of which I am the most proud.

When faced with crises, we rose to a calling higher than politics. After the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 decimated communities and ecosystems along the gulf coast, I was appointed by the court as coordinating counsel for the Gulf Coast States in that historic litigation. Our team, working together with others, won the trial and negotiated a multibillion-dollar settlement for our State and other coastal States.

Our work on that spill case built consensus, and it found common ground. It brought together the interests of fiscal conservatives and environmental advocates, and we delivered results because it was the right thing to do. While the victims of the Alaska oil spill, which the Presiding Officer is well familiar with, had to wait many years for a resolution, we were able to deliver justice

and set a gold standard for responding quickly and effectively to the needs of our coastal communities.

After all, the institutions our Founders laid out in the Constitution are only as strong as the people's belief in their strength. When America no longer trusts that its representatives are remaining true to their oaths, the entire system loses its value.

As the most recent Senator to take that oath, I remember the feeling of the Bible under my left hand. I remember reflecting on a verse it contains that has brought me peace in times of challenge. Proverbs 19:21, which I keep by my bedside, says: "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

I remember raising my right hand here in the well, where so many others have gone before—many of whom likely found it difficult to discern exactly what the Lord's purpose was in that moment. Each of them came to this body in the face of significant national challenges. Some faced violent conflict, others an economic crisis. Our forebears would not be surprised by the issues before this body today, but I do believe they would be surprised and discouraged by the emptiness of the Marble Room.

Mr. President, the policy challenges we face are not new ones. This body debates a budget resolution every single year. Many years, it also faces questions of war and conflict overseas. And at least once a decade, it seems, we face some tectonic shift of the economy.

As a lifelong student of history, I am reassured by stories of the grave crises that have been addressed on this very floor. In this Chamber, the post-Civil War Senate ensured that the Nation stayed the course of healing and reunification. In this very Chamber, the Senate put politics aside to defeat the rise of fascism in Europe and guided the creation of a new 20th-century world order. On this floor, long-overdue support for civil rights was won, vote by vote.

This civil rights struggle is held vividly in the memory of my home State. In the early 1960s, my elementary school in Birmingham, AL, was segregated. By 1971, I was taking the court with three young Black men—my teammates, my classmates, and my friends—to play for the State basketball championship.

As our Nation evolves, the traditions and history of the Senate demand that this institution meet each new challenge, armed with the will of the American people.

And as I watched with the rest of the country, it was on this floor that the Senate restored faith in our institutions by delivering justice after Watergate. It was a real pleasure for me as a lawyer later in life to get to meet Fred Thompson, who served in this great body and was the counsel for the minority on the Watergate Committee, to see the example he set as a Senator and to call him a friend.

The idea that the chaos and upheaval we see today are unique falls flat in the face of this monumental history. Pundits and politicians alike are too quick and easy to talk in superlatives, but chaos and change are nothing new to this country. The Senate was designed to endure, and rooms of marble are built to last.

Studying that Senate history puts the issues of today in perspective for us, but it also sheds light on the true challenge of our generation—a newer, more serious threat to the future of this institution and its traditions.

You see, the Senate was designed to accommodate conflict and profound disagreement. It was not, however, designed to tolerate the entrenched factionalism that dominates today's proceedings. It was not designed for the people's representatives to hunker down in private rooms, emerging only long enough to come to the Chamber and cast votes.

There are 100 seats in this Chamber. Each one was contested and hard-earned, but they are rarely all occupied. The less time we spend in the same room, the easier it becomes to view our colleagues on the other side of the aisle as obstacles instead of opportunities.

What do I mean by opportunities? Mr. President, I believe our generation of leaders will be judged by history on whether we strove to heal the divisions of this body and our Nation. In pursuit of that goal, every Member of this body has an opportunity to grow in understanding.

Yet it seems to me that "compromise" has become a dirty word in American politics, and that is a serious threat to our hopes of advancing meaningful policy, in my view.

It seems that reasonable Americans understand what we are called to do better than we do. I see the chairman of the Agriculture Committee here, who is a dear friend and maybe can put this better than I can. As he knows, a wise farmer in Alabama once told me: When my wife sends me to the store to buy a dozen eggs and there are only half a dozen left, I come home with a half-dozen.

I believe we have the power to bring home half a dozen here in the Senate and maybe even bring home a dozen for the American people. We have the power to be a profound force for good.

After all, compromise was baked into the Founders' design of this institution. At the heart of our system of checks and balances is an understanding that no one branch and certainly no one partisan faction will get all it wants, all the time.

From the very beginning, compromise allowed our Nation to embrace both the republicanism of Thomas Jefferson and the federalism of Alexander Hamilton. The very structure of this body is the result of the Connecticut Compromise of 1787, which accommodated proponents of both equal and proportional representation.

The authors of this very pragmatic solution, Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, are depicted on the wall right outside the Senate Chamber, not far from the Marble Room, where their example of finding common ground would be practiced for decades to come.

Mr. President, in the shadow of these founding debates, political voices today are arguing louder and louder about smaller and smaller things. It is easy for those outside this Chamber to insist that they know what should be done, and as long as we remain so deeply divided, those outside voices will always win.

When I leave the Senate, I hope to have lived up to the words of a different voice, familiar to those of us in the Chamber. On April 23, 1910, in a time of great change in this country, as the United States was coming to define a new world order, President Teddy Roosevelt delivered a now famous passage that bears repeating:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasm, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Here today, our Nation faces challenges like it did during Watergate 43 years ago and like it did in the time of Roosevelt 107 years ago. When we have each left this great body, I know we would like to be remembered as men and women in the arena—as people who spent themselves in worthy causes.

I am convinced the worthiest cause we can join today is a return to the collegiality, the pragmatism, and, yes, dare I say, the compromise of the Marble Room.

So, Mr. President, as I leave the Senate, I am indebted to so many—to those who have helped me become the man I am today, to the colleagues who have welcomed me as a partner in the people's business and who are so kind to take time to be here today in the Chamber, and to the great State of Alabama, which I have had the immense honor to serve.

I thank God every day for the blessing of my wife, Melissa, and my children and grandchildren who are here with us today. Greeting every day assured by their love and support has made my work here and throughout my life possible.

I thank my staff in Alabama and here in Washington, many of whom are here joining us, who have risen to the task of serving our great State through troubling times. Their tireless dedication reminds me there is a very bright future ahead for my State and for this institution.

I thank the staff of the Senate serving here on the floor and in the cloak-rooms, the U.S. Capitol Police, and all of those who preserve, protect, and defend this hallowed institution.

I thank each of my colleagues for the privilege of joining them in service. The friends and working partners I have found here in the Senate give me great hope that, in the right hands, this experiment in representative government will long endure.

I thank the men of principle who have served Alabama with honor for years before me. I especially thank my friend RICHARD SHELBY for his friendship and his guidance during my time here in the Senate.

Finally, I thank the people of my State. Alabama is a beautiful place with millions of hard-working, good people who call it home. As I look back on my career, I am most proud of the last 7 years I have spent working on their behalf, both in Montgomery and here in Washington.

Mr. President, in preparing my remarks today, I spent a lot of time in the Marble Room. I reflected on the stone that built it and the bedrock of my hometown. I thought about the lawmakers who frequented it years ago. I thought about the challenges they faced, their own principled stands and pragmatic negotiations. Most importantly, I thought about the common ground they found there.

Off the record and away from the cameras, this space represents an opportunity to once again find balance. Balance between principle and pragmatism in the Senate would reflect the very spirit of America, which is defined by balance.

The zeal for adventure that won the West and put human footsteps on the face of the Moon is balanced by a reverence for tradition and our founding principles—individual liberty, the rule of law, and the pursuit of happiness. The entrepreneurial drive that built great cities and today drives innovators to ask “what’s next?” is balanced by a solemn remembrance of the struggle and sacrifice that have paved the way.

The Senate is a sacred place that was designed to embrace the spirit of America. To lose the art of balance and compromise in this body is to lose something essentially American. If we cannot find shared cause, shared purpose, in the quiet corners of the space across the hall, then we may never find it here on the floor of the Senate, where the critics are so quick to point out how the doers of deeds could have done them better.

As I prepare to leave this esteemed body, I urge my colleagues, who will face many more challenges ahead, to take these words to heart. For the sake of our Nation, I urge them to return to the Marble Room.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

TRIBUTES TO LUTHER STRANGE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on behalf of all of our colleagues, I want to thank the junior Senator from Alabama for an extraordinary farewell. Due to the unusual circumstances of his arrival, his service here regrettably is limited to roughly a year, but I know all of our colleagues share the view that the Senator from Alabama has made an extraordinary difference for Alabama and for the Nation during his time here. I know I also express the views of all of our colleagues that we will miss him greatly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise as a Member of this great body to say thank you to our good friend from Alabama for serving. It is such a shame that we have so many good people in this body and some really great people in this body who are here for such a short period of time, and to have a person like Senator STRANGE come before us and be part and try to make a difference.

I truly enjoyed his speech based on bipartisanship, which is what we are all here for, and seeing how we have digressed to the point where there is very little bipartisanship that goes on and then knowing that we can make that change and make a difference.

I want to thank the Senator. It has always been a joy to be around him. He has such a way and such a demeanor about him—his congeniality, his camaraderie and wanting to make this place work the way it is supposed to work and the way they have told us it did work.

With that I would say, Senator, I am grateful I got to know you. I am grateful that you have passed through these doors for all of us to call you our friend. I am sad that you are not staying.

I know there are bigger things in store for you. I know your life is going to be blessed, and with that, you blessed us by being part of us for a period of time.

Thank you, Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I have had the unique privilege of knowing Senator STRANGE in that I have the privilege of being the chairman of the all-powerful—sometimes-powerful—Senate Agriculture Committee.

I hope every Senator will read your comments, sir. I think, perhaps, every Senator in their heart wishes, as you do, that we could get along better. For better or for worse, I think we represent the Balkanization in this country, but we come here with the hope that, yes, through compromise, and, yes, that in working together, we can represent our people in a much better fashion. Your remarks, I think, really hit the nail on the head in terms of what we should be doing.

We do that on the Agriculture Committee. When Luther first came to the

Senate and asked to be on the Agriculture Committee, I knew right then he was a special person and would be a special Senator. A lot of people get sentenced to the Agriculture Committee. It is a pleasant sentence, really, when you do that work. I have been privileged to be the chairman in the House and in the Senate for quite a few years. We will not get into that.

The Senator asked to be on the Agriculture Committee, and so, when we try to put together a farm bill, it is our responsibility—both the distinguished Ranking Member STABENOW and myself—to travel to various States. We have sat on the wagon with the farmer, the rancher, the grower, and said: What do you think? We listen to the farmer first, knowing that if you are fair to the farmer—they are the backbone of the Nation and underappreciated in our society today.

So I have been going to Kansas, Michigan, and Montana, and I said: I haven’t been down South, I am going to Alabama. I am going to go down there with our newest Member who wants to be on the Agriculture Committee and has already demonstrated his affection, not only for the committee but his commitment to represent farmers and growers and ranchers in Alabama. So we planned an event. We were going to listen to every commodity group, every farm organization, and any farmer who wanted to come in and talk to the chairman and the new member of the Agriculture Committee.

This was a special day for me and, as sometimes happens, planes don’t fly. Planes fly to Atlanta, but they don’t fly from there, which was the case when we were going down the night before, before we had this opportunity to visit with a lot of folks in Alabama. If you try to find a rental car that time of night, it is difficult. So we finally found a rental car after the third or fourth rental car opportunity, and then we drove to Montgomery.

Now, if you drive from Atlanta to Montgomery—people don’t usually recommend doing that, but I will tell you, from about 1:30 in the morning to about 4 a.m., it is an easy drive. Then you get to Montgomery, and you get to that square they have there in Montgomery where they have a statue of Hank Williams. So the first person to welcome me in Montgomery, AL, was Hank Williams. Of course, being a country and western aficionado—or at least fan—I thought that was very special. So we went down and saw Hank. I saluted him.

Then we went off to the hotel. Of course, the hotel had given up our hotel reservations. So that posed a little bit of a problem. They finally made some accommodations for me, at least, but it didn’t have a bed. It was an office room. Then I finally figured out it was a wall bed, and I pulled the wall bed down, but there were no sheets and pillows. I just sort of slept in my wardrobe, so to speak. Then I said: I can’t sleep. It was getting to be 5:30, 6:30

a.m., and we were starting off about 7 in the morning.

I came down the elevator, and as happened, the elevator door opened up. Across from me was Luther. He said: How did you sleep, Mr. Chairman? I said: As well as could be expected. Finally, I told him what happened.

After all of that, I had probably one of the best days in my service in the Senate, visiting a State I had not visited before. I talked to every commodity group, every farm organization representative. We went out to many different farms. I learned firsthand that a big export factor to China is peanuts. If we are going to be making friends with China—or at least getting to a situation where we have a better relationship with any country—as you know, agriculture can be a tool for peace. It is a stabilizing factor. It becomes a national security situation. We talked about this at length.

I must say I was very impressed with the folks I met there and the respect they had for you, Luther, for wanting to be on the Ag Committee, obviously, and for your record as attorney general and your public service. To a person, they were committed to you and thanking you for your service on the Agriculture Committee.

So wherever you go, whatever you do, I know you are an Aggie. I know you will continue to fight for your farmers, and, as you know, we are going through a pretty rough patch.

Personally, I want to thank you for your friendship, and, personally, I want to thank you for the message you gave to all Senators here, which I think should be mandatory in our quest to see if we can't achieve a better situation in working together to find solutions. The Senator from West Virginia and I feel the same way, and I know whatever you are going to do, you will do so with dignity and with respect and with strong leadership.

Thank you, my friend.

Mr. STRANGE. Thank you.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to bid farewell and to express my gratitude to Senator LUTHER STRANGE as he leaves the U.S. Senate. During his too-brief tenure here, he established an admirable reputation for hard work, dedication to his State of Alabama and our Nation, and a commitment to principles.

Senator STRANGE was appointed to the Senate last February to fill the vacancy created when Senator Jeff Sessions became Attorney General of the United States. From the start, it was clear that Senator STRANGE's pride in his home State was matched only by his humility at being selected to represent the State he loves.

Building on the reputation he earned as attorney general for Alabama, Senator STRANGE established himself here as a determined advocate for the rule of law and defender of our Constitution. From preserving the Senate traditions that foster full and open debate to supporting our veterans and

strengthening our national security and our economy, Senator STRANGE has worked on a number of important initiatives.

Senator STRANGE has met the obligations of his office with energy and dedication, and it has been an honor to serve with him in the U.S. Senate. I wish him and Melissa all the best in the years to come and look forward to many more contributions and accomplishments from this distinguished American.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I just want to say on the record how much I have enjoyed serving with the Senator from Alabama. He has meant a great deal to this institution, to this body during his short time here, and it is sad to see him go.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session, as under the previous order.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Joseph Balash, of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate equally divided in the usual form.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

The Senator from Minnesota.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, a couple of months ago, I felt we had entered an important moment in the history of this country. We were finally beginning to listen to women about the ways in which men's actions affect them. The moment was long overdue. I was excited for that conversation and hopeful it would result in real change that made life better for women all across the country and in every part of our society.

Then the conversation turned to me. Over the last few weeks, a number of women have come forward to talk about how they felt my actions had affected them. I was shocked. I was upset, but in responding to their

claims, I also wanted to be respectful of that broader conversation because all women deserve to be heard and their experiences taken seriously. I think that was the right thing to do. I also think it gave some people the false impression that I was admitting to doing things that, in fact, I haven't done. Some of the allegations against me are simply not true, others I remember very differently.

I said at the outset, the Ethics Committee was the right venue for these allegations to be heard and investigated and evaluated on their merits; that I was prepared to cooperate fully and that I was confident in the outcome.

An important part of the conversation we have been having the last few months has been about how men abuse their power and privilege to hurt women. I am proud that during my time in the Senate, I have used my power to be a champion of women and that I have earned the reputation as someone who respects the women I work alongside every day. I know there has been a very different picture of me painted over the last few weeks, but I know who I really am.

Serving in the U.S. Senate has been the great honor of my life. I know in my heart that nothing I have done as a Senator—nothing—has brought dishonor on this institution, and I am confident the Ethics Committee would agree.

Nevertheless, today I am announcing that in the coming weeks, I will be resigning as a Member of the U.S. Senate. I, of all people, am aware that there is some irony in the fact that I am leaving, while a man who has bragged on tape about his history of sexual assault sits in the Oval Office, and a man who has repeatedly preyed on young girls campaigns for the Senate with the full support of his party, but this decision is not about me; it is about the people of Minnesota. It has become clear that I can't both pursue the Ethics Committee process and, at the same time, remain an effective Senator for them.

Let me be clear. I may be resigning my seat, but I am not giving up my voice. I will continue to stand up for the things I believe in as a citizen and as an activist, but Minnesotans deserve a Senator who can focus with all her energy on addressing the challenges they face every day.

There is a big part of me that will always regret having to walk away from this job with so much work left to be done, but I have faith the work will continue because I have faith in the people who have helped me do it.

I have faith in the dedicated, funny, selfless, brilliant young men and women on my staff. They have so much more to contribute to our country, and I hope that as disappointed as they may feel today, everyone who has worked for me knows how much I admire and respect them.

I have faith in my colleagues, especially my senior Senator, AMY KLOBUCHAR. I would not have been able to

do this job without her guidance and wisdom. I have faith—or at least hope—that Members of the Senate will find the political courage necessary to keep asking the tough questions, hold this administration accountable, and stand up for the truth.

I have faith in the activists who organized to help me win my first campaign and who have kept on organizing to help fight for the people who needed us—kids facing bullying, seniors worried about the price of prescription drugs, Native Americans who have been overlooked for far too long, working people who have been taking it on the chin for a generation, everyone in the middle class, and everyone aspiring to join it.

I have faith in the proud legacy of progressive advocacy that I have had the privilege to be a part of. I think I probably repeated these words 10,000 times over the years, Paul Wellstone's famous quote: "The future belongs to those who are passionate and work hard." It is still true. It will always be true.

Most of all, I have faith in Minnesota. A big part of this job is going around the State and listening to what people need from Washington, but more often than not, when I am home, I am blown away by how much Minnesota has to offer the entire country and the entire world. The people I have had the honor of representing are brilliant and creative and hard-working. Whoever holds this seat next will inherit the challenge I have enjoyed for the last 8½ years, being as good as the people you serve.

This has been a tough few weeks for me, but I am a very, very lucky man. I have a beautiful, healthy family whom I love and who loves me very much. I am going to be just fine.

I would just like to end with one last thing. I did not grow up wanting to be a politician. I came to this relatively late in life. I had to learn a lot on the fly. It wasn't easy, and it wasn't always fun. I am not just talking about today. This is a hard thing to do with your life. There are a lot of long hours and late nights and hard lessons, and there is no guarantee that all your work and sacrifice will ever pay off. I won my first election by 312 votes. It could have easily gone the other way. Even when you win, progress is far from inevitable. Paul Wellstone spent his whole life working for mental health parity, and it didn't pass until 6 years after Paul died.

This year, a lot of people who didn't grow up imagining they would ever get involved in politics have done just that. They have gone to their first protest march or made their first call to a Member of Congress or maybe even taken the leap and put their names on a ballot for the first time.

It can be such a rush, to look around at a room full of people ready to fight alongside you, to feel that energy, to imagine that better things are possible. But you, too, will experience setbacks

and defeats and disappointments. There will be days when you will wonder whether it is worth it.

What I want you to know is that even today, even on the worst day of my political life, I feel like it has all been worth it. "Politics," Paul Wellstone told us, "is about the improvement of people's lives." I know that the work I have been able to do has improved people's lives. I would do it all over again in a heartbeat.

For a decade now, every time I would get tired, discouraged, or frustrated, I would think about the people I was doing this for, and it would get me back up on my feet. I know the same will be true for everyone who decides to pursue a politics that is about improving people's lives, and I hope you know that I will be fighting alongside you every step of the way.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Alaska.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of the Balash nomination, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 167, as under the previous order.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, today I am gratified to be finally debating and voting on the nomination of Joe Balash to be the U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Lands and Minerals.

I have been coming to the floor, as have a lot of my colleagues, making the case about how it has taken too long to get good people into the Federal Government. I am sure I will have to give that speech maybe a few more times—I hope not—to finally get people who want to serve, who have been nominated by the President, to be confirmed by the Senate, to move them. It doesn't help the American people that we just delay well-qualified Americans who want to serve their country just for the sake of delay. It is happening, but I am not going to focus on that today.

I actually want to thank the Democratic Whip, Senator DURBIN, who was actually very helpful in trying to move this nomination, which has been stalled on the Senate floor for many weeks now. Joe Balash was nominated by the President in July. I appreciate the cooperative spirit from my colleague from Illinois, and I thank him again for that.

This is a very important position in the U.S. Government. The Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management entails supervision and overseeing the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. It is very important for the entire country. It is particularly important for my State, the great

State of Alaska, and for so many others where Federal lands make up an enormous part of the State.

Yesterday, my colleague and friend, Senator LEE from Utah, talked to a number of us about how much Federal lands constitute different States in terms of the overall percentage. A lot of Americans don't know this. Usually, if you live on the east coast, you don't have Federal land as a big part of your State, but in Alaska, it is 61 percent; Idaho, 61 percent; Utah, 63 percent; Nevada, almost 80 percent. These positions in the Department of the Interior are enormously important.

This is a very important job, and I am glad to see we are finally getting to vote on it because it is important to help manage resources that we have in abundance but also protect the environment. We all love our environment. Alaska has the most pristine, beautiful environment in the world, and we know how to protect it. We also have enormous opportunities for jobs in energy on public land. What is in all the Federal statutes that Joe is going to be in charge of implementing is that you can do both. You can do both. You can protect the environment of this great Nation, and you can also utilize these incredible resources that we have on public lands. In essence, that is what his job is going to be all about.

I encourage my colleagues to look at Joe Balash's confirmation hearing and his background because he is probably one of the most qualified people to hold this job in the entire country—in the entire country. Joe Balash comes from a long, distinguished career of public service in Alaska. He was the commissioner of natural resources in Alaska, and he was the deputy commissioner of natural resources in Alaska, which manages one of the largest portfolios of land, water, minerals, oil, gas, and timber of anyplace in the world—not just in the country, in the world. Very few countries have more resources than we do in Alaska, and for years, Joe Balash was in charge of managing those. That makes him super well qualified for this job.

As DNR commissioner, he oversaw 100 million acres of uplands, State land in Alaska—this is obviously bigger than most States in America; 40 to 60 million acres of submerged lands and tidelands; and resources that included managing over half a million barrels of oil production a day. Joe oversaw a workforce of over 1,100 people as the commissioner of natural resources and a budget of \$170 million a year.

Joe understands how to build consensus, how to navigate State and Federal lands issues and interests, and, importantly, how to work to responsibly develop our resources and grow our economy, while always understanding that our lands sustain us and that stringent environmental safeguards are absolutely necessary for all Americans.

Let me say one other thing about Joe Balash. You can look at the bio, you can look at the experience, but you

also need to know the man. When I was the commissioner of the department of natural resources, Joe Balash worked for me as my deputy, and for the past almost 3 years, he has worked as my chief of staff here in the Senate.

Perhaps more than any other issue—experience, a super hard worker—he is a man of integrity, a man of character, and a man who cares deeply about his country and wants the best for Americans and for Alaskans.

I can't think of anyone more qualified—experience, character, integrity, knows the issues, cares about the environment—so I am strongly encouraging my colleagues to vote for Joe. He was voted out of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee in September with the support of every Senator in that committee, with the exception of one. When the committee looked at his experience and background and they heard about his integrity and character, there was enormous bipartisan support for Joe. I am hoping we will see that here in a few minutes when we come to vote.

I understand that one of my colleagues, unfortunately, is going to come down to the floor soon and encourage a vote against Joe. I am still not sure why. Maybe it is something related to a recusal issue between State and Federal lands in Alaska. I will be interested to hear what the recusal issue is.

Most recusal issues, by the way, as we look at confirmations in the Senate, relate to people who have interests in the private sector, and perhaps those private sector interests impact policy decisions. But when you have someone who has worked on lands issues in a State, the idea of being recused because you have expertise in policy from your State job when you go into a Federal job, to me, seems, well, outrageous. We will see what that argument is.

I do know that Joe Balash will follow the rules and regulations as they relate to ethics and conflicts in a steadfast way because I know who he is. So I again encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this extremely well-qualified nominee who has the character, knowledge, expertise, and experience for a very important job for the country and someone who is going to do a great job for Secretary Zinke and President Trump.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, the Department of the Interior is the steward and guardian of our public lands—our national parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas. As the Supreme Court said more than a century ago, it is the Secretary of the Interior's responsibility to see that none of the public domain is given away to anyone who is not entitled to it.

As the steward and guardian of the public lands, the Secretary must represent the government and the people

of the Nation as a whole, not the special interests or even the interests of a single State. But the Secretary does not do his job alone; he has delegated his authority and responsibility for land and minerals management to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. The Assistant Secretary exercises the Secretary's direction and supervision over the Bureau of Land Management. The Assistant Secretary needs to be someone who can discharge this important duty fairly and impartially. Equally important, though, he must be seen by the American people as someone capable of being a good steward of their public lands and not as someone who comes to the job with a predisposition to dispose of their public lands to special interests.

An impartial and unbiased decision-maker is a core element of the due process. The principle that no one can be the judge in his own case has been a hallmark of Anglo-American law for over 400 years. I believe confirming Mr. Balash to be Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management would be contrary to this principle.

In 2014, Alaska's Department of Natural Resources filed a claim for 20,000 acres of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with the Bureau of Land Management. Alaska's Department of Natural Resources sought to remove the long-recognized boundary of the Refuge. It asked the Bureau of Land Management to convey the 20,000 acres of Refuge land that would then be outside the Refuge's boundary to the State of Alaska so that those lands could then be leased for oil and gas development.

Mr. Balash was the head of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources at the time it made its claim to the Bureau of Land Management. The Bureau of Land Management properly rejected Alaska's claim. Alaska appealed the Bureau's decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, where the appeal is now pending. If the Senate confirms Mr. Balash to be the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, he will be overseeing the Bureau of Land Management. He will exercise the Secretary's direction and supervision over the Bureau of Land Management. He will be in a position of reversing the Bureau of Land Management's decision which originally denied Alaska's claim.

Moreover, Secretary Zinke has the authority to take jurisdiction of the case away from the Board of Land Appeals and to delegate that authority to decide the case to Mr. Balash. Mr. Balash may become the Interior Department's judge in the case that he initiated as Alaska's commissioner of natural resources.

That is my main concern. I asked Mr. Balash his plans to recuse himself from participating in the Department's consideration of Alaska's claim. I believe Mr. Balash thinks that he will comply with whatever the department's ethics office says the rules are—which is basi-

cally a 1-year recusal from being involved in that situation. That said, Mr. Balash, even under these current rules, could be in the position of being the final arbiter on a case he previously brought on expanding Alaska's claim to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He alone could make the decision. He alone could reverse the decision on the State of Alaska's claim to the Bureau of Land Management—a claim that was turned down. He could reverse that. For that reason, I am not supporting Mr. Balash's nomination to this position today.

There are so many things that we have right now that are an unrelenting assault on our public lands and our environment by this administration, and there are many on the other side of the aisle who are supporting that. We have seen an unprecedented use of the extraordinary procedures of the Congressional Review Act to nullify carefully crafted rules to protect the public lands and environment. We have seen the Secretary of the Interior unlawfully postpone implementation of other lawful rules. We have witnessed and seen legislation on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge run through here without the proper processes and procedures. We saw the majority use the extraordinary procedure of budget reconciliation not to balance the budget, as it was intended, but to circumvent regular order. Only this week, we witnessed President Trump launch an unprecedented and unlawful assault on our national monuments. Mr. Balash, I fear, will become maybe an unwilling but nonetheless a participant in these assaults on our public lands. That is why I cannot at this point give my support to this nomination.

I know my colleague from Alaska has worked with him. I respect his opinion on this position. I hope he will respect mine. I do not think that at this point in time, without a better recusal, I can support Mr. Balash's nomination.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, President Trump has nominated Joseph Balash to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals at the Department of the Interior. In that role, Balash will oversee the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, and head "Interior's management of all federal lands and waters, and their associated mineral and non-mineral resources, as well as the appropriate regulation of surface coal mining."

Balash has worked for years in Alaska politics, including as the former commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

In 2013, as the acting commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Joe Balash advocated for exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Balash petitioned the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service “to reconsider its decision to bar [Alaska] from conducting seismic studies in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.”

Also, Balash has stated that he supports the Trump administration re-writing the 5-year plan for the offshore oil and gas leasing plan, which could likely lead to new areas being opened up to offshore drilling.

I am a strong supporter of protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and oppose opening up new areas of the Atlantic to offshore drilling. For these reasons, I oppose his nomination for Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals at the Department of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am here with my colleague from the State of Alaska, Senator SULLIVAN. We have heard his comments, his very strong support of the nomination of Joe Balash to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management. As he has indicated, he speaks as one who has great insight and knowledge, having worked with Mr. Balash for a period of years.

As we think about those who are willing to step up and serve in this new administration, I think it is particularly telling that when we have personal knowledge, when we have had these relationships, when we know intimately of a person's work ethic, of their dedication to issues and their willingness to serve, we pay particular attention to that.

I, too, stand in strong support of Joe Balash for this position, and I thank the Secretary of the Interior for placing his trust, placing his confidence in Mr. Balash to serve on his team at the Department of the Interior.

We have an individual who knows intimately the subject area to which he has been appointed. Joe is from a community by the name of North Pole. We are all thinking about the North Pole as we get closer to Christmas. I suggest that just being from Alaska is enough to convince me that he is qualified for this position, but, honestly, the breadth and depth of his experiences and his commitment, his care, his passion, his dedication to serving not only the people but the lands that we hold so dear is a great tribute to Joe Balash.

I have known and worked closely with him for years now, from the time that he was at the department of natural resources with then-Commissioner Sullivan to the time that he served as the chief of staff for Senator SULLIVAN. Both of those jobs have allowed Mr. Balash to demonstrate time and again his competence, his expertise on a wide range of issues, particularly the stewardship of our public lands.

We had an opportunity while in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to listen to a little bit of his background, his upbringing, and how he became so personally involved and intertwined with our public lands.

Then, if you think about the role he played when he was at the State as commissioner of natural resources, he had direct responsibility, management, and protection of 101 million acres of the State of Alaska. This is larger than the entire State of California—101 million acres. He also had control of a State park system containing 3.3 million acres of land, more than twice the size of Delaware. He is used to dealing with large areas of land and the complicated and complex issues that are associated with them. He genuinely understands how we can develop our natural resources while protecting the environment and sustaining the health of wildlife and ecosystems.

He is able to balance, he is able to understand people, and he is able, as he has demonstrated as a manager, to manage land—managing energy, minerals, timber, water, and renewable energies in a State as diverse as Alaska.

In our State—I am sure that Senator SULLIVAN has noted this—we have a constitutional mandate. It is written into our State's constitution that we manage lands for the maximum benefit of our people. That means working with folks from all different sorts of backgrounds; you don't get to pick and choose. We all have our opinions and many competing points of view. Joe was able to do that and do that well.

It is not easy to navigate, but I think Joe Balash has proven time and again that he is capable and is willing to work with everyone. Whether they are hunters, whether they are Tribes, whether they are in the environmental community, the conservation community, his ability to work with folks from all sides has been proven. Now he is ready to take this next step—to take it up a notch to the broader Federal level. I believe that he will make an exemplary Assistant Secretary, not just for those of us from Alaska but for our entire country.

He will oversee the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. He will, largely, be the Department's point person for the management of our Nation's working lands, those lands that are not reserved for conservation purposes. It will be his responsibility to strengthen our energy and our mineral security for generations to come.

There is no doubt in my mind that he is the right person to take this on. I mentioned he is from North Pole. He was a two-time State wrestling champion. That takes a little bit of discipline. I think he will be well suited and will be an able partner with Secretary Zinke but, really, an advocate for the American people.

He has proven that he has the work ethic to produce the value that Americans need and deserve from their public lands. I know that his management of the Department's assets—whether it is promoting responsible energy develop-

ment or ensuring access to Federal lands for sportsmen's activities—will be carried out with a dedication to transparency, to accountability, and to results.

On the sportsmen's side, I do understand he is an accomplished buck hunter, and we recognize him for that.

Mr. Balash was considered by those of us—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 more minutes.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. Balash was considered by those of us on the Energy Committee at a hearing in early September. He was reported out 2 weeks later with strong bipartisan support. He has done everything that Members on both sides of the aisle have asked him to do. He has waited patiently over the course of nearly 3 months, as we seek to confirm him.

It was just mentioned by the ranking member that she has concerns about his ability and the recusal process. It was made very clear in committee with questions to Mr. Balash, as well as the follow-on with questions for the record, about some of the issues that Senator CANTWELL has raised. I think it is important to note that Mr. Balash pledged very clearly to consult with and follow the counsel of the agency's ethics office. He did that in committee, in a statement. He provided the same response in his QFRs. He said: I will consult with the Department's designated agency ethics official regarding this matter and fully comply with the ethics rules of the agency.

These are issues that have been asked, and they have been answered, certainly to the satisfaction of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and to this chairman, and to those who reported favorably on him from the committee. We are at the point where the Senate has now asked to confirm Mr. Balash. I wish it had come a little bit earlier, but we are where we are.

Again, I thank the Secretary for nominating Joe Balash for this very, very important and key role at the Department of the Interior. I thank Joe for being willing to continue his service to our Nation. I join Senator SULLIVAN, and a lot of Alaskans, in being tremendously proud of him. I urge all Members to support Mr. Balash's nomination to be our next Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management.

I yield back all debate time and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Balash nomination?

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 310 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Carper	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoehn	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Schatz
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Coons	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kennedy	Strange
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Warner
Donnelly	McCaskill	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—38

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cardin	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—1

Franken

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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Susan Parker Bodine, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise today to speak about the confirmation of Susan Bodine to lead the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

For those who may not know, that is a big job. This is an incredibly important job. The EPA's enforcement office protects the health of our citizens and our environment by ensuring that everyone is playing by the same rules. When bad actors don't follow the rules that we have put in place to maintain

a clean and healthy environment for all Americans, it is EPA's enforcement office that holds them accountable.

In the past, the actions taken by this office at EPA have led to reductions in toxic air pollution, as well as to the cleanup of contaminated lands and waterways across our country. In fact, last year alone, EPA's enforcement work required companies to invest some \$13.7 billion in similar cleanup efforts.

From the time that she was nominated, Susan Bodine's resume suggests, not just to me but to almost all of us, that she can play a very constructive role if she were confirmed to serve as head of EPA's enforcement office. Ms. Bodine has served as a staff member in both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate for over a decade. She also spent time working in the administration of George W. Bush. Given that breadth of experience, I believe she has a good understanding of the relationship that should exist between the separate but equal branches of our government and the critical role that EPA's enforcement office plays.

When she was nominated for this position, Ms. Bodine was kind enough to come to my office and spend a considerable amount of time with me and with my staff to discuss the job and her qualifications, which I appreciated very much. She spoke of the work she had done for Senators INHOFE and BARRASSO, both of whom have taken seriously their oversight roles on the EPW Committee.

From the day Ms. Bodine and my staff and I met in my office, I have made explicitly clear to Ms. Bodine that while I think she is well qualified for this job, I also take seriously the oversight role that we play on the Environment and Public Works Committee.

From the day of that meeting with Ms. Bodine until now, my request has been consistent, yet fairly simple: The EPA should provide complete, adequate, and timely responses to the committee that oversees the work of that Agency. Absent a serious commitment to do so, I have consistently said that I would be unable to support moving forward almost any EPA nominees.

I have also said from the very beginning that I do not make such statements lightly or with any sense of joy, but I believe firmly that this body and its Members have a constitutional duty to perform rigorous oversight and that we must protect that responsibility regardless of which party happens to be in power. Over 200 days is far too long to wait for responses to serious inquiries, such as those about the toxic pesticides that this EPA has deemed safe after the previous administration proposed banning them. I know that no matter who is in charge, we can do better than that.

As my Democratic colleagues and I know all too well, we are not the majority party. We don't control the Senate or its activities or who is confirmed

here or who is debated on the floor. For instance, despite my many objections and those of my colleagues, Bill Wehrum was confirmed to head up the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation. So my repeated requests have just been that—an ask with the hope that all of us, as Members of this body, could agree that certain responsibilities are more important than political wins. Some of my Republican colleagues have supported me in this, and I am grateful for that support.

As of late, I see that EPA is making a good-faith effort to begin to respond to our requests—requests of the minority within the Environment and Public Works Committee. I am now satisfied with many of these responses—not all but many of these responses—that they have sent so far, and I am pleased that we are seeing some real progress. I am hopeful—and I think I speak for the Democratic Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Democratic Members of the Senate—that this progress will continue.

I have been privileged to serve in this body for some 17 years now. I think my colleagues know me fairly well, and I think they know that I try to be fair. I have voted for President Trump's nominees and for the nominees of past Republican Presidents. I do not have and have never had an interest in delay for the sake of delay. In fact, I said just last week that if a subset of the letters that were due back from EPA were completed in short order and were truly responsive, we could make progress in nominations. The Agency has done its part, and now we are here today with Ms. Bodine set to be confirmed by this body—not next week, not next month, today. I hope that this is the beginning of a new chapter and that EPA's responses to our oversight requests will be more timely going forward.

Having said that, my sincere congratulations to Susan Bodine and her family, as well as thanks to her family for sharing with us a good woman. I look forward to continuing working with her in her new role. I think I speak again for my colleagues—Democratic and Republican—on the committee and in the Senate. We look forward to continuing to work with her in this new role she will play, if she is confirmed here in a few seconds. We want to make sure that in that role, she will ensure that EPA's enforcement office remains an indispensable and credible cop on the beat.

With that, Mr. President, I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bodine nomination?

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 Kansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, for debate only, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). The Senator from Nebraska.

NOMINATION OF STEVE GRASZ

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, today the Judiciary Committee had the opportunity to advance the nomination of Steve Grasz, one of the foremost appellate attorneys in the State of Nebraska, and I would like to make one brief comment about that.

The Judiciary Committee has now heard and soon the full Senate will be hearing about the impeccable credentials of Mr. Grasz. Steve has served with distinction as Nebraska's chief deputy attorney general for nearly a dozen years. During that time, he defended our State's laws with integrity, humility, and decency. Whether he was litigating before the Eighth Circuit, before the Nebraska Supreme Court, or before the U.S. Supreme Court, Steve's character and professionalism earned the respect of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Members of the committee became familiar with Steve and in particular his recommendation from President Obama's U.S. attorney for Nebraska, Deborah Gilg. She wrote to the committee: "Steve has always enjoyed a reputation for honesty, impeccable integrity, and dedication to the rule of law." She continued by noting that Steve "possesses an even temperament well-suited for the bench and always acts with respect to all that interact with him."

Steve has earned the support of Republicans and Democrats back in Nebraska, and I hope that when his nomination comes to the floor of the Senate, we will take to heart all of the support he has across the political spectrum and from well-respected lawyers across our State.

Thank you for the time, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

DACA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, across the country, families are deco-

rating their Christmas trees. They are singing along to holiday playlists. They are searching for that perfect gift for the ones they love. They are making travel plans to see their families. The holidays are a time for joy and togetherness, a time for faith and family, a time for gratitude and hope.

The holidays are not a time for fear. Yet, without action, Congress may leave hundreds of thousands of families across America in fear this holiday season. I am referring, of course, to the 800,000 Dreamers across America whose lives have been thrown into jeopardy by the administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, or DACA.

DACA is a program that made it possible for 800,000 undocumented youth across this country—including 22,000 in my home State of New Jersey—to come out of the shadows, to step into the light, and to follow their dreams without fear of deportation.

It has been months since this administration decided to end DACA. Despite what some of my Republican colleagues say, the consequences of this cruel and reckless decision are not some distant threat; more than 11,000 Dreamers have already lost their DACA protections and work permits. So to anyone who thinks we have until March of next year to take action, you are surely mistaken. For these young people who grew up in the United States, who know no other home or country, who today live in fear of deportation, the crisis is here, and the crisis is now.

Ending DACA has created a national emergency that is playing out in our communities each and every day. Tens of thousands of DACA recipients are likely to lose their status on or before March 5. So what exactly are we waiting for, and why wait at all?

There is no legitimate reason for the President to have ended DACA—a crisis that was avoidable. Now it is here, and it is our job to fix it. President Trump essentially told Congress: The ball is in your court. Well, today I want to know from my colleagues: When are we going to take our shot? If we have the votes—and I believe we have the votes— isn't it time that we held a vote?

We know there is overwhelming support from the American people, Republicans and Democrats alike, for America's Dreamers. It is not fake news. Poll after poll, from Quinnipiac, to the Washington Post, to even FOX News, shows that the American people want a solution, and we know there is solid support for the Dream Act here in the Senate.

I have seen my colleagues share the photos of the Dreamers they meet. They post the stories about these brave, young people fighting to stay in the country they know and love. But they deserve more than an Instagram post or a friendly tweet; they deserve action. Every day that goes by, more and more Dreamers find themselves in

danger of being sent back to countries they simply don't know or even remember.

Let's take a moment to remember exactly whose lives we are talking about when we talk about Dreamers. In my mind, we are talking about the "motherhood and apple pie" of the immigrant community and the question of immigration. We are talking about young people brought here as children through no choice of their own. Every child who is a Dreamer is someone who knows only the United States of America as their country. The only flag they pledge allegiance to is the flag of the United States of America. The only national anthem they know is the "Star-Spangled Banner." These children grew up in America and are American in every sense of the word except on paper.

Dreamers are studying in our colleges, playing on our sports teams, serving in uniform in our military, risking their lives on behalf of what they consider to be their country, growing our economy, obeying our laws, and most of all, loving our country, too, because it is their country as well. They aren't undocumented aliens; they are Americans who happen to be undocumented. And that includes 22,000 Dreamers in my home State of New Jersey, promising students like Sara Mora, whom you see pictured here on the floor.

Sara grew up in Hillside, NJ. Her parents brought her to this country from Costa Rica at the age of 3. She was 3 years old. As Sara recently wrote in the Star Ledger, "New Jersey has been my home for as long as I can remember." Today, she is a hard-working college student, thanks to DACA. That is how she was able to get a work permit, find a job, and work her way through Union County College. Sara was preparing her applications to transfer to Seton Hall University and earn her 4-year degree when the Trump administration announced the end of DACA. Now, Sara says, her future is one "big question mark. Without DACA, I'll go back to zero—no driver's license, no job, no possibility of paying for my education. I'll have to wake up fearing deportation every day."

When will we accept some responsibility and recognize that it is our inaction here in the Senate that contributes to Sara's fear every day?

Take Adriana Gonzalez of Toms River, NJ. As the Asbury Park Press recently wrote, Adriana is "a flute player, a student ambassador, a girl who would play soccer with special needs children." Like most Dreamers, Adriana isn't known by her peers as an undocumented immigrant; she is known as a smart young woman with a bright future and something to contribute to her community.

How about Reiniero Amaya of Elizabeth, NJ. He is studying civil engineering at Fairleigh Dickinson University. I can't think of anything more backward than deporting a hard-working

student who dreams of becoming a civil engineer. We need civil engineers. We give people from different parts of the world permits to come to the United States to do these engineering jobs that we don't have enough domestic people to do. Here is a young man who grew up in America, who is American in every respect, and who is, in essence, pursuing a career path that would inure to the national economic interest. His story is just one more reminder that our country can't afford to lose America's Dreamers. They have so much to offer to our communities and our economy.

In fact, ending DACA is projected to cost New Jersey's economy over \$1.5 billion annually and reduce the overall economy of the United States by \$460 billion over the next decade.

DACA gave Dreamers like Reiniero the freedom to pursue his dreams. But it also gave him a sense of security. He recently wrote this on northjersey.com:

The day I received my work permit and my Social Security card was the day I finally felt proud of who I am. I felt recognized. I felt safe.

That sense of belonging, of acceptance, and of safety was ripped away by the President's decision to end DACA. So long as Congress fails to act, we are complicit in prolonging the very real fear that 800,000 Dreamers feel today—the fear that the knock on the door is not your family or neighbor but an immigration agent ready to whisk you away from your family; the fear that we see when these young people who believed in our government came forth, went through a criminal background check, gave all their information, and gave information on their family, all under the guise that they thought it was going to be confidential. Now all of that is at risk.

The willingness of DACA recipients to share their stories speaks volumes about their integrity, their courage, and the trust they put in us as elected officials. I am reminded of Psalm 56:3: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."

Well, Dreamers like Sara, Adriana, and Reiniero put their trust in the United States of America when they applied for DACA. They came out of the shadows. They registered with the Department of Homeland Security. They passed criminal background checks. They handed over personal details about themselves and their families to authorities they had been forced to hide for their entire lives.

DACA recipients went through all of this to get a 2-year renewable work permit and the promise of protection from deportation. That is the limited bargain they made, and the administration has eviscerated that limited promise and struck fear in the hearts of all of these families.

So I ask my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—was their faith, their trust, their belief in the U.S. Government's word a monumental mistake?

Were they wrong to believe that we could put partisan politics aside and come together and do the right thing in this case? Will the Senate go home for the holidays without lifting a finger to make sure these promising young students feel safe in their homes, in their schools, in their communities?

They have become an integral part of our American family, and many are starting families of their own. In fact, 25 percent of DACA recipients have U.S.-born children. Do we really want these young mothers and fathers to be torn from their children and sent back to the country that they never called home? Do we not have an obligation to protect American children from the trauma of losing a parent? Do we not have a moral responsibility to keep families together? Isn't that one of the basic concepts that we have?

Will we sit idly by with the implementation of the administration's policy, which says: Whether you are selling drugs in your streets—which I am all for deporting—or earning A's in our classrooms or serving in our military, everyone is fair game for deportation. No one is safe, not even children who know no other home. That is a wrong policy. That is not law and order. That is fear and chaos.

So where is our compassion and our sense of urgency? How many more Dreamers have to lose their DACA status before we stand up and do what is right? The time for temporary fixes is over. The time for empty gestures is over. The time for heartfelt words is over.

It is time for us to stand up for these young people, and it is time for us to act. It is time for us—Democrats and Republicans—to use whatever legislative vehicle is necessary to pass the Dream Act. Whether it is a continuing resolution or a straight vote here on the floor, it is time for us to get this done.

Let's put an end to the fear and uncertainty hanging over so many families this holiday season. Let's summon our collective compassion. Let's pass the Dream Act. Let's do it now. Let Congress not go home for the holidays unless we have a solution to this question. For me, it is a moral imperative that these young people, who know no other country but the United States and who are Americans in every other sense of the word, not have to live this holiday season in the fear that a knock on the door is from someone other than a family member or their neighbor.

I yield the floor.

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

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

CONFIRMATION OF SUSAN BODINE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Environmental Protection Agency needs strong and experienced leadership. That is why I come to the floor today to speak in support of President Trump's nomination of Susan Parker Bodine to serve as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at the EPA.

Her expertise and her experience make her an exceptional pick to lead this important office at the Agency. She has extensive environmental policy knowledge from years working as a private attorney, a staffer on Capitol Hill, and in leadership at the EPA.

From 2006 to 2009, during the Bush administration, she served as the Assistant Administrator for the EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. She also served as the staff director of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment.

Most recently, Susan served as my chief counsel at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. That is why I know Susan is committed to finding commonsense ways to protect America's land, air, and water.

In this new role, she will work to help communities and small businesses comply with the law, while holding polluters accountable. Democrats and Republicans, alike, agree that she is the right person for the job.

Mathy Stanislaus, a former Obama EPA Assistant Administrator, said: "Ms. Bodine understands both the internal side of the agency and the proper balance of enforcement" and is a "standup person."

Ben Grumbles, a former George W. Bush Assistant Administrator and currently Maryland's secretary of the environment, said: "She's tough and fair and committed to public service."

Susan is an excellent pick to lead the EPA's Office of Enforcement. Taking on the critical task of enforcing our Nation's environmental laws is a big job. I can think of no better candidate for this job than Susan Bodine.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. 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.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about my support for the Senate tax reform bill and to encourage Congress to help American families.

Our economy and our workforce have changed over the last few decades, and our Tax Code must catch up. If we want to build a better future for our children, we must tackle problems for families juggling responsibilities between their homes and their workplaces.

We have a chance to make history. The Senate-passed bill included my Strong Families Act, which would be the first nationwide paid family leave policy passed by this body. This proposal has the potential to make life easier for working families across our country by providing a tax credit as large as 25 percent for employers who offer up to 12 weeks of paid family leave. Employees would be able to take this time without needing to choose between potentially falling behind on their bills or spending time caring for their loved ones. Caring for families today does not just mean taking care of children. My proposal helps to ease burdens on family caregivers taking care of aging parents as well.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging recently released a report focused on America's aging workforce and the opportunities and challenges associated with it. One of its findings is that a growing group of aging workers are also caregivers. In fact, one out of every four employees over the age of 50 serves as a family caregiver.

Some employers are implementing strategies to support them, but I believe that this credit will go a long way in encouraging additional employers to take proactive steps to help these workers. This proposal also gives businesses the flexibility to set up these plans in ways that make sense for their companies and does so without mandates that some simply cannot afford.

I also want to take this opportunity to briefly address some of the criticisms of my proposal. It has been said that a provision in this bill was designed to punish States and localities that have laws mandating paid leave already in place. If employers in States and localities that already require some paid leave go beyond what is mandated at the local level, they will be able to take advantage of this credit.

We designed this credit to be targeted toward lower and middle-income workers who do not currently have access to paid family leave. We want to expand that access.

Moreover, I was happy to see an addition that was included in the Senate tax bill regarding State and local taxes. Most Nebraskans will tell you that our property taxes are too high. I agree. I supported the proposal to allow for a State and local property tax deduction of up to \$10,000 on Federal taxes.

As this bill moves toward a conference committee, I urge our conferees to keep this proposal and my Strong Families Act in the final bill. These provisions would help our families and they would help America's middle class.

Thank you.

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

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we are in the middle of a very protracted conversation about tax reform. This conversation started in January. I have heard people say that it has been rushed through at the end. We started in January, and we are starting month 12 of this process: hearings in the House; hearings in the Senate; different drafts coming out, shot down, starting over again, and coming back and forth. Now we are starting our 12th month of going through this process.

As we get close to the end, I want to outline a few things we are actually working on to be able to send back to this body and the American people—what is actually happening here. The focus of this from the beginning—from the very start—was two simple things: How can we reduce the rates for individuals so they can keep more of their own money and spend their own money, which stimulates the economy? The second aspect was this: How can we simplify the system? There is a lot of back and forth on the final details of it, but those two things are very clear.

This dramatically simplifies the tax structure that we have, and it reduces rates for people, so that people have more of their own money to be able to spend, and businesses have more of their own money to be able to invest in their businesses, to be able to pay their workers more, to be able to buy more equipment, and to be able to expand their businesses. That helps everybody in the economy. Whether you save your money or whether you spend your money, you are able to keep your own money.

So here is what this means for hardworking Americans and, in particular, in my State, for hardworking Oklahomans. Every bracket gets a tax deduction. In fact, as the Tax Foundation studied the Senate plan, going State by State, it looked at the middle-income family in Oklahoma, and the Tax Foundation stated that the middle-income family will have an increase in its take-home pay of \$2,200 over the next year. People will see it in their own paycheck from what is not being withheld anymore, because they are able to keep more of their own money.

The Senate plan doubles the standard deduction. For a single working adult, the first \$12,000 of their money is not taxed at all. For a married couple, \$24,000 of their income is not taxed at all. We also double the Child Tax Credit to \$2,000, directly, to be able to protect the people who need the help the most.

What does that look like for us?

Take an Oklahoma family of four. That typical family of four in my State, with all incomes put together and with two working parents, makes about \$73,000, combining all of their incomes together. That family of four, with \$73,000 of total income for the family, will see a cut in their tax bill of \$2,200 next year. Typically, they pay about \$3,600 in Federal taxes. Next year, they pay \$1,500 in Federal taxes. It is a pretty dramatic shift for them.

Let's take a teacher in Oklahoma who has been teaching for a couple of years—a single mom, a couple of kids, with \$41,000 in total income and trying to make ends meet. That single mom with a couple of kids will see a tax reduction of \$1,400. That is incredibly significant in just her day-to-day life. I can assure you that every Oklahoman would be glad to see an extra \$100 or \$150 in their paycheck every single month. That buys a lot of groceries, and it sure does help.

This is a process that really does affect real people, and it has been lost in the conversations. It has been interesting to hear the debate and all the noise on it.

I am hearing things I am calling tax myths of this bill. The most common one is that it is actually going to increase taxes on those in poverty. So for people who are saying that this is going to increase taxes for those individuals, it does not. It actually does exactly the opposite—not only by reducing rates but by increasing the standard deduction, by increasing the child tax credit. It helps people that need help the most.

I have also heard individuals in the media saying: This is going to hurt people because the individual mandate—something unrelated to tax policy entirely—has been snuck into the tax bill. The individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act is a tax policy that was actually added to a healthcare bill.

So this is a tax bill dealing with the tax aspects that were snuck into the original Obama healthcare bill. How does that work? The individual mandate says: If you don't buy the insurance approved by the folks in Washington, DC, then, you get an extra tax on you.

Where does that tax go? In Oklahoma, 81 percent of the people who pay that extra tax make \$50,000 or less. That extra ObamaCare tax—that penalty that was put on there—was targeted directly at the middle class, and the middle class in Oklahoma pays that fine. Eighty-one percent of the fine that is paid is paid by people making \$50,000 or less, in my State. We want to see that tax rate go down for those individuals, and we want to allow people to have a choice. That is a significant change for those individuals, who not only are trying to make ends meet, but they don't want to see one more tax laid on top of them.

Here is another myth I have heard. The tax cuts for the individuals aren't

permanent. May I remind everyone that the tax changes for the individuals made by the Bush administration had the exact same effect. They had a 10-year life span. As we went out to the end of that 10-year life span, they were then renewed. This is the same type of experience, where this individual tax is put in place, and a future Congress will go back and evaluate: Are all of these tax rates correct? Is this the right formula that should be in place? And they will be able to evaluate them at that time—just like we did in 2011, when those tax rates were made permanent—look at them again, give them that future window, and evaluate: Is this the right direction?

There has been an interesting one I have heard several times by people saying this will hurt teachers and it will hurt schools. I even heard someone this past weekend specifically say: The Senate bill takes away classroom expenses from teachers. The ironic part about that is that the Senate bill actually doubles the deductibility for teachers and classroom expenses. The lie out there is that the Senate bill takes it away. The truth, if you read the bill, is that it actually doubles it so that teachers have twice as much that they can deduct.

Teachers make a limited salary already. The last thing we need to do is to hurt teachers as they are trying to take care of the kids in their own classes. So this doubles the deductibility for teachers for classroom expenses.

It also puts in place an extension of the 529. Many parents set aside a little bit of money every month to go toward their child's college education. This would allow that to also be used for education, if they choose to have those expenses, in kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as college. It increases that opportunity.

The House bill did have a portion in their bill about student loan interest and tuition waiver for graduate students. The Senate actually does not have those two areas, protecting graduate students in their tuition waiver expenses. I think that is important.

There has also been a great myth out there that Republicans are cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid with this bill. Can I tell you, there is nothing in this bill about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We are not trying to damage or change any of those programs. In fact, it was in one of the hearings just last month where JCT, or the Joint Committee on Taxation, was asked that question directly, and they affirmed that there is nothing in this bill that is trying to change those policies. That is just a myth that is sitting out there.

What we need is a healthy, growing economy. Our economy has been flat for the last 8 years, growing at around 2 percent. Historically, the U.S. economy since World War II has grown at about 3 percent. That little 1 percentage point change may not seem like a

big deal, but that is a lot of jobs across the country. It is increased wages across the country, and it is increased opportunity.

I feel sorry for college graduates who graduated in the past several years because they are trying to land a job in this economy and finding out how difficult it is to get a job. They wonder: Has it always been like that? It has not. Go back just a decade or two decades ago, and people were graduating out of college and landing into great jobs because the economy was growing faster.

If we don't do something to get this economy growing faster again, we will continue to have limited opportunities for all Americans, and people's paychecks will continue to be flat yet another decade. This is a way to nudge the economy, to say: Let's get it going again.

Quite frankly, my Democratic colleagues 8 years ago passed a \$1 trillion stimulus package and said that is what would nudge the economy, but the economy didn't budge at all. This is an opportunity to come back and say: Let's actually do this right, not having the government spend your money but allowing you to keep more of your money and allowing the free market—just from people spending, buying, and saving—to lift the economy. That lift makes a tremendous difference.

One last interesting conversation. There have been a lot of folks who talked about deficit or debt effects in this bill, that this bill could be up to \$1 trillion in addition to the deficit. This is typical Washington speak and the challenge of serving here in Washington.

There are 130 economists that looked at this. All turned in reports. Everybody has a different outlook. Economists study hard, they look at the numbers, and they run their models, but everyone is guessing, and I get that. They are educated guesses, but they are all guesses. It is the responsibility of us here, in this Chamber, to look at the models, to look at the study, and to determine: Does this work?

For instance, JCT in their study said there will be about a half trillion in deficit because of this bill. But what they didn't take into account, when you look at their actual numbers, is any real increase in international funding—any increase in our American businesses that do business here in America and across the ocean. That is not really taken into account in theirs.

They also don't look at tremendous swaths of our economy because they don't have that in their model. But the JCT estimates that we will have half a trillion dollars in deficit spending. As I mentioned before, over the last 10 years, our economy is stuck at less than 2 percent GDP growth. In the context of the Senate bill, current policy assumes that tax extenders expire, meaning we start with a \$500 billion headwind. Our tax bill should not have

to cover the effects of current policy extensions. The \$1 trillion gap that is left equates to around 0.4 percent increase in GDP over the 10-year budget window. CBO's current GDP baseline is 1.9 over 10, and given the pro-growth policies in our bill, we should fully expect to a .4 percent boost, getting us to 2.3 percent, which closes the deficit gap, and brings future growth much more in line with where we should be historically.

Moreover, by JCT's own admission, eight one-hundredths of a percent could yield \$500 billion in dynamic economic growth. So using those numbers, sixteen one-hundredths in boosted GDP should provide the sufficient revenue to cover any shortfall.

The focus of this is that, when you look at the studies and you ask the questions, they all have very conservative estimates—as they should, as economists. But if our economy even goes up to maybe 2.5 percent—so a half percentage point, which is typical for us—we are far in the black.

I understand that it is always a risk. My Democratic colleagues took a risk 8 years ago when they spent almost \$1 trillion in the stimulus package, saying: I hope this works. And it did not.

I understand it is a risk, but I think it is an appropriate risk, to be able to say: Let's allow Americans to keep more of their own money to invest in this economy on the risk that we grow the economy by 0.2 percent more to be able to break even. I think the American economy can grow much faster than that. She has for decades, up until the last decade. Let's get us back to our old normal and allow that to be our new normal.

There are a lot of questions on the tax policy, rightfully so. It is important to all of us. Let's get it right, but let's keep moving. Over the next couple of weeks, this body, along with Members of the House, will do a conference committee. It is a back-and-forth about how we resolve the differences between the House bill and the Senate bill. When that is done, it will have to pass the House, pass the Senate, and go to the President's desk.

In the days ahead, Americans will see the changes in their own paycheck as they see the rates go down and are able to keep more of their own money. The rates of the median family are set to go down by 60 percent in this bill. It will be a tremendous benefit to them. I think that opportunity is one we shouldn't miss.

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

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

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as you know, and many do, 16 years ago I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was written to cover young people, brought to the United States by their parents, who have grown up in this country but do not have legal status. They are undocumented. Some of them don't learn that until they are in high school or later. They think they are Americans. They have gone to school with a lot of American kids. They pledge allegiance to the flag. They sing our national anthem. They truly believed they were Americans and didn't learn until later in life that they had overstayed their visas. Their parents had overstayed their visas, is probably a better description, and that has affected their legal situation.

So I introduced this bill—a simple bill—that reads, if you have children in America who are caught up in that circumstance, we will give them a chance to get legal. They didn't make the decision to come here in the first place, but they ought to have a chance to become legal in America and become citizens. That is what the DREAM Act said, and we set up certain standards.

How do you become legal in America?

First, if you have a serious criminal record, goodbye. We don't want you. We don't need you. Second, if you are not going to finish school and are going to drop out, sorry, there is no future for you in this country—or a limited future. Third, would you consider serving in our U.S. military as a way of proving that you want to be a part of America's future? We set that up with the DREAM Act.

Time passed, and we didn't pass the bill. One of my colleagues in the Senate went on to be elected President of the United States, Barack Obama.

I reached out to him and asked: Mr. President, can you figure out a way to protect these young people who are subject to deportation through no fault of their own? He did. He came up with an Executive order called the DACA Program.

Under the DACA Program, young people, like those I described, came forward. They paid a \$500 filing fee, then went through a criminal background check to make sure they had no problems, and they submitted their information. Each of them was given a 2-year renewable protection plan so they could live in America, not be deported, and be able to legally work.

What happened to those people? There were 780,000 of them who showed up, paid the fee, and got the protection under the DACA Program.

Then came a Presidential campaign—the last one—in which Donald Trump, as candidate for President, said: I am going to get rid of this DACA Program. I think it is wrong. It never should have been done by Executive order.

He said that and then was elected and set out to do it. Last September 5, he did just that. It was announced by

the Attorney General of the United States. They said that by March 5 of 2018, the program would end.

What it means is, today and every day, more and more of these protected young people fall out of protection—about 120 a day. There are 10,000 of them who were protected by DACA who can now be deported, and the number will continue to grow until March 5, when the President said the program should end—when 1,000 young people a day in America will lose DACA protection, be subject to deportation, and will not be able to legally work.

When he eliminated the DACA Program on September 5, President Trump said to us: I challenge Congress. Do what you are supposed to do. Pass a law to take care of this.

I accepted that challenge, and I joined with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Republican of South Carolina. We introduced the Dream Act. We are ready to pass the Dream Act. I think there are the votes on the floor to pass the Dream Act.

Some of my Republican friends have said to me: We support it, but we want a show of good faith on your part that you will strengthen our border operations to reduce others from coming into this country.

I said: Sign me up. As a Democrat, I will join with you as a Republican to fund things that are sensible, realistic, and effective to take our tax dollars and make our borders safer. I accept that.

Now we are in a position in which the President's challenge has really come to the spot where we have to do something. We are going to leave here by December 22 to go home and enjoy the holidays. If we do not fix this problem before we leave, imagine what that will mean to these 780,000 young people. They don't know what their futures are going to hold.

Who are they?

There are 20,000 of them who teach in grade schools and middle schools and high schools across the United States—20,000 of these DACA-protected young people. When they lose their right to legally work in America, they are finished as teachers—finished, out the door. These are 20,000 teachers who could be lost.

In addition, there are students who are in a pretty tricky situation. About 30 of them go to the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago. They won the competition to be accepted at that medical school because Loyola, unlike other medical schools, said they will open competition to DACA-eligible people. Some of them are the most brilliant kids in America who never dreamed that, in being undocumented, they could make it to medical school. They have. They are doing well.

There is a problem. You cannot finish medical school and move on to where you want to be unless you complete a residency after medical school. The residency is actually a job—a job in-

volving a lot of hours in hospitals learning to be a doctor. All doctors go through it, and these medical students would go through it as well except, if they lose DACA protection, they cannot legally work; therefore, they cannot even apply to be residents and complete their medical educations. Our failure to act, our delay in acting, jeopardizes their medical educations.

Do we have a surplus of doctors in the United States? No. The AMA tells us just the opposite. Across Illinois, I can point to communities downstate and to neighborhoods in the Chicago area that are desperately in need of doctors. Can we waste a medical student at Loyola's medical school because the Senate is just too darned busy to take it up?

Does it look to the Presiding Officer like the Senate is too busy to take up an issue like this? The fact is, we have done precious little this year, and we have plenty of time. It is also a reality that a lot of people are watching carefully to see if we do our job.

A long time ago, I started coming to the floor of the Senate, telling the story of these Dreamers—the stories of these people who are protected by DACA. I can give the greatest speech in the world, and people will yawn, but when I tell them the stories of these lives and these people, it changes the conversation. They come to understand who they are and why this is critically important. Today is kind of a milestone. This is the 100th story I have told on the floor of the U.S. Senate. They are all in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for those who want to take a look at them.

It is the story of another one of these Dreamers. His story is particularly compelling. This is his photo.

His name is Kyungmin Cho. Kyungmin Cho was 7 years old when his family brought him from Seoul, South Korea, to the United States. He grew up in New Jersey.

From a young age, he was quite a good student and active in his community. In high school, he took multiple advanced placement courses. He was Vice President of the National Honor Society and president of his class. Here is a picture of him at his high school graduation. In high school, Kyungmin was a member of the Math and Science Academy and a member of the varsity track and field team. He was a volunteer at his church, and he taught summer school. At the same time, he was working over 40 hours a week.

You see, these kids, these young people—Dreamers—don't get Federal Government loans or Pell Grants so they have to work extra time to get the money to go to school. He worked 40 hours a week in a restaurant to help support his family and pay for his education. Now he is a student at Temple University's Fox School of Business and Management. He is studying accounting in the Honors Program. He continues to work two restaurant jobs a week for nearly 40 hours to help his

family, but, last year, something else happened that was significant in his life.

Kyungmin Cho, an undocumented student in America, was allowed to enlist in the U.S. Army. The program he enlisted in is called The Military Accessions Vital to National Interest Program. It is known by the acronym MAVNI. This program allows immigrants like Kyungmin, with special skills “vital to the national interest,” to enlist in our Armed Forces. More than 900 DACA recipients with these skills, just like Kyungmin, have joined the military. They took the oath. They said they were willing to die for this country and serve in our military.

Some Trump administration officials have claimed that DACA recipients are taking jobs away from Americans, but Kyungmin and hundreds of others have vital skills that our military just couldn't find in other places.

Kyungmin, with many other Dreamers, is now waiting to ship out to basic training. He continues his undergraduate studies and works full time as he waits for a chance to serve the United States of America. He is willing to risk his life for a country that doesn't recognize him as a legal resident.

He wrote me a letter, which reads:

DACA means everything to me. It gives me the opportunity to work and support myself. . . . It is with great pride that I call myself American even though my status says otherwise.

I recently visited the Phoenix Military Academy, one of the six military academies that is part of the Chicago Public School System. I am proud to say Chicago Public Schools hosts the largest Junior ROTC Program in America, with 10,000 cadets. You ought to see them marching at the Memorial Day Parade—just wave after wave of these uniformed, young high school students. It turns out that many of these cadets are Dreamers who want to do just what Kyungmin has done—volunteer to enlist in the U.S. military.

How can you question this man's commitment to America if he is willing to die for this country? How many kids in high school would step up with that kind of courage? He has demonstrated, and others have, too, that they can give a lot to our country.

Without DACA, if it ends March 5, it is over for Kyungmin and 900 others who have volunteered to serve our Nation. They are finished. They cannot continue their service to America, even though the skills they bring are necessarily vital to our national interests. For the thousands of Junior ROTC cadets in Chicago who drill every day and take this seriously, it is over for them too. There is no avenue left for them to step forward and serve our Nation.

Would America be better if we deported Kyungmin back to South Korea—a country he may not even remember? Will we be a stronger country if we lose this kind of courage and this kind of commitment of a young man

who is willing to risk his life for a country that does not legally recognize him as part of its population?

In a few weeks, we are going to get to go home for the holidays. I am looking forward to it. I really am. It is a big holiday for my family, and I am sure it is for many others. Can we really go home and enjoy our families, knowing we have not answered the most basic question that the President said to us on September 5, when he asked: Can Congress act? Can you pass a law? Can you solve a problem? That is what it comes down to when it is DACA and the Dreamers.

When I introduced the Dream Act with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Republican of South Carolina, he said: The moment of reckoning is coming.

He is right. LINDSEY is right. It is a moment of reckoning for this young man. More importantly, it is a moment of reckoning for this Senate as to whether we are serious about why we were elected. If we cannot solve this basic problem in a matter of days and weeks, shame on us. We are not overworked, for goodness' sake. We are just not inspired to do it at this point, and we need to be inspired to do it.

We shouldn't do this young man and to the thousands of others who count on us the unacceptable and walk away from our responsibility. Now is the time, before the end of this year, to let this young man know, when he is called to serve our country—and to proudly do so—that we have done everything we can to clear his path.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

REMEMBERING BOATSWAIN'S MATE SECOND CLASS JOSEPH LEON GEORGE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise to honor the heroism of Boatswain's Mate Second Class Joseph Leon George.

On December 7, 1941, 26-year-old Joe George served as a crew member aboard the USS *Vestal*, a repair ship that was moored next to the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a history-defining event for our Nation, one we humbly observe each year to remember and honor the 2,403 Americans who perished.

On that day, Joe George, along with so many other courageous heroes, would take swift and decisive action, putting his own life on the line to save sailors whom he had never met and would never know.

When the USS *Arizona* was attacked, the forward ammunition magazine of the ship exploded—we have all seen that very famous photograph of the *Arizona*—and engulfed countless sailors in the inferno. Joe George, from his post on the nearby repair boat, recognized six badly burned sailors who were trapped in the control tower on the *Arizona*'s main mast, with no escape options available.

Despite the fact that he was ordered to cut the line—to cut the rope—between the *Vestal* and the sinking *Arizona*, Joe relentlessly heaved a line, over and over, which spanned a distance of almost 80 feet between the two ships, until Joe was finally able to reach the sailors with his rope.

Joe's selfless actions saved six sailors who would have otherwise perished in the flames on the USS *Arizona* that day. While two of those six would succumb to their injuries shortly thereafter, the remaining four survivors have Joe to thank for their lives.

Amidst all the chaos that day, Joe George was never identified as the sailor who threw that lifeline. In fact, the four survivors diligently sought for information to recognize the man whom they were never able to thank—Joe George, the person who saved their lives.

It wasn't until 36 years later that the unknown sailor would be acknowledged when Joe George conducted an interview with the University of North Texas on August 5, 1978. Joe George contributed his experiences while serving during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor as part of the university's oral history for the “Day of Infamy.”

This was the first time Joe would speak of the event, confirmed by his ship log records, commanding officer's remarks, and, most importantly, the two living survivors that have Joe to thank for their lives.

Joe's actions that day, which we find hard to match words that do it justice, are nothing short of what an American hero is in servitude, dedication, and sacrifice.

While the years of searching for Joe and establishing the basis for proper recognition do not go unappreciated, it is with great respect and admiration that we take a moment to honor this distinguished sailor's actions so long ago.

The specific events of December 7, 1941, 76 years ago today, continue to age with each passing year, but the memories and stories of heroes like Joe thrive as our Nation reflects in humility and gratitude.

It is with great respect that I recognize this time today to honor Joe George. Some 76 years ago today, Joe's actions saved six sailors.

Today Joe's family will receive the Navy Bronze Star for Valor at the remembrance ceremony at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. This is the first time a medal has been presented on the Memorial of the USS *Arizona*.

I was honored to work with Colorado Springs resident Donald Stratton to solidify this honor for Joe George. Don is one of the sailors who was saved, and he has been fighting for decades to make sure this day of recognition would take place. So 76 years later, we culminate the work of Don Stratton's mission to commemorate the man who the Stratton family has everything to be thankful for.

I am beyond words with excitement to be part of this momentous occasion

with so many others who worked tirelessly over the years to make this happen. My hope is that Joe's valiant story joins the permanent foundation of our Nation's history for future generations to recognize, understand, and appreciate the sacrifice of the countless heroes who have come before them.

I had the incredible privilege of spending Veterans Day just a few weeks ago with Donald Stratton and his family in Colorado Springs. I was in his living room as he and his wife shared their experiences together.

Donald Stratton talked about what it was like to be on fire with five of his shipmates shimmying across that rope to the vessel and to their freedom, to their safety.

I was in that living room on Veterans Day when the family received a phone call from the Colorado Springs City Council, naming a bridge in honor of Donald Stratton. I saw the exuberance and joy that the family shared at that recognition.

Donald Stratton's service didn't end at Pearl Harbor. After a year in the hospital, he would return to the Pacific to fight in mission after mission.

Now, 76 years later, Donald Stratton's last mission is complete with the recognition of the man who saved his life.

I want to read a letter that will be presented at the memorial service at Pearl Harbor where Joe George, the hero who saved so many lives, will be awarded the Bronze Star.

Dear Mr. Stratton and the George family, Dawn broke seven decades ago on this day to a world at war. The peaceful waters of this harbor churned in violent reaction to a vicious attack that changed forever the course of our nation. You know, you were here. All of you here today are united as families, soldiers, sailors and airmen through blood and sacrifice of so many who gave so much.

The recognition of Joe George is an exclamation point to the thousands of servicemembers on the U.S.S. Arizona and the men he saved, and the families that exist today—

Who are celebrating in Pearl Harbor today—

because of his heroic actions. This has been a long time coming, a last mission for rightful recognition. As the days march forward so too have far too many of our World War II veterans—please know that your work to achieve this one last salute to courage proves that you will never be forgotten. These still waters will ripple for eternity in awe of your tireless and unyielding dedication to this great country.

On August 15, 1945 my grandfather stationed in France wrote a letter to his family that started with these words, "Aha, that day, 14 August, is indeed a history making day, and last night at twelve o'clock when at last all the rumors were confirmed that the world was at peace I said a silent prayer and know that it won't be long until we are all together again." To all who are present today in spirit and in person—you are making history, bringing our nation together once again, as this final mission is accomplished giving due recognition for valor in combat, for heroic and meritorious service. In the words of Donald Stratton, on December 7, 1941, "Everybody had to be somewhere." Today's ceremony reminds our na-

tion of how truly blessed we are because you were here.

Mr. President, this is very well likely the last memorial service at Pearl Harbor that will have survivors of the USS *Arizona* in attendance, and I hope that Americans across the country will take the time to reflect on the greatness of so many who have left us behind now but who left us a country that we can be so proud of. We have enjoyed 76 years of freedom thanks to them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Georgia.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, last week the Senate finally broke through the gridlock and voted to change our archaic Tax Code once and for all. It only took 31 years to get here.

As to regulatory relief, so far this year this body and this administration have removed 860 regulations and rules, from the rule book here in Washington, that had been sucking the very life out of our free enterprise system over the last 8 years or so. But along with regulatory relief and unleashing our energy potential, this is the single most important thing we can do to unleash our economic growth and bring relief to American workers. These changes to the Tax Code are a win for American families, American workers, and American businesses.

Let me give just a couple of examples. A family of four that makes a median income today of \$73,000 a year will see their tax bill go down by \$2,200 a month. That is a 60-percent reduction in their Federal income taxes. A single payer, a single mom with one child, making the median income, will get a 75-percent tax cut. The standard deduction is doubled. The child care credit is doubled to \$2,000. The individual mandate that was unleashed on the American people by ObamaCare is eliminated.

By the way, just in 2014 alone—that is the latest year we have any official record from the IRS—this insidious mandate fined 8 million Americans \$2 billion. The irony of that is that almost half of those people make less than \$25,000 a year.

In addition to those changes, the one I love and the one my mother and father will love—they were public school teachers—is that the teacher expense deduction has been doubled under this bill. In addition, 6 million taxpayers have been removed from the Federal income tax roll. That is just the half of it.

Businesses see their corporate tax rate go from 35 percent to 20 percent, allowing them to create jobs here in America and expand production and compete with the rest of the world. Due to our archaic repatriation tax, we are the last country in the world to have a double tax on profits made by U.S. companies around the world. That is \$2.6 trillion, by some estimates, that

we hope will be reinvested here in the United States.

According to outside analysts, this bill creates 1 million new jobs, and the average compensation of the average family in America should go up by \$4,000—some estimate as high as \$9,000 per year.

The GDP only has to go from 1.9 percent to 2.1 percent to more than pay for all of this. That is not my estimate. That is the estimate of the Joint Committee on Tax. If you don't believe them, then, the Congressional Budget Office, with which we have all kinds of problems, say that we only have to grow the economy 0.4 percent. So anywhere from 1.9 to 2.3 percent growth would more than pay for this investment in the American worker. I would argue, because of the last two quarters, that we are already seeing 3 percent growth, primarily, because of the expectation that we are going to act on tax and because of the reality of the fact that we have been moving on the regulatory regime that has been perpetrated on the American worker these last 8 years.

There are a lot of benefits, but in my opinion the person who benefits from this tax bill the most is that person in America who gets a job.

When it comes to the corporate rate, I personally have seen firsthand how important it is to have a rate that allows American workers to compete with their counterparts around the world. The most stimulative part of this tax bill, in my opinion, is this corporate tax cut, because of the impact it will have on our businesses and workers and because it creates a level playing field with the rest of the world.

Let's be very clear. My original goal was 15 percent because I know this is a dynamic situation, where the rest of the world today is going to move because of what we are doing.

Both the House and the Senate agreed on 20 percent. Now there is some talk about changing it in conference. My question is this. The House approved 20 percent and the Senate approved 20 percent. The purpose of this conference is to work between those two decisions to find the differences and mull those into a finer bill that both the House and Senate can vote on. My question for this body and for this conference is this: What is between 20 and 20? I don't understand. This should be a no-brainer.

The best thing we can do for people in the United States who work with their hands—these are people who punch a timeclock, just like I did when I was working my way through college—is to create a level playing field for the rest of the world and lower the corporate tax rate. The current rate sends jobs overseas and keeps our workers from competing on a level playing field. We have the best workforce in the history of the world, and yet we have hamstrung them such that other companies can come to the United States and buy our companies

and take those jobs overseas. We need to get this tax rate competitive and as low as possible. Otherwise, other countries will immediately lower their rates, and we will still be at a significant disadvantage.

If we don't take bold action right now, we may not get the chance to do so again for another 30 years. We need to make sure we don't get outpaced by other countries, even after we make these tax changes.

Let me just describe why this is so important. Today, the U.S. tax rate is 35 percent. Asia right now averages about 18 percent. Europe is about 20 percent. So if we go to 20 percent, the rest of the world is going to move. We already know that the United Kingdom is moving to 15 percent. Others are talking about moving as well. We have a 50-percent differential. That difference allows other countries to come into this country, buy our companies and use that tax differential to pay for part of the acquisition costs. What that does is it takes jobs overseas and actually thwarts our ability to compete. Because of this reality, because of this 50-percent differential, there are twice as many foreign companies buying U.S. companies, both C corporations and passthroughs, as there are U.S. companies buying foreign companies. We simply have to change that.

Let me give you some examples of how competitive and how dynamic this issue about the corporate tax rate is. Germany today has a 16 percent tax rate; that compares to our 35 percent top tax rate. The UK today is 19 percent, but as I said earlier, they have already announced that they are going to 17 percent next year. France and the Netherlands have also announced that they are going to take rates lower next year.

When the UK goes to 17 percent, France lowers theirs, the Netherlands lowers theirs—Germany is already sitting right there at 16 percent—if we increase this corporate tax rate from what we have already agreed to in our negotiations in this body, then we will replicate the 50-percent differential with the rest of the world almost immediately, so we will have accomplished nothing.

The greatest burden on the American worker, again, is this corporate tax rate of 35 percent. It is estimated that every 1 percent drop in the corporate tax rate could mean roughly 30,000 new jobs in an economy that is \$30 billion larger. We can't afford to play around with this corporate tax rate that we have already agreed on. It is time to stop that debate.

All of these changes in the Tax Code, though, were meant to lift up Americans, simply put. It is the family who will benefit from this. It is the individual who is trying to get an education, get that first job. It is those people who are going to retire and depend on a robust Federal Government to take care of them in their retirement. But right now, with this debt

crisis, we are losing the ability to do the right thing.

Members of both sides of the aisle have previously supported many of these changes to the Tax Code. There was no reason to vote no on this bill, and there is no reason not to support them now. The United States made history the other night at about 2 a.m. on Saturday morning by approving this plan. We now have certain individuals from this body and the House who will go into a conference, and they will work out the differences between the House bill and the Senate bill. That is called democracy, and I am looking forward to seeing that bill come back to this body. We must not lose sight about what this is all about—to bring relief to Americans and help us become more competitive. We cannot take this standard of living for granted.

This body is great at spending money, but right now every dollar we spend of discretionary money, by definition, is borrowed money. This can no longer be the case. This tax bill is clearly an investment in our future.

I am not embarrassed to say that I believe in capitalism. Capitalism is what has made this country different from any other country in the world so far. Right now, the economic miracle of this past century is based on three simple things: innovation, capital formation, and the rule of law. That, combined with the best workforce in the history of the world, has created this economic miracle. Yet we sit here today where my children, the next generation, will be the first generation in the history of our country to face lower economic prospects than the generation before them. That does not have to be the case. It is up to this body to stand up and do what is right for the next generation. This is a critical part—don't miss this—this is a critical part of solving our debt crisis. This is the least we owe to our children and our children's children.

We must continue doing all we can to make sure that we put this tax bill on President Trump's desk before Christmas. Our children and our children's children's futures depend on it.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, let me tell you a story. Yesterday, I was in Nashville, and I went to Chick-fil-a on Charlotte Avenue about 2 p.m. in the afternoon, and I ordered six chicken nuggets, some mac and cheese, and some waffle fries. I was about to leave, and a lady walked up to me and said: Senator, thank you for what you are doing to help me with insurance.

I said: Well, what do you mean?

She said: My name is Marty Parish. I am a self-employed farmer, and the year before ObamaCare started, my monthly insurance premium was \$300.

Next year, it is \$1,300, and that is very hard for me to afford.

I said: I guess you are one of those Americans who work hard and you don't get any government subsidy to help you pay for your health insurance.

She said: That is exactly right. I have to pay for the whole thing myself.

I said: Well, Marty Parish, I have a Christmas present for you. The Congress can pass, by the end of the month, legislation that would lower your premiums in the year 2019 by 18 percent. That is according to Avalere, one of the country's leading health consulting firms, which made the announcement yesterday.

So if your premiums are \$1,300 a month, that is a couple of thousand dollars less that you will have to pay, and that is still way too high. If the Senate and the House agree on a tax bill that removes the individual mandate and the Congressional Budget Office is right, that will put some upward pressure on those same rates but only 10 percent. She was still going to get an 8-percent decrease in her rates in 2019, and that is about \$1,000 in her pocket. Those are real dollars.

Marty Parish has seen, if she is like the average Tennessean, her premiums rise 176 percent over the last 5 years, and she has seen them go up an average this year of 58 percent more. So a very good Christmas present for Marty Parish and men and women like her across this country would be for this Congress, before the end of the month, to pass what we call the Alexander-Murray and the Collins-Nelson legislation, which will lower premiums by 18 percent. More than that, that Christmas present, which is all wrapped up in a nice package and sitting in the White House, waiting for anybody who wants to consider it—according to the Congressional Budget Office, it will not just reduce premiums, but it will reduce the amount of Federal tax dollars that go to pay for ObamaCare subsidies. If the premiums are lower, the subsidies are going to be lower. And if the premiums are lower and the subsidies are lower, then the Federal debt is going to be lower.

So here you have, for my friend whom I met yesterday at Chick-fil-a, an 18-percent, on average, reduction in her 2019 insurance premiums. Fewer of her tax dollars are going to pay for Affordable Care Act subsidies, and there will be less Federal debt for her and her family. Because the President has said that he will not put up with it and because Senator MURRAY, the Democrat who is ranking on the HELP Committee, and I agree on this, there will be no bailout of insurance companies in these proposals.

Who would support something like this? Well, President Trump supports it. He told us that last week. In fact, he asked for it. He called me specifically a few weeks ago and said: I don't want people hurt in the next 2 years while we are still debating what to do in the long term about health insurance. Why

don't you work with Senator MURRAY and see if you can put together a bill that keeps people from being hurt and that stabilizes the market so premiums don't go up so much?

I said: Mr. President, we are already working on that.

I have talked with him half a dozen times about that. I met with him at the White House, talked to him the other day, and he has said publicly and privately that he supports the Alexander-Murray legislation, and he supports the legislation supported by Senator COLLINS, a Republican, and Senator NELSON, a Democrat. So that is a pretty big one.

Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican majority leader, supports it. He has said that publicly and privately. He supports both of them.

Senator SCHUMER, who is the Democratic leader, said 2 or 3 weeks ago that every single Democrat in the Senate would vote for Alexander-Murray and that it had 60 votes, and Senator MCCONNELL should put it on the floor as soon as possible. He thought it would pass with a lot of votes.

Well, the bill hasn't changed except in one way. It has gotten better from the point of view not just of Democrats but of Republicans.

The idea that Senator COLLINS and Senator NELSON have come up with is the idea of creating an invisible risk pool or a reinsurance fund. To allow States to do that would permit those States to do what Maine has done, what Alaska has done, and what Minnesota is trying to do, and it is this: Alaska created such a fund; they call it a reinsurance fund. Maine calls it an invisible risk pool. They put money into taking care of the very sick people in the individual market in Alaska, and once they did that, well, they were able to lower rates for everybody else by 20 percent. That is in addition to the 18 percent that Avalere talked about in our bill—in addition to that. Maine did a similar thing in a little different way in their State.

Who else likes this idea? Well, Republicans in the House of Representatives like it. They, of course, are a full partner in this exercise. They will have to consider it and decide whether they are for it, but I think it would be pretty easy for them to support Collins-Nelson because it was in the repeal-and-replace bill for the Affordable Care Act that the House passed and voted for. In fact, the so-called compromise by Representative MEADOWS and Representative MCCARTHY included an invisible risk pool of up to \$15 billion to allow States—this is pretty good Republican philosophy—to make their own decisions about doing this and decide, as Maine did, Alaska did, and as Minnesota is trying to do, to say that we are going to create this fund, and we are going to take care of the very sick people who use most of the money we spend on healthcare. When we do that, we lower the rates for everybody else. In the Alaska case, because it low-

ered the rates for everybody else, again, premiums went down, subsidies went down, and Alaska was able to pay for 85 percent of its reinsurance fund with Federal dollars without any new Federal dollars going to Alaska. That is what happens when you allow States to use their own good judgment, and that is why Senator COLLINS, a Republican, and Senator BILL NELSON, a Democrat, have suggested it over here.

The other thing that the House of Representatives did in its Republican replace-and-replace bill was continue the cost-sharing payments for 2 years. Cost-sharing payments are payments that the Federal Government makes so that low-income Americans will not have to make them when they buy their insurance. It makes them to the insurance companies, but the benefit from the lower rates is supposed to go to the individual consumer or to the taxpayer.

The House of Representatives, in its repeal-and-replace bill, understood—just as the distinguished Presiding Officer Senator CASSIDY, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator JOHNSON understood—that if they are able to repeal and replace ObamaCare or make any significant major changes in it, it will take a couple of years to put it in place, and you don't want people to be hurt in the meantime. That is exactly what the President said to me when he called me a few weeks ago. He said: I don't want people hurt during this 2-year period.

So the House of Representatives put into their repeal-and-replace bill 2 years of cost-sharing payments, not to bail out insurance companies. It doesn't bail out insurance companies. The benefits go to individuals. They wanted to make sure that rates stayed down and people didn't get hurt.

The proposals we are talking about, the Christmas present I talked about to the young farmer in Tennessee—both have fundamentally been a part of the House repeal-and-replace bill. While I can't speak for the House of Representatives—what they do is their business—I believe as they study Alexander-Murray and Collins-Nelson, they will find that they like it because they have already voted for it once this year. The House of Representatives created the invisible risk pool. That was a real breakthrough in their ability to pass a bill. Then, second, they wanted to make sure that during this interim—the time we try to change the individual insurance market in this country—people aren't hurt.

So I have come to the floor today just to say that there is a lot going on today and next week. It involves defense spending. It involves the amount of money we can spend for the next year in our government. It involves a tax bill. The Senator from Georgia has just talked about it—a historic tax bill that I hope we can pass. But there is also an opportunity for every single one of us to give a Christmas present to the 9 million Americans who have

been hammered by skyrocketing insurance premiums.

We don't need to debate whose fault that is. I don't need to say it is all the fault of the Affordable Care Act. Democrats don't need to say it is President Trump's sabotaging it. Let's forget that for a moment. Let's just say that the fact is, in Tennessee, premiums will go up in 2018 by 58 percent, and they are going to go up more the next year if we don't do something about it.

We have two bills here that will say to the self-employed farmer in Tennessee or Iowa or Louisiana or the songwriter or the small business woman: We hear you. We know you can't afford these rates. If you are paying \$1,300 a month for two of you, that is way too high.

We can begin to take those rates down—according to Avalere, 18 percent in 2019. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if we don't take this action to pass the cost-sharing payments, rates will go up 25 percent. So if the present we have includes lower premiums, less debt, less money going to ObamaCare subsidies, and it doesn't bail out insurance companies, why should we not pass that? I think we will pass it.

I think it would be pretty hard to explain—I don't want to run into Marti Parish at Chick-fil-A in Nashville between Christmas and New Year's and say: I am sorry about that Christmas present. I could have lowered your rates 18 percent, and I could have done it in a way that didn't run up our Federal debt. I just couldn't get it done.

She would say to me: Wasn't the President for it?

I would say: Yes.

Hasn't the House already voted for that once?

I would say: Yes.

Didn't the Democratic leader say the Democrats were for it?

I would say: Yes.

She would say: Then why didn't it pass?

I would have a hard time coming up with an answer to that.

I hope that over the next few days, we are able to do what Democrats and Republicans have suggested and what 12 Democratic Senators and 12 Republican Senators have offered to this Senate in Alexander-Murray and what Senator COLLINS and Senator NELSON have offered in Collins-Nelson. Both ideas are very much like two provisions already voted on this year by the House of Representatives.

Let's realize that it is the Christmas season. A very nice Christmas present for 9 million hard-working Americans who don't get any government help to pay for their skyrocketing health insurance premiums would be to pass these bills into law so they can count on insurance premiums in 2019 that are, on average, 18 percent lower.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

DACA

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as a voice for 800,000 young men and women who are counting on all of us to pass the Dream Act. We can't wait because they can't wait. Every day that passes is another day they are forced to keep their lives on hold. Right now, hundreds of thousands of young people in this country are deferring their dreams of finishing a college degree, of becoming a doctor, buying a home, raising a family, starting a small business, or serving in our military—all because President Trump pulled the plug on the DACA Program 3 months ago.

Imagine that feeling of waking up day after day without any certainty about what comes next. Imagine that the country you love—the country where you grew up, where you are part of the community, where you pay your taxes, where you spend your time, your energy, and your money—will not commit to uphold this promise to you. That is just wrong.

Dreamers were brought to this country as children—some of them so young, they don't even remember it—and holding up their futures or sending them to a country they have never known makes no sense for them or for our country. It doesn't do anything to solve our broken immigration system, and it certainly doesn't reflect a country of opportunity or promise—something the United States has always aspired to.

My colleagues have been sharing stories from their States. Here are a few from my home State of Washington—just a few. I have heard so many in recent months.

Not long ago, I was in Tacoma, and I visited a community organization that has actually helped hundreds of men and women get enrolled in the DACA Program, including a woman named Adriana. She has always been a strong student. As early as middle school, she was representing her school district in statewide math and science competitions. Now, after becoming a certified nursing assistant, she is a program manager supervising others. Letting the DACA Program collapse would be a huge setback for Adriana and would end her authorization and her ability to work as a nursing assistant.

I heard from a sophomore at my alma mater, Washington State University, who was brought here to this country at the age of 9. Thanks to the DACA Program, she was able to get a job helping adults with disabilities, which has allowed her to pay for college tuition and support herself. She is a full-time student with a part-time job and still finds time to volunteer in her community. She is on track to graduate in 2019. She dreams of owning her own company someday.

I heard from another DACA recipient who owns a business in Washington State. He said that his college degree from the University of Washington—which he completed without any Fed-

eral funding, by the way, no help at all—symbolized one of his great life challenges. And, as he noted, he is now using his education, his skills, his earnings, and his taxes to contribute to the U.S. economy. He wrote: “This country is my home.”

The thought that this country would slam the door shut on him or any other Dreamer after all they have put in their communities and our country is so backward. That is why we Senators who are elected to work for the people and address the big issues facing the country need to act.

I urge my Republican colleagues to consider the stories you heard from your own States. Think about the communities you represent and the young men and women who are studying and working and starting businesses in the communities you travel to and live in. Show them that President Trump's reckless, divisive agenda does not represent you, your party, or your own State. Work with Democrats to stand for the Dreamers in your district, who are unsure if they can keep their job at a hospital or as a firefighter or serve in our military to fight for our freedoms, who are unsure if they can stay in the only country they have known as home and remain with loved ones.

We need the help of every Member to push back against the policies and the rhetoric that hurt our friends and our neighbors, our coworkers, our students, and our loved ones, because, to paraphrase Dr. King, we know that only our light can drive out the dark forces of bigotry and division in this country.

I thank the countless DACA recipients who have bravely shared their stories in letters, in person, and at rallies across our country. I know it cannot be easy to speak up in these uncertain times, but I want Dreamers to know that there are a lot of us here in Congress and across the country who are inspired by your courage and resilience. We stand with you, and we will not stop until we get this across the finish line.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HASSAN. 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 MAX MENDEZ

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, it is my honor to announce our latest Granite Stater of the Month, an inspiring, resilient, and generous young man from Merrimack, NH.

Max Mendez, an 8-year-old boy—also known as Mighty Max and Professor Max—has battled leukemia for over a year, and he has proven to be a shining example of the values that make the

Granite State and all of our communities strong.

As Max began treatment last year—procedures, blood draws, and tests—at Boston Children's Hospital, he was often recognized for his courage and grit. The hospital had a supply of toys, and after these procedures, he would often be rewarded with one of them.

Max received so many toys that he started to donate some of them to other kids and realized that giving toys felt even better than receiving them.

In the face of his own severe health challenges, Max started Mighty Max's Mega Toy Drive to help supply Jimmy Fund Clinic, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and Boston Children's Hospital's hematology and oncology unit with presents for brave young patients like himself.

In true Granite State fashion, Max and his family received invaluable support from their community, including friends, local businesses, schools, sports teams, and the local police department.

Max's community donated toys, offered spaces, collection sites, and delivered donations to Max and the Mendez family. With extra help from his sister, McKayla, and the Lyna family, who helped advertise the toy drive and store donations, Mighty Max's Mega Toy Drive received roughly 3,000 toys ahead of the holiday season this year.

Mighty Max, the Mendez family, and all of the Granite Staters who supported the toy drive demonstrate the spirit that makes New Hampshire such a strong, resilient State.

While battling leukemia and enduring painful treatments, Max found it in himself to bring joy to others who face similar challenges. His entire community, including people Max will never meet, is stronger because of his generous spirit and hard work.

Max is an inspiration for all of us during this holiday season and beyond, and I am proud to call him our Granite Stater of the Month.

Thank you.

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

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

DACA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this fall, I met with Dreamers in my home State of Oregon. At meetings in Eugene and in Portland, these young people gave powerful accounts of how the Trump administration has needlessly and cruelly injected fear into their lives and the lives of their families.

Right now, these Dreamers—these young people who have done nothing wrong, who have terrific grades, wonderful conduct, who are helping their

families—are faced with the very real threat that they may be ripped away from the only lives and the only country they have ever known. These young people might be little more than numbers on a page to those who spend their days waging political fights in the Nation's Capital, but this is not just some academic topic for the thousands of young people across the land who would be affected by these vicious policies. This is a real-life issue with real-life consequences and real-life dangers for many of our friends and neighbors.

It is real for those like Cynthia Aguilar, whom I met this fall at the University of Oregon in Eugene. She spoke eloquently about how her mother sacrificed so much for her, living paycheck to paycheck so Cynthia could have an education and a better life.

It is real for those like Eastern Oregon University student Daysi Bedolla, who spoke just as movingly when we met in Portland, as well as in La Grande at a townhall I held in her community. Not only does Daysi talk about the huge contributions that Dreamers are making in their hometowns and college campuses, she demonstrates her contributions each day at Eastern Oregon University as the school's student body president.

Cynthia, Daysi, and so many others are what I call the real dream team, and I am proud to be their teammate in this fundamental fight for fairness. It is not a small fight. In Oregon alone, there are an estimated 11,000 Dreamers—enough to fill almost every seat in the Memorial Coliseum—and every one of those young people has parents and brothers and sisters and friends in their communities. They have well-laid plans to work hard in school, make something of their lives, and start families of their own in the United States. The strength of their stories fuels our fight, and that is why I join colleagues today in insisting that the Dream Act come to the floor of this Senate. This has been a long battle.

I am proud to have been with the Dreamers every step of the way from the Dream Act legislation to President Obama's actions on DACA. I am also pleased to have worked with my colleagues to introduce legislation like the Protect Dreamer Confidentiality Act. This bill would ensure that the information Dreamers provided to the government isn't somehow used against them for immigration enforcement.

Congress has to come together and work in a bipartisan way on a fair path forward for Dreamers. This effort from the White House to punish innocent young people and split families goes against the values we cherish as Americans and further divides our country. These children have known nothing but the United States as their home. They have done nothing wrong and everything right. They deserve an opportunity to stay here. Our government made a promise to Dreamers when we encouraged them to share their stories

publicly, submit to background checks, and pay taxes. It would be wrong to go back on that promise now.

I am pleased to be on this floor to say that we are just going to battle every step along the way until there is justice done for the Dreamers.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank Senator MORAN, who graciously gave me some time, and I want to briefly talk about one other subject.

I am the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, and I am pleased to serve with my colleague from Louisiana who also serves on the committee and will be a conferee on the tax bill.

I would like to bring up a matter the President introduced yesterday. The President has long said that there was going to be a "fantastic tax bill"—his words, not mine—and obviously the American people don't see it that way. Overwhelmingly, we see in surveys—I saw it in townhall meetings over the weekend, in a community Hillary Clinton won, in a community where Donald Trump was extremely popular—that this tax bill was incredibly unpopular.

The President admitted yesterday that there was a "tiny little sliver" of Americans who, as he said, "just through circumstances maybe don't get the full benefit of the tax bill." I am not sure what tax plan he is talking about, but it sure can't be the one that hikes taxes on middle-class folks that Republicans are working out in the conference right now.

So I want to get to the numbers, just briefly, from the independent, non-partisan referees at the Joint Committee on Taxation. These are the folks we pay. The numbers they have given us really aren't in line with what the President is talking about when he says only a "tiny little sliver" of Americans are going to be hurt and come out behind.

Thirteen million low- and middle-income Americans are facing an immediate tax hike of \$100 or more because of this bill. Apparently, in the President's view, 13 million Americans is a "tiny little sliver."

That is just the immediate impact. The bill gets worse and worse for middle-class folks with each passing year, and 2027 is when the numbers put your jaw on the floor. Under this plan that the President says is so "fantastic," 150 million middle-class taxpayers either get a couple of crumbs or they get hit with an outright tax hike. I am going to say that once more. One hundred and fifty million Americans will get nothing but crumbs or an outright tax hike. That is what the President calls a "tiny little sliver"? It is pretty close to 90 percent of the middle class.

That is just the raw math of who is facing a tax hike. As I have said, this bill drives a dagger into the heart of the Affordable Care Act. Thirteen million Americans are going to lose their

healthcare, and tens of millions more will get hit with a hidden tax hike in the form of higher insurance premiums. Then, of course, we all understand that the coverage requirement in the Affordable Care Act that Senate Republicans seek to remove is what makes it possible for us to get loophole-free, airtight protection for those who faced discrimination when they had a preexisting condition.

This is pretty troubling stuff, and it sure doesn't strike me that when this administration says that only a "tiny little sliver" of people are going to get hurt—the reality shows something very different.

The fact is, after all the giveaways to the multinational corporations and the well-connected and high-fliers, this bill is going to cost more than \$1 trillion. It is a real head-scratcher, how you can spend so much money, help so few people, and convince yourself that what you are doing is so terrific.

Peddling the idea that there is just a "tiny little sliver" of people out there who don't benefit from this tax plan, in my view, is preposterous, and the tens of millions of Americans this bill is going to hurt deserve far better.

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

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE AND ACCESS ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I am glad to see the Presiding Officer in the Chair because I came to talk about a topic that he and I share a great concern and compassion about—the veterans of our States and our Nation.

I first want to thank Senator JOHN MCCAIN, of Arizona. Many of my colleagues have spent a much longer time in the Senate than I have, and they have had the opportunity to work side by side with Senator MCCAIN more often than I have, but I am honored today to join him in legislation that we introduced earlier this week. It is S. 2184, the Veterans Community Care and Access Act of 2017.

I am honored to have the opportunity to work side by side with Senator MCCAIN and other colleagues as we try to determine how best we can care for those who served our Nation. I wish to use this opportunity to pay tribute to the Senator from Arizona for his service to our Nation and what I know of his experience in Vietnam and his service to the Nation but what I also know

of him in difficult circumstances in which he continues to work for the benefit and well-being of the people of our country. We both share—he is a veteran, not I—the ideals and beliefs that those who served our country deserve only the best from a grateful nation.

I have been a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee since I came to Congress with that goal in mind, and I continue to serve in the Senate as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I serve now as the chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that funds the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have introduced the Veterans Community Care and Access Act because we want to call on the VA to do what it is they say they want to do. This bill fulfills priorities.

The reason this bill comes to the Senate floor at this point in time is that the Veterans Choice Program was created at a time of crisis at the VA in which veterans were not being served and not being well served, and Congress responded with a program to allow veterans to access care in their communities. It is before us again because that program expires presumably this month, perhaps early in January. The bill expires when the funding for the Veterans Choice Program is used up, and that is a matter of days or weeks away. The effort, in part, is to reauthorize the Veterans Choice Program but, more importantly, to make certain that we revitalize, update, improve, alter, and transform the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In my view, it would be a sad circumstance in which we reach the conclusion that we must simply reauthorize the Choice Program without using this opportunity to transform the VA into something better that can serve the needs of more veterans in a better way to fulfill the needs of those veterans.

The legislation that Senator McCAIN and I have introduced does several things with regard to transforming the VA. It merges and modernizes the community care programs into one program. It provides greater access to care for veterans within the VA and within the community. In my view, this is not just about improving access or the quality of care in the community. It is about improving the opportunity of the VA to care for veterans within the VA. It establishes a framework for the VA to build a high-performing healthcare network. That network is designed to care for veterans where they can best receive the care, where they can receive the best quality care, and where they can geographically attain the care they need.

In addition to that, it requires the VA to coordinate that care within that network across the system so that once a veteran is a patient of the VA, they are not forgotten, they are followed, and they, as an individual veteran, have a care coordinator within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Regarding reform legislation on this VA community care, Secretary Shulkin, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, told me: "We need more specificity." So we developed legislation that balances instruction and guidance from Congress with the VA's own proposal. Secretary Shulkin also told me that if too much is left to the regulation process, "the VA will keep things the way they are now"—that things will not change. This is a recognition of the bureaucracy that he manages, and it is a recognition of that bureaucracy's refusal to change.

Refusal to change, unfortunately, is what got us to the 2014 scandal—exhibited, particularly, in Phoenix—which revealed nationwide system failures and resulted in the deaths of veterans. It is also evidenced by refusal to change, which is shown the number of times we have had a crisis in which the VA has run out of money to pay for the Choice Program and again comes to us at the 11th hour telling us they need help financially to keep the Choice Program going. It is a reason why today we can't tell you how much money is needed or when the current resources will expire.

I don't want us to miss the opportunity to do something more than simply reauthorize the Choice Program. I want to use this opportunity to create a system that not only works for veterans but modernizes and transforms the VA into a 21st century healthcare system that will serve our veterans today and veterans for generations to come.

This legislation reforms the VA healthcare system by connecting independent demand and capacity assessments to objective access and quality standards, which are used, then, to provide the veterans access to care in their community. The point here is that the VA remains the gatekeeper. The point, also, is that the criteria—the broad outline by which community care should be and must be provided—is determined by Congress, not by rules and regulations from within the bureaucracy of the Department. This legislation creates the tools the VA must use to reform healthcare, safeguards our veterans from inconsistent experiences, and leads to poor health outcomes.

This effort was a collaboration, including a strong collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs, but also with the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service, the Department of Defense, RAND, various healthcare industry experts across the country, as well as veterans services organizations.

We worked closely with the entities that have investigated the VA. In the Appropriations subcommittee that I chair, we often have the IG or the GAO in front of us explaining one more time a flaw that occurred at the VA and what needs to be done to correct that flaw. We sought their input into how

not to fix the consequences of a flaw but how to avoid a flaw. We want to fill in the gaps and develop solutions in advance of problems, and that requires real transformation within the VA.

We need to get the VA's house in order so they can do what they want to do, what they are required to do, and what the Americans demand of them—care for our veterans. There is too much dysfunction still happening at the VA for Congress not to take a stronger and more measured approach to reforming the VA healthcare system. It is unacceptable, in my view, for us to rely on "criteria the Secretary will develop" because that translates into a VA bureaucracy determining veteran eligibility in that regulatory process.

In large part, this legislation is derived, in my view from my experience as a Member of the Senate, in which not a day goes by that our office doesn't hear from veterans across Kansas and across the country. They bring to us the problems they have experienced, what all of us in the Senate would call casework. Somebody brings us a problem, and we work to solve it. The goal and my belief is that the outcome of this legislation reduces the amount of casework, which isn't about reducing our workload. It is about making certain that veterans don't have to come to their Congressman or Congresswoman and don't have to come to their U.S. Senator to get the services they are entitled to by law and by moral obligation. We don't learn from history. We need transformation. We need something more than just saying: Let's keep the current process in place for a while longer.

Following World War II, GEN Omar Bradley was assigned the task of overhauling the VA for the millions of Americans who were returning home from World War II. He said some important things at that point in time. Bradley rightfully kept the needs of veterans at the forefront. He said: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures; with their problems, not ours."

The goal and the outcome of good legislation will be to reduce and, hopefully, over time, to eliminate most of the problems our veterans experience in dealing with the VA and in accessing the healthcare they have been promised.

The VA has done an admirable job in many, many instances, but way too many veterans fall through the cracks. I would estimate that our office receives 30 new cases every week, and most of them deal with the issue of healthcare, and many of those deal with the issue of community care.

We can reform this system. We can make it better for the veteran. We can make it better for the provider and for those hospitals and clinics across Kansas and around the country that are willing to serve the VA if there is a process in place by which they get paid and they get paid at a rate with which they can afford to care for those veterans. What I would say is that, in

most instances, it is so they don't lose more money in caring for those veterans.

Just like at the conclusion of World War II, when General Bradley overhauled the VA, today's VA is in need of another major reform. Just as General Bradley did, we must keep the veterans' unique wants and needs in mind as we reshape and reform the delivery of healthcare. Veterans require and deserve the best our Nation has to offer. If the VA is serious about restoring the trust with veterans, then, the VA needs to be committed to creating a modern, functional healthcare system that increases access—both within the VA and within the community—for timely and quality care. We ought not miss this opportunity. We ought not shy away from legislation that helps to achieve that outcome.

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

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

DACA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to spend a couple of minutes talking about the Dream Act and the so-called DACA issue. There are so many acronyms here in Washington. Sometimes we rely too much on them, but in this case, a lot of Americans know what we are talking about—the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

This policy was put in place in the prior administration. Then in September, in this administration, the President made an announcement to end the program, to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. The President imposed, I would argue, an arbitrary deadline of March 5 of next year, which is looming now. Something on the order of 20,000 DACA recipients have already lost their protection from detention and deportation, and I believe that it is critical for Congress to act now to pass the bipartisan Dream Act.

What are we talking about here?

We are talking about young people who arrived in this country, in many cases, at very, very young ages—some of them babies, some of them young children at the time. When you hear their stories, you come away impressed that they have succeeded, that they have become part of the fabric of American life.

In a meeting a couple of months ago—sitting in a conference room, around a long conference table with other DACA recipients, because of the looming deadline and the potential that she could lose the status she has now and be deported—one DACA recipient said to me: The only country I have ever known doesn't want me—or at

least she was reflecting that the policy the administration had enunciated seemed to send a message to her that she was not wanted.

This makes no sense at all on a number of fronts, and I will get to each of them in a moment, but I will start with the word "promise." These young people were made a promise by our government. It was made by the President of the United States of America when he said: Come forward, and we will protect you because you have taken that affirmative step forward.

That promise cannot be violated, in my judgment, by any President or, certainly, by inaction on the part of Congress. If this government is willing to break that promise to what most believe is something on the order of 800,000 young people who have lived in the United States since their childhoods and after our having allowed them to better contribute to their families and their communities, why would any government around the world, let alone our own people, believe any other promise that we would make?

Would we have that moment, I would hope that we would be confident that a foreign government that happens to be an ally would be able to take our word for something—take the word of the President, take the word of a Federal official or a Member of Congress—when we make an assertion.

We all remember the story in the context of the Cuban missile crisis, when an American official went to see President de Gaulle of France—an ally, a close ally, an ally for generations. In discussion with President de Gaulle of France, that envoy said: The President of the United States wants me to present evidence to you to prove that there are missiles in Cuba.

As we were told, President de Gaulle said: There is no reason for you to show the surveillance pictures. If the President of the United States says there are missiles in Cuba, I believe him, and you don't need to prove it to me.

Part of that was because, over the generations, leaders of our country had built up a kind of credibility, a believability, that was very important to our international relationships—in this case, having to do with the French people.

Yet our government would break a promise to 800,000 young people—law-abiding young people, young people who have succeeded, in many of whom our country has invested by way of their educations. They have been educated in our school districts—educated in grade school and in high school and in our institutions of higher education in some instances. We are going to break a promise to them? Why would anyone trust us around the world if we would break a promise to 800,000 young people?

This is the responsibility not only of the administration but of both parties in both Houses because, if that promise is violated by inaction or action, then I think that we damage our credibility

here at home, especially, but also around the world.

We know that there are economic consequences to this action or inaction. By one estimate, when I consider just Pennsylvania, here are some of the numbers. In Pennsylvania, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program has allowed nearly 5,900 young people to come forward and to pass background checks to live and to work legally in this country. That was the promise. You come forward, and you allow a background check to proceed. You pass it, and you work legally in this country.

What kind of impact would play out in Pennsylvania if those 5,900 young people were to be lost because DACA would have ended?

The cost for our State would be, by one estimate, \$357 million. The national number is extraordinarily high. For the 800,000 young people who have lived in the United States since their childhoods, if DACA ends, the national economy will lose more than \$460 billion—that is billion with a "b" as opposed to the Pennsylvania number, which is in the millions—over the decade. So it would be, roughly, \$46 billion or so every year for 10 years. Why would we do that? Why would anyone want that to happen—to have that kind of economic hit to the national economy?

I think it is wrong just based upon its being a violation of a promise. It is a sacred obligation of any government, especially to the people who are living within the boundaries of the United States of America. That is offensive enough for me to speak out against action or inaction that would be against the interests of these young people. Even if you did not prioritize the violation of a sacred promise, you could also arrive at the conclusion that ending DACA would be a mistake for purely economic reasons if you were concerned about the national economy.

These young people, known as Dreamers, as I said, have lived in this country since they were very young. They are law-abiding residents. They have learned English. They pay taxes and have gone to school. They have secured jobs to support themselves and their families. For many of these Dreamers, America is, indeed, the only home they have ever known. Here are a couple of examples, in this case, from Pennsylvania.

Audrey Lopez, a Dreamer from Lancaster, PA, was brought to the United States from Peru when she was just 11 years old. Audrey spent most of her childhood in Pennsylvania, and her parents instilled in her the value of hard work and an education. Like so many Dreamers, Audrey Lopez only learned that she was undocumented when she started applying to college and learned that she did not have a Social Security number.

Despite her not having access to financial aid, Audrey worked hard and graduated from Millersville University

of Pennsylvania in 2012. After graduation, she took a job in public service at Church World Services in assisting refugees with resettlement. This past fall, Audrey accepted a nearly full scholarship to American University, here in Washington, where she will obtain a master's in international development. She has chosen that course of study, in part, due to fear of deportation. She is hoping to arm herself with the tools to make her country a better place.

We should be supporting young, hard-working people like Audrey who want to work in the service of others and our Nation. Instead, there are people here in Washington who are threatening their futures—not only her future but our Nation's future—by making us less safe and damaging the economy.

I say “less safe” if that is the way we treat law-abiding individuals in our country, people who have lived here their whole lives. They may not have been born here—they may not have a number—but for all intents and purposes, they are Americans. They live in American communities and attend American schools. They have achieved things that we would hope every American would achieve, and they have worked hard. In some cases, they didn't realize they were any different from any other child until much later in life when they were told they might not have had a number or a special status that others around them might have had. In any case, in addition to being the wrong thing to do—violate a promise—and in addition to hurting our economy, if you end DACA, it will not be good for our security.

Again, why would anyone believe that we could enter into a hard and fast security agreement or protect our own people if we would not be willing to protect people in our own country who have followed the law? This would be an insult and an outrage if it were hundreds of people, but we are talking about 800,000 who will be subject to losing their status and, ultimately, be deported because the U.S. Congress doesn't have the guts and doesn't have the integrity to protect them.

So this is a test, a test of the U.S. Congress—both Houses—and it is a test for the administration as well. I hope they can pass this test, the test of whether we keep our promise or whether we lie to the people. That is what this is about. This is about basic integrity, and there is no in-between here. You either keep your promise or you don't. We will see what the administration does, we will see what the Congress does, and we will see whether people care about the economy.

There is a lot of talk about growing the economy. How can we say we want to grow the economy, when you reject because of some ideology or some special interest—reject and compromise and damage the future of 800,000 people who live here? That is inexcusable and unforgivable. I hope we see some moral courage over the next couple of weeks when it comes to these young

people. Ending DACA is bad for our economy, it tears away the integrity of our government, and it is bad for our security. If this program is ended, we are less safe as a country, without a doubt.

This is why Congress must move immediately to pass the bipartisan Dream Act. It is a bill I was proud to vote for and move forward in 2007 and 2010. The bill would allow Dreamers to become permanent residents if they meet the very stringent qualifications outlined in the bill. This means giving those 5,900 Pennsylvanians who have been granted DACA status some security and a future they can count on. This is why we can say America is a great country, when we keep our promises, when we protect our own folks in our communities, especially these individuals who work very hard.

So this is a basic test. I hope our government will meet it. I hope the administration will work with us to make sure we can finally pass into law a measure that will remove this uncertainty and remove the fear people live with.

Let me conclude with one observation. I was in a meeting a couple of weeks ago with a young woman who said: The only country I have ever known doesn't seem to want me.

Another young woman in the same meeting said her whole goal in life was pretty simple. She wanted to be a nurse. She said she wanted to heal people. She had done well in school, had followed all the rules, and now she may be in trouble, subject to deportation down the road, if somehow this DACA policy isn't upheld, if our promise is violated, our sacred promise to 800,000 people. This young woman was telling a room full of people about this goal she had, this aspiration to be a nurse, and when she said, “All I want to do is heal people,” she became very upset.

Another young woman who had achieved in school and had done well was a volunteer firefighter in Pennsylvania. She worries about it as well. Story after story, example after example of young people who have worked very hard their whole lives, have achieved in school, their friends are all around them, and their families are a part of these communities. Is our government going to violate a promise to them? Why would anyone believe our government after that on any promise if it violates a promise that fundamental? Why would anyone trust the U.S. Congress if these young people aren't protected?

I hope Congress will meet this test, support the Dream Act, and get it done. If we get that done, then we can say we are a government people should trust. If you don't get this done, it is a lot more difficult to make the case that our word is good here at home and that it is good internationally.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUNT). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to H.J. Res. 123, which was received from the House, and that there be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form, in relation to H.J. Res. 123; further, that following the use or yielding back of that time, the joint resolution be considered read a third time and the Senate vote on the joint resolution with no intervening action or debate.

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

The clerk will report the resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

RECOGNIZING THE UAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM AND THE GREAT ALASKA SHOOTOUT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week I have been coming down to the floor to talk a little bit about my great State, about the wonders of its natural landscape—a land that everybody should see for themselves—and we talk about special people. I know the Presiding Officer looks at this as one of the favorite times in his long week. We talk about the people who have made a difference in Alaska, our Alaskan of the Week. It is one of the best things I get to do here as Alaska's Senator because I get to talk about Alaska's beauty; the people who make my State so special; the kind, generous people full of rugged determination, full of patriotism, full of drive, full of life.

Living in the North in some of the most difficult terrain and extreme conditions of the world breeds competition in the best ways possible. It also sparks creativity all across the State. When creativity meets competition, great things can happen.

You saw great things happen on the basketball court late last month when University of Alaska Anchorage's women's basketball team, who are our Alaskans of the Week, won the championship at the Great Alaska Shootout in Anchorage, the seminal sports event of the year that for four decades has corresponded with Thanksgiving weekend.

Let me talk for a few minutes about the Great Alaska Shootout. In the late 1970s, a coach from the University of Alaska Anchorage's basketball team had a vision to put the fledgeling UAA basketball program on the map. How

would he do that? He would create a preseason college basketball tournament, and he would make sure that participation in any tournament outside the contiguous lower 48 States didn't count against the limits for how many games a team was allowed to play. And so was born the Great Alaska Shootout.

For the past 40 years, tens of thousands of Alaskans from all over the State—and I would say Americans from all over the country—many who had never been to a professional game or even a college game, traveled to Anchorage to watch some of the best basketball in the country. In Anchorage, people opened their homes to the teams from the lower 48 to enjoy a home-cooked Thanksgiving dinner.

The teams and the players who came to Alaska over the last 40 years are legion—Patrick Ewing, Glenn Robinson, Sam Perkins, Ray Allen, Dwayne Wade, and Alaska's own Trajan Langdon, just to name a few. All the great college basketball coaches at one time or another came to our State—Coach K, Jim Valvano, Bobby Knight, Denny Crum, Roy Williams, Tom Izzo, Pat Summitt, and so many others. As one reporter put it, "It was an annual Thanksgiving week staple for ESPN and it made Anchorage the center of the college basketball world for one bright, shining week."

Time and again, the UAA Seawolves—both the men and women's teams—Division 2 programs, who were up against some of the biggest Division 1 powerhouses in the country, showed the world what basketball in Alaska looked like, and it looked strong.

The Great Alaska Shootout was a gift to the world, to America, and to all of Alaska. Times have changed, and so have college basketball tournaments. More choices are available. Other States have begun to compete with Alaska. So this past Thanksgiving, sadly, was the Shootout's last tournament. But, again, UAA's basketball teams made us proud. All told, the men's teams won 39 games in 40 Shootouts. This past Thanksgiving Day, the UAA women, which has become a Division 2 powerhouse under the leadership of Coach Ryan McCarthy, claimed the women's championship in the final Shootout, beating the Division 1 University of Tulsa Golden Hurricanes 59 to 52 in a thriller. It was their seventh title in tournament history.

Everyone involved—the businesses that sponsored the Shootout over the years, the many avid fans who haven't missed a game, and all those who played in the Great Alaska Shootout over four decades—is deserving of recognition. But at this year's final Great Alaska Shootout, the UAA women's team showed us all the true meaning of grit and determination.

So here is to the Seawolves, our Alaskans of the Week. Here is to the history of the Great Alaska Shootout. It is a great day to be a Seawolf. Thanks

for all the great games, the great memories, and a truly great Alaskan and American basketball tournament.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore emeritus, the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, first, I applaud the Senator from Alaska. He makes us all want to be there.

Mr. President, let me speak for a moment in my role as vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee about the continuing resolution that the distinguished majority leader has just mentioned.

The current spending caps set in place by law will not responsibly fund the government or alleviate the consequences of sequestration on both our domestic priorities and our military readiness.

Since March 1, along with many others, I have constantly repeated that we must reach a bipartisan budget deal that is based on parity, free of poison pill riders, not waste taxpayer dollars on a useless border wall, which we will never be reimbursed for by Mexico. But with the current continuing resolution expiring tomorrow, we are running out of time to reach an agreement.

The continuing resolution before us today will allow us more time to reach a bipartisan agreement and keep the government's lights on during negotiations. I will join with the distinguished majority leader in voting for this, but the key to successful negotiation during that time is parity. Sequestration has had devastating consequences on our country that are going to impact a generation, but we have to raise the caps on both sides of the ledger—defense and nondefense.

Anywhere you go, the vast majority of Americans will agree that it is not an academic exercise. The decisions we make here today have real impacts on people's lives.

There is no question that sequestration has hurt our military readiness, but it has also hurt our Nation's economy, and it has led to a decline in critical government services on which millions of Americans depend.

Our veterans have been shortchanged. An average of 558,000 veterans fail to get a healthcare appointment during the 30-day standard. The average wait time for the VA to process a benefit appeal is over 3 years.

Our infrastructure is crumbling. America, this great Nation, now gets a D-plus rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers. This means that the roads, the bridges, the dams, the drinking water, the public parks, and the schools we all use and depend on have a near-failing grade.

Education programs have suffered. The purchasing power of the maximum Pell Grant now covers only 29 percent of the average price for college.

Our elderly citizens are getting shortchanged. More than 1 million Social Security benefits appeals are backlogged an average of 605 days. An esti-

mated 10,000 people die each year before their appeals are completed.

I could go on and on.

If we raise the caps for defense programs but do not also raise the caps to properly fund our nondefense priorities, we will still shortchange our men and women in uniform. If we don't invest in our Nation's economy and educate our youth, the military will not have the expertise, qualified soldiers, or advanced research that it needs to be the best in the world. If we don't invest in diplomacy, our world will become less safe and we will be less safe. As our Secretary of Defense said: If you are not going to invest in diplomacy, you better buy me more bullets. And we would fail to provide the level of care for our veterans that they deserve.

I have talked with both Republicans and Democrats. I am confident we can reach an agreement that addresses our country's needs and responsibly funds our government.

As we in the Congress work on it, it is discouraging that the President has cast doubt on these negotiations. He has even invited a "good [government] shutdown." His party is in charge, so I don't know why he would say that. Even more discouraging is a recent Washington Post story that said the President has told his confidants that a government shutdown would be good for him politically.

Well, there are 325 million Americans who are going to be affected by a government shutdown. It is irresponsible. It is no way to govern. In all my years in the Senate, with Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, never have I heard such damaging rhetoric come from either a Republican or Democratic President of the United States.

The last Republican shutdown in 2013 dealt a devastating blow to the Nation's economic growth. It amounted to an estimated \$1.5 billion lost for each day of the 16 days of the shutdown. Federal workers were furloughed through no fault of their own for a combined total of 6.6 million days, stalling important research and grinding our government to a halt.

I know the Republicans are in charge of the House, the Senate, and the White House. If there is a Republican shutdown this fiscal year, it is because they want one. I have talked to a lot of Republicans and Democrats, whom I respect and work with every day, who hope the 2-week continuing resolution before us is an indication we will not go down that path. I hope these Republicans will work with Democrats to produce a responsible, bipartisan budget deal that meets the needs of our Nation.

We have squandered enough time. I stand ready, as I have been since March, when we negotiated a budget agreement that kept us from having a shutdown last time. I will work with the Republican leadership, as I did then, to secure the funding agreements we need to complete our appropriations

work for this fiscal year. This 2-week continuing resolution will give us that chance.

I urge my Democratic colleagues to join with the Republican leader and vote aye.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining before the vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 8 minutes.

Mr. LEAHY. And how much time is there on the other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Nine minutes.

Mr. LEAHY. So we will not vote unless time is yielded back.

I believe there are no other speakers.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back on both the Republican and Democratic sides.

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

All time is yielded back.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. LEAHY. 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. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 311 Leg.]

YEAS—81

Alexander	Donnelly	Leahy
Baldwin	Duckworth	Manchin
Barrasso	Durbin	McCaskill
Bennet	Enzi	McConnell
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Menendez
Blunt	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Gardner	Murkowski
Brown	Graham	Murphy
Burr	Grassley	Murray
Cantwell	Hassan	Nelson
Capito	Hatch	Perdue
Cardin	Heinrich	Peters
Carper	Heitkamp	Portman
Casey	Heller	Reed
Cassidy	Hoeven	Risch
Cochran	Inhofe	Roberts
Collins	Isakson	Rubio
Coons	Johnson	Schatz
Corker	Kaine	Schumer
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott
Cortez Masto	King	Shaheen
Cotton	Klobuchar	Shelby
Daines	Lankford	Stabenow

Strange	Tillis	Whitehouse
Sullivan	Udall	Wicker
Tester	Van Hollen	Wyden
Thune	Warner	Young

NAYS—14

Booker	Hirono	Rounds
Cruz	Lee	Sanders
Ernst	Markey	Sasse
Gillibrand	McCain	Warren
Harris	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—5

Crapo	Franken	Toomey
Flake	Paul	

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) was passed.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES— H.R. 1

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the authority granted on a motion yesterday, the Chair appoints conferees on the part of the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses.

The Presiding Officer appointed Mr. HATCH, Mr. ENZI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CARPER conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make a motion to proceed to Executive Calendar Nos. 533, 534, and 535 today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 533.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Ne-

braska, to be the United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 534.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 535.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD HARLAN HANSEN

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate, recognize, and acknowledge the longtime public service that Donald Harlan Hansen has provided to the State of Utah.

This month, Donald Hansen will officially retire as the civil litigation chief for the Salt Lake County district attorney. He has worked for the district attorney since 2001, where he served as lead counsel in jury and bench trials before State and Federal courts and countless administrative proceedings.

Prior to his work with the Salt Lake County district attorney, he worked for the Utah Attorney General, in which capacity he served as litigation counsel for critical legal cases throughout the State. Utah-born and bred, Donald graduated from the University of Utah before obtaining his law degree from the S.J. Quinney College of Law.

Donald has been published in many legal proceedings and is admitted to practice law before the Utah Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah, the Oregon Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Donald currently lives in the Mill Creek area of Salt Lake and is the father of four children and the grandfather of 12. He is a dedicated public servant, and I wish him the very best in his retirement.

76TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and honor the 2,403 Americans who lost their lives when Japanese naval forces launched a surprise attack on our Nation at Pearl Harbor, HI, 76 years ago. Today we remember the millions of Allied Forces who fearlessly and selflessly gave their lives to defeat fascism and defend our freedoms and way of life. We will never forget the sacrifices that were made during World War II, and the memory of the attack on Pearl Harbor inspires us to remain forever vigilant.

Just a few days ago, the Associated Press, AP, reported that the Department of Defense's POW/MIA Accounting Agency has identified 100 sailors and marines killed when the USS Oklahoma capsized during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Officials exhumed the bodies from a cemetery in Hawaii "after determining that advances in forensic science and genealogical help from families made it possible to identify the men." These marines and sailors have been classified as missing since World War II.

According to the AP, agency officials think they will be able to identify about 80 percent of the battleship's missing crewmembers by 2020. I imagine this is of great comfort to the families of those who were lost, many of whom may now be buried in their hometowns. This effort is yet another example of our obligations to those who have given "the last full measure of devotion" that this Nation and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth, as Abraham Lincoln so eloquently and poignantly put it at Gettysburg, PA.

We must be ready to counter threats to our Nation, both at home and abroad, that endanger the American people and our values. In President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's historic "Day of Infamy" speech, he pledged to "... make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us." Our Nation must remain strong and vigilant, prepared to meet future challenges, particularly in the fight against those who wish us harm.

America's Greatest Generation was forged from the sacrifices required in the crucible of World War II. On this

day, as we pause to remember and honor those sacrifices, we remind ourselves and the world that "American values" still stands for freedom and a determination to use our unmatched strength to defend those who are unable to defend themselves. On this anniversary, we also take time to honor the brave men and women who currently serve in our military and their families. We pray for their safe return as they continue to serve in harm's way.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JUNE RYCHALSKI

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing June Rychalski for her service with the Montana Department of Military Affairs. She has served Montana with grace, diligence, a positive attitude, and genuine care for the people of the Treasure State.

During her 35 years of service, June has been secretary to the senior Army adviser, administrative assistant to the adjutant general and next month will complete her career with the Montana Veterans Affairs Division. June demonstrated compassion and professionalism on a daily basis. Her ability to help a grieving family member navigate the challenges of veteran burial honors or steer a distressed veteran in the right direction to attain benefits is highly commendable. Her presence in the in the Montana Department of Military Affairs will be missed, but the mentorship she provided agency personnel over the years will ensure that her legacy endures. To her coworkers, June was regarded as their greatest advocate.

When June retires, she plans to do what she has always done, continue to take good care of others. At age 83, June's example is inspiring. Her work ethic, compassion, and commitment to excellence represent the best of Montana values. Thank you, June, for your service. I wish you the best in retirement and appreciate all you have done for our State.●

TRIBUTE TO DAVE COURVOISIER

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Mr. Dave Courvoisier on his retirement from KLAS news station in Las Vegas. I am honored to recognize his dedication to reporting to the citizens of southern Nevada for 32 years, as well as his commitment to the communities he has served throughout his career.

A native midwesterner, Dave received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Illinois. He began his career at KCCC Radio in Carlsbad, NM, and then carried his talents to Grand Junction, CO, where he jumpstarted his television career at KJCT. Dave worked for various news outlets in Indiana, Missouri, and North

Carolina before settling in Las Vegas with his wife in 1985.

Mr. Courvoisier quickly established himself as a tactful and passionate reporter for KVBC in Las Vegas. His numerous reports related to the issues of disadvantaged children yielded both national and local awards. In particular, Mr. Courvoisier is well-known for his involvement with Wednesday's Child, an adoption program, and he distinguished himself with his news feature series focused on helping foster children find permanent homes. His commitment to this issue is also reflected in his personal life; he established a new chapter of Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

While Dave has led an incredibly successful reporting career, he believes his most important work to be raising his three daughters with his wife. As Nevada's senior Senator, I want to thank Mr. Courvoisier for his dedication to keeping the people of southern Nevada informed. I offer him the very best in his retirement and my well wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO WALTER STRONG

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize Mr. Walter Strong on the occasion of his retirement. Walt has led the University of Oklahoma's Max Westheimer Airport, OUN, for 19 years and has a lifelong dedication to the aviation community. Under his leadership, the Max Westheimer Airport has demonstrated it is one of the best flight schools in the Nation, organizes successful pilot fly-ins, and maintains a youth outreach program to encourage the next generation to get involved in flying.

Mr. Strong began his career in aviation in the U.S. Air Force, working as an air traffic controller in both control tower and radar approach control facilities. Retiring after 20 years of service in the Air Force, Mr. Strong began working at the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission, rising to the level of deputy director. He was one of Oklahoma's first airport inspectors. From 2004 to 2005, he served as the president of the Oklahoma Airport Operators Association. A pillar of the Oklahoma aviation community, Mr. Strong was awarded the "Airport Manager of the Year" in 2011, the same year that Max Westheimer Airport was recognized as "Airport of the Year." In 2016, under his leadership, the Max Westheimer Airport received the Willie F. Card Contract Tower Service Award from the Federal Aviation Administration, which recognizes one tower each year for embodying Willie Card's vision of a tower that places profound emphasis on both safety and efficiency.

At the Federal level, Mr. Strong has been a passionate advocate for aviation, serving on the board of the American Association of Airport Executives and as the chair of the U.S. Contract Tower Association and ensuring that

all Members of Congress are aware of the importance of general aviation to their constituents and to their communities.

I know that I join his family, the Max Westheimer Airport, and the University of Oklahoma community in thanking him for his years of service and contributions to the aviation community. Congratulations on your retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO DORA SPAULDING

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor an exceptional Vermonter, Dora Spaulding, who this year is celebrating 50 years of dedicated service to the students at the Marion Cross Elementary School in Norwich, VT.

Ms. Spaulding has been the administrative assistant at the Marion Cross School for the past 10 years and was secretary to the principal for 40 years prior to that. Her story is all the more impressive when one considers that Dora Spaulding attended Marion Cross School herself, from first to eighth grade. It is hard to imagine today, but Dora was the only girl in her entire first-grade class.

As the school's administrative assistant, Ms. Spaulding is responsible for the payroll, purchasing, bus transport arrangements, facility rental schedule, and other administrative tasks for the school, but more than that, she is, in many ways, the face of the school. In fact, several members of my staff grew up in Norwich and attended the Marion Cross School and speak highly of her many contributions to the students, school, and the community.

Dora Spaulding embodies the spirit of dedicated public service. I applaud her for helping to steward countless young people over the past 50 years and for her tremendous commitment to education and community.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 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 bill, without amendment:

S. 1266. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 38. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 90. Concurrent resolution condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya

and calling for an end to the violence in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:44 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 1266. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations to investigate medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 5:15 p.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 joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 123. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 38. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a means by which nonresidents of a State whose residents may carry concealed firearms may also do so in the State; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 90. Concurrent resolution condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the violence in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2199. A bill to authorize appropriations for border infrastructure construction, to provide conditional resident status to certain aliens, and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include grounds of inadmissibility and deportability for alien members of criminal gangs and cartels, and for other purposes.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1164. An act to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3643. A communication from the Acting Director of Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled

“Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program” (RIN0572-AC37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3644. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “*Bacillus subtilis* strain BU1814; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance” (FRL No. 9969-96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3645. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Sedaxane; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9970-04) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3646. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Indoxacarb; Pesticide Tolerances” (FRL No. 9970-39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3647. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the quarterly exception Selected Acquisition Reports (SARs) as of September 30, 2017 (OSS-2017-1286); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3648. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the fiscal year 2017 report on Department of Defense purchases from foreign entities; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3649. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Report to Congress on Corrosion Policy and Oversight Budget Materials for Fiscal Year 2017”; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-3650. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Procedures for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Matter or Special Nuclear Material” (RIN1992-AA56) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3651. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Financial Responsibility Requirements under CERCLA Section 108(b) for Classes of Facilities in the Hardrock Mining Industry” (FRL No. 9971-50-OLEM) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3652. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Findings of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plan Submittals for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)” (FRL No. 9971-66-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3653. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Revisions to Emissions Banking and Trading Programs for Area and Mobile Sources” (FRL No. 9971-04-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3654. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; New York; Reasonably Available Control Technology for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards” (FRL No. 9971-83-Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3655. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) State Implementation Plan (SIP) Under the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)” (FRL No. 9971-58-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3656. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Ohio; Redesignation of the Fulton County Area to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule” (FRL No. 9971-74-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3657. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Minnesota; 2008 Ozone Transport” (FRL No. 9971-61-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3658. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Redesignation of the Chicago and Granite City Areas to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule” (FRL No. 9971-77-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3659. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Emergency Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Materials from Libya” (RIN1515-AE34) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3660. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Notice: Tier 2 Tax Rates for 2018” (FR Doc. 2017-25741) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3661. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Request for Comments on Application of Excise Taxes With Respect to Donor Advised Funds in Certain Situations” (Notice 2017-73) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3662. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Section 5000A Guidance for Individuals with No Available Marketplace Bronze-Level Plan” (Notice 2017-74) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3663. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “2017 Base Period T-Bill Rate” (Rev. Rul. 2017-23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3664. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Physician Supervision Requirements in Critical Access Hospitals and Small Rural Hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3665. A communication from the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3666. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission’s Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3667. A communication from the Chief Operating Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Office of Inspector General’s Semiannual Report for the period of April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3668. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department’s Semiannual Report of the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3669. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, a report relative to a case pending before the Supreme Court (Raymond J. Lucia et al v. Securities and Exchange Commission); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3670. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of Investment and Innovation, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Small Business Investment Companies—Administrative Fees” (RIN3245-AG65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2017; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-3671. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; to the Committees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; and Foreign Relations.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-143. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts memorializing its position on immigration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

RESOLUTIONS

IN RESPONSE TO THE JANUARY 27, 2017
PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER

Whereas, Immigrants founded this Commonwealth nearly 4 centuries ago, and

Whereas, This nation and this Commonwealth are proud of our strong tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees to our shores, and

Whereas, Our nation and this Commonwealth have stood as a beacon of hope for refugees fleeing war, violence and persecution, and

Whereas, Immigrants play an essential part in strengthening the communities and enriching the society of this nation and this Commonwealth; and

Whereas, Important sectors of the Commonwealth's economy, including higher education, health care and innovation, depend heavily on immigrants' contributions, and

Whereas, The executive order prohibits many foreign students, workers and other visa holders from 7 targeted majority-muslim nations, including many who have already been vetted and documented, from entering the United States for at least 90 days, suspends the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days and resumes the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program after 120 days only for nationals of countries as determined jointly by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence; and

Whereas, The First Amendment of the Constitution protects the freedom of religion and this Executive order prioritizes the admission of refugees based on specific religions, and

Whereas, Much of the Executive order is inconsistent with the Nation's and the Commonwealth's strong tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees to our shores, while not conclusively contributing to the important goal of keeping our residents safe and secure from terrorism, and

Whereas, The Executive order presents serious constitutional and other legal issues of due process, equal protection and discrimination on the basis of religion and national origin, Now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts Senate:

(1) Reaffirms the Commonwealth's strong tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees and rejecting discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion;

(2) Calls on President Trump to reconsider and rescind those portions of the Executive order that interfere with the rights of already documented students, workers, permanent residents and other visitors;

(3) Supports the legal actions of our attorney general and other plaintiffs to contest the legality of the Executive order in court, and be it further

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions shall be transmitted forthwith by the clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States and those Members of Congress from the Commonwealth.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 150. A resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 1901. A bill to require global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF
COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. HATCH for the Committee on Finance.

*Kevin K. McAleenan, of Hawaii, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Terry A. Doughty, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

Terry Fitzgerald Moorer, of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama.

Mark Saalfeld Norris, Sr., of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Claria Horn Boom, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky.

John W. Broomes, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

Rebecca Grady Jennings, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

*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.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.

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. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2204. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to re-

habilitation innovation centers under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. HELLER):

S. 2205. A bill to improve access by Indian tribes to support from the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support program (E-rate) of the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 2206. A bill to release certain wilderness study areas in the State of Montana; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2207. A bill to allow qualified volunteer first responders to qualify for public service loan forgiveness; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 2208. A bill to provide for the issuance of an Alzheimer's Disease Research Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2209. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to count monetary winnings from lotteries and other lump-sum income of \$80,000 or more as if they were obtained over multiple months for purposes of determining income eligibility for medical assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 2210. A bill to ensure the Chief Information Office of the Federal Communications Commission has a significant role in decisions related to information technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2211. A bill to establish a national endangered missing advisory communications network, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. KAINE, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOKER, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 2212. A bill to establish the "Biomedical Innovation Fund", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2213. A bill to authorize Pacific Historic Parks to establish a commemorative display to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PAUL:

S.J. Res. 50. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Georgia of Javelin Missiles and Javelin Command Launch Units; 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. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 350. A resolution recognizing the 69th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the celebration of "Human Rights Day"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. Res. 351. A resolution recognizing the bicentennial of the State of Mississippi on December 10, 2017; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. Res. 352. A resolution designating the week of December 3 through December 9, 2017, as "National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. Res. 353. A resolution designating December 16, 2017, as "Wreaths Across America Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 354. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman, and calling for a swift and transparent investigation into his tragic death in Buenos Aires on January 18, 2015; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. Res. 355. A resolution improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 298

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) 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. 1172

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1172, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1353, a bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes.

S. 1464

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from California

(Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1464, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the exclusion for energy conservation subsidies provided by public utilities to include subsidies provided by public utilities and State and local governments for water conservation and storm water management.

S. 1842

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1842, a bill to provide for wildfire suppression operations, and for other purposes.

S. 1913

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1913, a bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act and the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 to make the native sod provisions applicable to the United States and to modify those provisions, and for other purposes.

S. 2030

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2030, a bill to deem the compliance date for amended energy conservation standards for ceiling light kits to be January 21, 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 2032

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2032, a bill to make certain footwear eligible for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences, and for other purposes.

S. 2055

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2055, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to better address substance use and substance use disorders among young people.

S. 2070

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2070, a bill to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, to reauthorize the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, and to promote initiatives that will reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism.

S. 2143

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2143, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees wishing to advocate for improved wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment, to expand coverage under such

Act, to provide a process for achieving initial collective bargaining agreements, and to provide for stronger remedies for interference with these rights, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2152, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and for other purposes.

S. 2201

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2201, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve college access and college completion for all students.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 2206. A bill to release certain wilderness study areas in the State of Montana; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth generation Montanan and an avid outdoorsman, I know how important access to our public lands are. Having hiked, camped, biked, and snowmobiled countless miles in the wilderness, forests, and other public lands of Montana, I share with other Montanans the desire to explore the beauty of our state. That is why today I am introducing the Protect Public Use of Public Lands Act. This bill follows calls from countless Montanans and the U.S. Forest Service recommendations to open up Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) that the Forest Service recommended to manage as non-wilderness after the congressionally mandated study in the 1970s. The bill would allow new uses to be considered in the public planning process. For too long these lands have remained in limbo and many forms of recreation have been significantly reduced. For this reason, the Montana Legislature passed a measure calling on Congress to take action on these Wilderness Study Areas, and I have continued to hear from County Commissioners, local Montanans, farmers, ranchers, and recreation groups since I have been in Congress of their support for action. Hearing this call I today introduce the Protect Public Use of Public Lands Act and ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure.

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. 2206

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 “Protect Public Use of Public Lands Act”.

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF CERTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN THE STATE OF MONTANA.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) under the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1243), 9 wilderness study areas comprising a total of 973,000 acres of land in the State of Montana were set aside for the Secretary of Agriculture to evaluate the suitability of the wilderness study areas for designation as wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), with the evaluation to be completed not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1243);

(2) between 1979 and 1986, the Chief of the Forest Service completed the studies of the 9 wilderness study areas and determined that 608,700 acres of the original 973,000 acres designated as wilderness study areas by the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1243) were unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(3) since the completion of the studies required under the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1243), of the land designated as wilderness study areas by that Act—

(A) 171,000 acres have been designated as wilderness by Congress; and

(B) 663,000 acres remain as wilderness study areas until Congress acts;

(4) Congress has failed to act on the recommendations of the Chief of the Forest Service with respect to the remaining 7 wilderness study areas;

(5) the Montana State legislature passed House Joint Resolution 9, a resolution asking Congress to address the remaining 7 wilderness study areas;

(6) County commissions, sportsmen, farmers and ranchers, and outdoor recreation groups in the State of Montana support Congress acting to remove the land in the State described in subsection (c) to protect public use of public land; and

(7) for the purposes of section 3(a) of the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1244), the land in the State of Montana described in subsection (c) has been adequately studied for wilderness designation.

(b) RELEASE.—The land described in subsection (c) is no longer subject to section 3(a) of the Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-150; 91 Stat. 1244).

(c) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The land referred to in paragraphs (6) and (7) of subsection (a) and subsection (b) is—

(1) the approximately 151,000 acres of land comprising the West Pioneer Wilderness Study Area;

(2) the approximately 32,500 acres of land within the Blue Joint Wilderness Study Area not recommended for wilderness classification in the record of decision prepared by the Forest Service entitled “Bitterroot National Forest Plan” and dated September 1987;

(3) the approximately 94,000 acres of land comprising the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area;

(4) the approximately 81,000 acres of land comprising the Middle Fork Judith Wilderness Study Area; and

(5) the approximately 91,000 acres of land comprising the Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2209. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to count monetary winnings from lotteries and other lump-sum income of \$80,000 or more as if they were obtained over multiple months for purposes of determining income eligibility for medical assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2209

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 “Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable Over Lottery Winners Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF LOTTERY WINNINGS AND OTHER LUMP-SUM INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF INCOME ELIGIBILITY UNDER MEDICAID.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(17), by striking “(e)(14), (e)(14)” and inserting “(e)(14), (e)(15)”; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (14) (relating to modified adjusted gross income), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(J) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN LOTTERY WINNINGS AND INCOME RECEIVED AS A LUMP SUM.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual who is the recipient of qualified lottery winnings (pursuant to lotteries occurring on or after January 1, 2018) or qualified lump sum income (received on or after such date) and whose eligibility for medical assistance is determined based on the application of modified adjusted gross income under subparagraph (A), a State shall, in determining such eligibility, include such winnings or income (as applicable) as income received—

“(I) in the month in which such winnings or income (as applicable) is received if the amount of such winnings or income is less than \$80,000;

“(II) over a period of 2 months if the amount of such winnings or income (as applicable) is greater than or equal to \$80,000 but less than \$90,000;

“(III) over a period of 3 months if the amount of such winnings or income (as applicable) is greater than or equal to \$90,000 but less than \$100,000; and

“(IV) over a period of 3 months plus 1 additional month for each increment of \$10,000 of such winnings or income (as applicable) received, not to exceed a period of 120 months (for winnings or income of \$1,260,000 or more), if the amount of such winnings or income is greater than or equal to \$100,000.

“(ii) COUNTING IN EQUAL INSTALLMENTS.—For purposes of subclauses (II), (III), and (IV) of clause (i), winnings or income to which such subclause applies shall be counted in equal monthly installments over the period of months specified under such subclause.

“(iii) HARDSHIP EXEMPTION.—An individual whose income, by application of clause (i), exceeds the applicable eligibility threshold established by the State, shall continue to be eligible for medical assistance to the extent that the State determines, under procedures established by the State (in accordance with

standards specified by the Secretary), that the denial of eligibility of the individual would cause an undue medical or financial hardship as determined on the basis of criteria established by the Secretary.

“(iv) NOTIFICATIONS AND ASSISTANCE REQUIRED IN CASE OF LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY.—A State shall, with respect to an individual who loses eligibility for medical assistance under the State plan (or a waiver of such plan) by reason of clause (i)—

“(I) before the date on which the individual loses such eligibility, inform the individual—

“(aa) of the individual’s opportunity to enroll in a qualified health plan offered through an Exchange established under title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act during the special enrollment period specified in section 9801(f)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to loss of Medicaid or CHIP coverage); and

“(bb) of the date on which the individual would no longer be considered ineligible by reason of clause (i) to receive medical assistance under the State plan or under any waiver of such plan and be eligible to reapply to receive such medical assistance; and

“(II) provide technical assistance to the individual seeking to enroll in such a qualified health plan.

“(v) QUALIFIED LOTTERY WINNINGS DEFINED.—In this subparagraph, the term ‘qualified lottery winnings’ means winnings from a sweepstakes, lottery, or pool described in paragraph (3) of section 4402 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or a lottery operated by a multistate or multijurisdictional lottery association, including amounts awarded as a lump sum payment.

“(vi) QUALIFIED LUMP SUM INCOME DEFINED.—In this subparagraph, the term ‘qualified lump sum income’ means income that is received as a lump sum from one of the following sources:

“(I) Monetary winnings from gambling (as defined by the Secretary and including gambling activities described in section 1955(b)(4) of title 18, United States Code).

“(II) Damages received, whether by suit or agreement and whether as lump sums or as periodic payments (other than monthly payments), on account of causes of action other than causes of action arising from personal physical injuries or physical sickness.

“(III) Income received as liquid assets from the estate (as defined in section 1917(b)(4)) of a deceased individual.”; and

(B) by striking “(14) EXCLUSION” and inserting “(15) EXCLUSION”.

(b) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) INTERCEPTION OF LOTTERY WINNINGS ALLOWED.—Nothing in the amendment made by subsection (a)(2) shall be construed as preventing a State from intercepting the State lottery winnings awarded to an individual in the State to recover amounts paid by the State under the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) for medical assistance furnished to the individual.

(2) APPLICABILITY LIMITED TO ELIGIBILITY OF RECIPIENT OF LOTTERY WINNINGS OR LUMP SUM INCOME.—Nothing in the amendment made by subsection (a)(2)(A) shall be construed, with respect to a determination of household income for purposes of a determination of eligibility for medical assistance under the State plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) (or a waiver of such plan) made by applying modified adjusted gross income under subparagraph (A) of section 1902(e)(14) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(14)), as limiting the eligibility for such medical assistance of any individual that is a member of the household other than the individual who received qualified lottery winnings or qualified lump-sum income (as defined in subparagraph (J) of such

section 1902(e)(14), as added by subsection (a)(2)(A) of this section).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 350—RECOGNIZING THE 69TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CELEBRATION OF “HUMAN RIGHTS DAY”

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 350

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations 69 years ago on December 10, 1948, represents the first comprehensive agreement among nations as to the specific rights and freedoms of all human beings;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds the basic principles of liberty and freedom enshrined in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights;

Whereas awareness of human rights—

(1) is essential to the realization of fundamental freedoms;

(2) promotes equality;

(3) contributes to preventing conflict and human rights violations; and

(4) enhances participation in democratic processes;

Whereas Congress has a proud history of promoting human rights that are internationally recognized; and

Whereas December 10 of each year is celebrated around the world as “Human Rights Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 69th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the celebration of “Human Rights Day”;

(2) supports the ideals of human rights and reaffirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(3) encourages all nations to continue working towards freedom, peace, and security, which can be achieved through democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe “Human Rights Day” and continue a commitment to upholding freedom, democracy, and human rights across the globe.

SENATE RESOLUTION 351—RECOGNIZING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI ON DECEMBER 10, 2017

Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 351

Whereas December 10, 2017, marks a historic bicentennial, denoting 200 years since the State of Mississippi was admitted to the Union;

Whereas this momentous occasion marks a time for Mississippians and all people of the

United States to remember the past and celebrate the future, including the significant contributions of the State of Mississippi to the culture, governance, and intellect of the United States;

Whereas on March 1, 1817, President James Monroe signed into law “An Act to enable the people of the western part of the Mississippi territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the union, on an equal footing with the original states” (3 Stat. 348, chapter 23), setting the boundaries for the State of Mississippi;

Whereas on December 10, 1817, the United States approved the Mississippi Constitution and admitted the State of Mississippi as the 20th State of the Union;

Whereas the history of Mississippi is most deeply rooted in the people and land of Mississippi, which has produced a unique and rich culture distinct from any other State;

Whereas in the 200 years since the birth of Mississippi as a sovereign State, the citizens of Mississippi have made many significant achievements in agriculture, art, cuisine, industry, literature, music, science, and many other important areas;

Whereas Mississippians have shown their patriotism to the United States through their dedicated service to the protection of the United States through every major conflict;

Whereas the land of Mississippi has produced crops, timber, and protein for the United States and the world while surviving the devastation of hurricanes and other natural disasters over the course of the history of Mississippi; and

Whereas the Mississippi Bicentennial Celebration Commission is dedicated to celebrating all aspects of the past 200 years of history of Mississippi as a State and has planned numerous major events in coordination with communities, which will culminate on December 9, 2017, with the grand opening of—

(1) the Museum of Mississippi History; and
(2) the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the momentous occasion of the bicentennial of the State of Mississippi on December 10, 2017;

(2) encourages all Mississippians to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the Governor of Mississippi;

(B) the National Archives; and

(C) the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

SENATE RESOLUTION 352—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 3 THROUGH DECEMBER 9, 2017, AS “NATIONAL NURSE-MANAGED HEALTH CLINIC WEEK”

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 352

Whereas nurse-managed health clinics are nonprofit, community-based health care sites that offer primary care and wellness services based on the nursing model;

Whereas the nursing model emphasizes the protection, promotion, and optimization of health, the prevention of illness, the alleviation of suffering, and the diagnosis and treatment of illness;

Whereas an advanced practice nurse leads each nurse-managed health clinic, and an

interdisciplinary team of highly qualified health care professionals staffs each nurse-managed health clinic;

Whereas nurse-managed health clinics offer a broad scope of services, including treatment for acute and chronic illnesses, routine physical exams, immunizations for adults and children, disease screenings, health education, prenatal care, dental care, and drug and alcohol treatment;

Whereas, as of September 2017, approximately 500 nurse-managed health clinics provided care across the United States and recorded more than 2,500,000 patient encounters annually;

Whereas nurse-managed health clinics strengthen the health care safety net by expanding access to primary care and chronic disease management services for vulnerable and medically underserved populations in diverse rural, urban, and suburban communities;

Whereas research has shown that nurse-managed health clinics experience high patient retention and patient satisfaction rates, and nurse-managed health clinic patients, compared to patients of other similar safety net providers, experience higher rates of generic medication fills and lower hospitalization rates;

Whereas the 2013 Health Affairs article “Nurse-Managed Health Centers and Patient-Homes Could Mitigate Expected Primary Care Physician Shortage” highlights the ability of nurse-managed health clinics to bring high quality care to individuals who may not otherwise receive needed services; and

Whereas nurse-managed health clinics offering both primary care and wellness services provide quality care in a cost-effective manner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of December 3 through December 9, 2017, as “National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week”;

(2) supports the ideals and goals of National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week; and

(3) encourages the expansion of nurse-managed health clinics so that nurse-managed health clinics may continue to serve as health care workforce development sites for the next generation of primary care providers.

SENATE RESOLUTION 353—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 16, 2017, AS “WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 353

Whereas, 26 years before the date of adoption of this resolution, the Wreaths Across America project began with an annual tradition, which occurs in December, of donating, transporting, and placing 5,000 Maine balsam fir remembrance wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas, during the 26 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 4,517,000 wreaths have been sent to locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials, in every State and overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project, to “Remember, Honor, Teach”, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and overseas, including at—

(1) Arlington National Cemetery;

- (2) veterans cemeteries; and
- (3) other locations;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade from Maine to Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of—

(1) remembering the fallen heroes of the United States;

(2) honoring those who serve; and

(3) reminding the people of the United States about the sacrifices made by veterans and the families of veterans to preserve freedoms in the United States;

Whereas, in 2016, approximately 1,200,000 remembrance wreaths were sent to more than 1,220 locations across the United States and overseas, which is an increase of more than 100 locations compared to the previous year;

Whereas, in December 2017, the tradition of escorting tractor-trailers filled with donated wreaths from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery will be continued by—

(1) the Patriot Guard Riders; and

(2) other patriotic escort units, including—

(A) motorcycle units;

(B) law enforcement units; and

(C) first responder units;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals volunteer each December to help lay remembrance wreaths;

Whereas, in 2017, the trucking industry in the United States continues to support the Wreaths Across America project by providing drivers, equipment, and related services to assist in the transportation of wreaths to more than 1,300 locations across the United States;

Whereas the Senate designated December 17, 2016, as “Wreaths Across America Day”; and

Whereas, on December 16, 2017, the Wreaths Across America project will continue the proud legacy of bringing remembrance wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 16, 2017, as “Wreaths Across America Day”;

(2) honors—

(A) the Wreaths Across America project;

(B) patriotic escort units, including—

(i) motorcycle units;

(ii) law enforcement units; and

(iii) first responder units;

(C) the trucking industry in the United States; and

(D) the volunteers and donors involved in this worthy tradition; and

(3) recognizes—

(A) the service of veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and

(B) the sacrifices that veterans and members of the Armed Forces have made, and continue to make, for the United States, a great nation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Senator ANGUS KING in sponsoring this resolution to designate December 16, 2017, as Wreaths Across America Day. Since its inception, the Wreaths Across America project has become an annual tradition of donating, transporting, and placing Maine balsam fir remembrance wreaths on the graves of our fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at veterans cemeteries and memorials in every State and overseas. In the program’s 26 years, more than 4.5 million wreaths have been placed in honor of those who have served our country.

The origin of Wreaths Across America is an inspiring example of that generosity and gratitude. During the Christmas season in 1992, Morrill and Karen Worcester took time during their busiest season to donate and deliver wreaths from their company in Harrington, ME, to Arlington National Cemetery to honor the heroes who lie at rest there. At first, a small group of volunteers laid the wreaths with little notice. In recent years, however, the Arlington Wreath Project has grown to become a national phenomenon. The people of Maine are proud that this important and well-deserved tradition began in our State.

This year, on December 16, thousands of volunteers in Arlington, throughout our Nation, and overseas will carry out the mission of Wreaths Across America to “Remember, Honor, Teach.” This will conclude a weeklong procession between Maine and Virginia, with stops along the way to pause and remember the men and women who have died to preserve our freedoms, spread the message about the importance of honoring those who serve, and remind the people of the United States about the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families. This procession helps to ensure that those sacrifices are never forgotten.

The Patriot Guard Riders, along with other dedicated escort groups, will accompany tractor-trailers filled with donated wreaths from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery. America’s trucking industry has long supported Wreaths Across America by providing drivers, equipment, fuel, and related services to assist in the transportation of wreaths across the country to more than 1,200 locations.

Wreaths Across America not only honors our departed heroes but also imparts the important message to veterans who are still with us that we honor their service. It tells our men and women in uniform today that we are grateful for their courage and devotion to duty. It tells the families of those serving our country that they are in our thoughts and prayers. And it tells the families of the fallen that we share their grief.

Throughout human history, the evergreen wreath has been offered as a tribute to heroes. On December 16, 2017, we will again offer this enduring symbol of valor and sacrifice as part of our never-ending obligation to thank those who wore the uniform of our country. In this season of giving, we will pay tribute to those who have given us the most precious gift of all—our freedom.

SENATE RESOLUTION 354—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE COURAGEOUS WORK AND LIFE OF ARGENTINIAN PROSECUTOR ALBERTO NISMAN, AND CALLING FOR A SWIFT AND TRANS-PARENT INVESTIGATION INTO HIS TRAGIC DEATH IN BUENOS AIRES ON JANUARY 18, 2015

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 354

Whereas the bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 18, 1994, killed 85 people and wounded more than 300;

Whereas the investigation of the AMIA bombing had been marked by grave judicial misconduct, and the case had reached an impasse in 2004;

Whereas, in September 2004, Alberto Nisman was appointed as the Special Prosecutor in charge of the 1994 AMIA bombing investigation;

Whereas, on October 25, 2006, Argentine prosecutors Alberto Nisman and Marcelo Martinez Burgos formally accused the Government of Iran of directing the bombing, and the Hezbollah militia of carrying it out;

Whereas Ibrahim Hussain Berro, a member of the terrorist group Hezbollah, was identified as the AMIA bomber;

Whereas Iranian nationals Ali Fallahjani (former Iranian intelligence minister), Mohsen Rabbani (former Iranian cultural attaché), Ahmad Reza Asghari (former Iranian diplomat), Ahmad Vahidi (former Iranian defense minister), Ali Akbar Velayati (former Iranian foreign minister), Mohsen Rezaee (former chief commander of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps), and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (former President of Iran) were named as suspects in the bombing;

Whereas Lebanese national Imad Fayez Moughnieh (former head of Hezbollah’s external security) was named as a suspect in the bombing;

Whereas, in November 2007, Interpol voted to put these 5 Iranian and 1 Lebanese suspects in the 1994 AMIA attack on its most wanted list, and reportedly has extended these red notices in July, 2017;

Whereas, in 2007, Guyanese national Abdul Kadir plotted to blow up John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and was, according to Mr. Nisman, “the most important Iranian agent” in Guyana and influenced by Mohsen Rabbani;

Whereas, in May 2013, prosecutor Alberto Nisman published a 500-page indictment accusing Iran of establishing terrorist networks throughout Latin America, including in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname, dating back to the 1980s;

Whereas, according to the Department of State’s 2016 Report on Terrorism, Hezbollah, Iran’s proxy terrorist organization, continues to maintain an active presence in the Western Hemisphere as well as “some financial supporters, facilitators and sympathizers”;

Whereas, in January 2013, the Government of Argentina under then-President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner agreed with Iran in a Memorandum of Understanding to set up a so-called “truth commission” to investigate who was “really” responsible for the bombing, despite the fact that Iran and its proxy

actors were and remain the only suspects in the attack;

Whereas, in May 2014, an Argentine court found this Memorandum of Understanding to be unconstitutional;

Whereas prosecutor Alberto Nisman was invited to testify before the United States Congress in February 2013, but was prevented from doing so by the Government of Argentina, who denied him permission to travel to Washington, DC;

Whereas the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation provided technical assistance and cooperated with Argentina law enforcement officials in the AMIA bombing investigation;

Whereas, on January 13, 2015, prosecutor Alberto Nisman alleged in a complaint that then-Argentinian President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and then-Minister of Foreign Relations Hector Timerman conspired to cover up Iranian involvement in the 1994 terrorist bombing, and reportedly agreed to negotiate immunity for Iranian suspects and help get their names removed from the Interpol list;

Whereas prosecutor Alberto Nisman claimed that he had evidence of a "sophisticated criminal plan," reportedly including wire-taps and phone calls "between people close to Mrs. Kirchner" and a number of Iranians, including Mohsen Rabbani, showing a planned exchange of Iranian oil for purchasing rights to Argentine grain to revive Argentina's economy;

Whereas prosecutor Alberto Nisman was scheduled to present his new findings to the Argentinian Congress on January 19, 2015;

Whereas prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found shot in the head in his apartment in Buenos Aires on January 18, 2015;

Whereas officials of the Government of Argentina under then-Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner continued to discredit Mr. Nisman after his suspicious death, attempting to ruin his reputation;

Whereas then-Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner created unfounded hypotheses with regard to Mr. Nisman's findings, including conspiracies she suggested were orchestrated by United States hedge funds and other entities she considers "hostile" to the President of Argentina;

Whereas, in May 2015, an Argentine Federal court had dismissed Nisman's findings against Ms. Kirchner and other officials and later the accusations were dropped by Javier De Luca, another Federal prosecutor;

Whereas that move raised questions in Argentina about the objectivity of Mr. De Luca, given his closeness to a group of Ms. Kirchner's supporters;

Whereas an independent investigation launched by Alberto Nisman's family released its own report by forensic experts and forensic pathologists showing that Mr. Nisman's death was not an accident or suicide, including claims that "the prosecutor had been shot in the back of the head", that "no gun powder residue was found on his hands", and that "Mr. Nisman's body had been moved to the bathroom once he was shot";

Whereas, in September 2016, Argentine President Mauricio Macri stated that "it's hard to believe that Nisman committed suicide. There are too many situations, indications, realities of those hours, those days, that don't match with a suicide.";

Whereas, in September 2016, Argentine President Mauricio Macri called for "a definitive investigation" into the death of Alberto Nisman, saying: "I want to generate the conditions, which I think I'm doing, to allow our justice system to freely investigate what really happened.";

Whereas, on September 22, 2017, forensic investigators of the Argentine Federal Police

submitted a report to a Federal court concluding that slain prosecutor Alberto Nisman did not commit suicide, but rather was drugged, beaten, and fatally shot in the head on January 18, 2015;

Whereas, on December 7, 2017, former Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was charged with treason for attempting to cover up Iran's role in the 1994 AMIA bombing; and

Whereas no one yet has been brought to justice for the death of Alberto Nisman, nor have any of the named Iranian suspects for the AMIA bombing faced prosecution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) offers its sincerest condolences to the family of Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman;

(2) recognizes Alberto Nisman's courageous work in dedicating his life to the investigation of the bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which killed 85 people and wounded more than 300;

(3) applauds Argentine President Mauricio Macri for calling for a swift, transparent, and independent investigation into Alberto Nisman's tragic death;

(4) recognizes the arduous and technical work of the Argentine National Gendarmerie in reviewing evidence to produce credible, evidence-based findings;

(5) encourages the public release of the results of the investigation, including the forensic and pathological reports by the government, which would show whether Alberto Nisman took his own life, or if his death is a homicide;

(6) commends the Government of Argentina for exemplifying the rule of law and the importance of an independent justice system;

(7) urges the President of the United States to directly offer United States technical assistance to the Government of Argentina in solving the death of Alberto Nisman, as well as the ongoing investigation of the AMIA bombing;

(8) expresses serious concern about Iran's terrorist networks in Argentina and all of the Western Hemisphere, mindful of the findings of Mr. Nisman's investigation and reports on this matter, and encourages continued investigations of Iranian terrorist networks based on his work;

(9) urges an independent investigation into the findings of Mr. Nisman regarding the events that led to the memorandum signed between Argentina and Iran;

(10) likewise expresses serious concerns about attempts by former Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and her government to discredit Mr. Nisman and raise unfounded hypotheses on Mr. Nisman's AMIA findings and the circumstances of Mr. Nisman's death while the work of the courts on this matter still continues; and

(11) urges the President of the United States to continue to monitor Iran's activities in Latin America and the Caribbean as it is mandated by the Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-220).

SENATE RESOLUTION 355—IMPROVING PROCEDURES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS IN THE SENATE

Mr. LANKFORD submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 355

Resolved,

SECTION 1. CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) POST-CLOTURE CONSIDERATION.—If cloture is invoked in accordance with rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate on a nomination described in paragraph (2), there shall be no more than 8 hours of post-cloture consideration equally divided in the usual form.

(2) NOMINATIONS COVERED.—A nomination described in this paragraph is any nomination except for the nomination of an individual—

(A) to a position at level I of the Executive Schedule under section 5312 of title 5, United States Code; or

(B) to serve as a judge or justice appointed to hold office during good behavior.

(b) SPECIAL RULE FOR DISTRICT COURT NOMINEES.—If cloture is invoked in accordance with rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate on a nomination of an individual to serve as a judge of a district court of the United States, there shall be no more than 2 hours of post-cloture consideration equally divided in the usual form.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have 8 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 2 p.m. in SD-215 to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Kevin K. McAleenan, of Hawaii, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSION

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pension is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing entitled "Implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act: Progress and the Path Forward for Medical Innovation".

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

The Committee on Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, Terry A. Doughty, to be

United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Terry Fitzgerald Moorer, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, Mark Saalfield Norris, Sr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, Claria Horn Boom, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky, John W. Broomes, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, Rebecca Grady Jennings, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, and Robert Earl Wier, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 7, 2017, at 2 p.m. in room SH-219 to conduct a closed hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following member of my staff, Matt Matis, for the remainder of the day.

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 351, S. Res. 352, and S. Res. 353.

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

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

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 4 p.m. on Monday, December 11; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time

for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Grasz nomination; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m., Monday.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017, AT 4 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:21 p.m., adjourned until Monday, December 11, 2017, at 4 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 7, 2017:

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

JOSEPH BALASH, OF ALASKA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING CHIEF GARY CRAFT

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief Gary Craft for his retirement from the Monterey County District Attorney's Office.

Chief Craft began his career in 1976 as a reserve police officer for the Seaside Police Department. From there, he transferred to the Pacific Grove Police Department, where he spent the next four years as a uniformed patrol officer. In 1980, he took the knowledge that he gained from these two departments to the Monterey County Sheriff's Department, where he would spend the next fourteen years. During his tenure at the Sheriff's Office he served in various roles to protect the residents of Monterey County. Some of these roles included narcotics team member, special enforcement team member, and special unit and tactics team member. The Monterey County Sheriff's Office went on to name him "Lawman of the Year." Chief Craft later received an executive certificate from the California Peace Officers Standards and Training. The executive certificate is the highest level of certification that is given by the State of California.

In 1994, Chief Craft left the Monterey County Sheriff's Office and began the next phase of his career in public service. Chief Craft chose to bring his knowledge and experience to the Monterey County District Attorney's Office, where he would spend the next twenty-three years. During his tenure there, he held in many leadership roles including ten years as chief DA investigator. During his time at the District Attorney's Office, Chief Craft received numerous accolades including Investigator of the Year. In 2016, Chief Craft attended and graduated from the FBI National Academy. The FBI National Academy is a prestigious law enforcement education program that provides training to the top 1 percent of law enforcement executives. Classes include, amongst other subjects, psychology of communication, topics in contemporary law, and physical training. The grueling courses demand a sharp intellect, strong interpersonal skills, and perseverance. Chief Craft is also the first sworn peace officer from the Monterey County District Attorney's office to attend the FBI Academy.

Chief Craft's dedication to keeping the people of Monterey County safe deserves our highest commendation. His actions have demonstrated a deep commitment to public service and an eagerness to go the extra mile. As the Representative for the 20th Congressional District of California, I am deeply grateful for his service to our community. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Chief Gary Craft and wishing him a happy retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF MS. JANET W. DAVIS

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to Ms. Janet Davis. Janet has been the driving force behind Kinetic Credit Union in Columbus, Georgia for more than 26 years and currently serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). She will be retiring on January 31, 2018.

A native of Columbus, Georgia, Ms. Davis was born to the late Jimmy and Rebecca Davis, as one of two children. A product of the Muscogee County School System, she graduated from Kendrick High School in 1977. She went on to attend Columbus State College (now University) where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

For over four decades, Ms. Davis has been a highly trusted leader in the financial services industry. She has built quite an impressive career, which began during her tenure at Columbus Bank & Trust Company. In 1983, she began her career as a Share Draft Officer at The Infantry Center Federal Credit Union (now Kinetic Credit Union). She became the President and CEO of Kinetic Credit Union in 1991 and has since helped it to grow from a \$40 million institution into one of the top 10 credit unions in Georgia with more than \$380 million in assets.

Ms. Davis has received numerous honors and awards for her work. These include: the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions Professional of the Year and the Moses C. Davis Award in 1998, the Columbus State University Alumni Service Award in 2005, the Georgia Credit Union Affiliates Lifetime Achievement Awards in 2010, the Columbus State University's Thomas Y. Whitley Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2011, and her induction into the Credit Union House Hall Leaders in 2016.

Ms. Davis served on a number of boards and was affiliated with several associations. She has served as Chair of the Georgia Credit Union League, Georgia Credit Union Affiliates, Georgia Credit Union Foundation, Georgia Service Corp Board, and CSI, she has been an active board member for the National Credit Union Foundation, National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions, Defense Credit Union Council, and CUNA Mutual Group, and she has served as a member of the Deluxe Collaborative in 2009–10.

In addition to her professional participation, she served as the president and as a Chair of the Chattahoochee Valley Chapter of the local Better Business Bureau and Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation, and a board member of the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Columbus Literacy Alliance, Columbus Partners in Education, Chattahoochee

Valley Hall of Fame, American Cancer Society, and Columbus Hospice.

Dr. Benjamin E. Mays often said: "You make your living by what you get, you make your life by what you give." We are so grateful that Ms. Davis has given her time and talents to provide a premier financial institution for the residents of Southwest Georgia and Southeast Alabama. A woman of great integrity, her efforts, her dedication, and her expertise are unparalleled. Columbus, Georgia shined a little brighter because of Janet Davis.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our sincerest appreciation and best wishes to Ms. Janet Davis upon the occasion of her retirement from an outstanding career in financial services.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN WALTON, JR. FOR 35 YEARS OF FEDERAL SERVICE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Walton, Jr., President of the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2809. John will retire from the Social Security Administration after 35 years of federal service on December 9, 2017.

A veteran of the of the United States Army, John served for 15 years before retiring with the rank of Staff Sergeant, E-6. After leaving the military, he began his career at the Social Security Administration. In 2003, while working for the Social Security Administration, John joined his local branch of the American Federation of Government Employees.

During his time with AFGE, John has been an active member of the union. He is the former Steward of AFGE Local 2809. Currently, he serves as the President for Local 2809. Under John's leadership, AFGE Local 2809 has been a prominent voice in the community advocating for the protection of labor rights and supporting the needs of working families.

It is an honor to recognize John as he enters a well-deserved retirement. I am grateful to him for a lifetime of devotion and for serving his country with distinction. His 35 years at Social Security are an impressive accomplishment, and I know he helped countless Americans with his service. I wish him all the best.

IN RECOGNITION OF NORM & ELAINE BRODSKY

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Norm and

• 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.

Elaine Brodsky in recognition of their long-term commitment to local community and charitable causes. For almost 30 years, this North Brooklyn power couple has helped shape the Williamsburg neighborhood into the vibrant community it is today.

Elaine and Norm Brodsky have generously supported the local community and its charitable causes since opening CitiStorage, an archival storage and records management company, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn in 1990. They became full-time residents of the neighborhood in 2001, when Norm fulfilled his promise to build an apartment on the fourth floor of their office building/warehouse. Their family had been residents of Atlantic Beach for 32 years before moving to Brooklyn. The couple sold the company in 2007 but still live in Williamsburg, where they continue to be pillars of the community.

Norm, who was born in Brooklyn, attended Rider University and received his Doctorate of Law from Brooklyn Law School. He is currently involved in three entrepreneurial ventures—a chain of fast, casual Japanese restaurants in NYC, hotels in North Dakota, and an entrepreneurial, education company called Birthing of Giants. For more than 20 years Norm has written “Street Smarts,” a monthly column in Inc. magazine. He is the author of a well-respected business book, *The Knack*. He provides pro bono business consulting advice to a significant number of entrepreneurs who come to visit him in his office in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Norm is also a strong advocate for the community's transit needs and has hosted meetings for local residents and businesses to weigh in on the impacts of the ongoing L train repairs.

Elaine, an Elmira College graduate and former teacher, also worked as a mental health professional and conducted family workshops for Inc. Magazine conferences for many years. The Brodskys have won several business awards for their company culture which has been featured in various business books and magazine articles. Elaine is a Board member of the League Education and Treatment Center and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. She has been the Chair of the North Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce since its inception, over four years ago. The couple is actively involved with the North Brooklyn Angels mobile food truck which delivers meals and offers counseling services to the local neighborhood.

Elaine and Norm have been married for 48 years and are the proud parents of their two daughters, Beth and Rachel, and grandparents to Sophie, Eitan, and Ava.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the magnanimous contributions of Norm and Elaine Brodsky, whose dedication to community is truly an inspiration.

HONORING THE MESSIAH COLLEGE MEN'S SOCCER TEAM FOR WIN- NING THE NCAA DIVISION III NA- TIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend sincere congratulations to the Messiah College

Men's Soccer Team for winning the NCAA Division III National Championship. This is the 11th time the Messiah Falcons earned the title, “National Champions.”

The Falcons defeated the North Park Vikings in a 2–1 victory on December 2, 2018. The win completed a 24–2 campaign for the Falcons that matched their team record for single-season wins, while also making Messiah 11-for-11 in title game appearances.

The dedication and perseverance of these student athletes should inspire everyone. I extend my congratulations as well to head coach Brad McCarty, and the school officials, family and friends who supported these young men on their incredible journey.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I commend and congratulate the Messiah College Men's Soccer Team on the hard work and determination that led to their National Championship.

RECOGNIZING LANCE LINARES

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Lance Linares on the occasion of his retirement as CEO of the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County after twenty-two years in the position. Lance's career began at KUSP, a Christian music broadcasting station in the area. Following his time at KUSP, Lance found his home at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. The Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County helps non-profit agencies establish the funds they need in order to serve their communities. Under his leadership, the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County's work has supported the arts, education, health, human services, environmental advocacy, and disaster relief.

Under Lance's leadership, the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County grew from \$6 million in assets at the start of his tenure to over \$100 million in assets. Lance's ability to connect charitable and community oriented organizations with funds is just one example of his successes. He maintains that his efforts would not have been possible without the Santa Cruz community's support and charitable character. Many local philanthropic organizations who benefit from this support, such as the Jack and Peggy Baskin Center for Philanthropy, Healthy Kids Initiative, and Second Harvest Food Bank stand as a testament to these efforts. Lance's support of impact investment also helps support small businesses which ultimately expand and foster economic growth in the community. As the representative for the 20th Congressional District of California, I am deeply grateful for Lance's commitment to serving our communities.

I would like to personally congratulate Mr. Linares on his well-earned retirement and wish him the best with his future endeavors. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Mr. Lance Linares for his twenty-two years of service to the community of Santa Cruz and for bettering the lives of numerous individuals through the projects he has supported during his tenure.

RECOGNIZING MULBERRY BAPTIST CHURCH ON THEIR 150TH ANNI- VERSARY

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mulberry Baptist Church, of Emmerton, Virginia, on their 150th anniversary. The church was organized in 1868 when David Veney led a group of African-American worshippers to secure letters of proper dismissal and leave Jerusalem Baptist Church to organize a church. David Veney went on to become the first pastor and donated an acre of land for the first building. Mulberry Baptist has been led by 12 pastors in its 150 year history. Through the years, Mulberry has provided a quality Christian foundation for young people who moved from Richmond County upon completing their public school education. Currently, Mulberry has a congregation of approximately 275 members consisting of craftsmen, entrepreneurs, civil servants, doctors, ministers, and educators with weekly worship.

Mr. Speaker, I pray for Christ's guidance as the congregation comes together in His name and fellowship. May God always bless Mulberry Baptist Church as they continue to spread Christ's word and remain a light within the community.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. MURPHY

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Bruce Murphy for his service as president of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Dr. Murphy has spent his career investing in higher education and has tirelessly served as Nicholls' fifth president over the last four years. Throughout his tenure, many universities across the country struggled to attract and retain students, but Nicholls' actually increased enrollment four consecutive semesters. I am most impressed by his efforts to prepare students at Nicholls University for successful integration into the real world that awaits upon graduation. The school's partnership with Fletcher Community College, for example, has resulted in significant progress in workforce development. Aside from his service as president of Nicholls State University, both President Murphy and his wife, Jeanne Murphy, are retired from the U.S. Army, having earned the rank of lieutenant colonel and colonel, respectively. Dr. and Mrs. Murphy generously served on our military academy review board. I am proud that they devoted time in their busy lives to play an active role in the recruitment of young Louisiana leaders to our nation's military service academies. Thank you Dr. Murphy for your commitment to excellence at Nicholls, your service to the state of Louisiana, and your service to our nation. My sincerest congratulations on an incredible career and your time served as Nicholls' president.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for Roll Call votes 658, 659, 660, and 661 on Wednesday, December 6, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay on Roll Call votes 658, 659, and 660, and I would have voted Yea on Roll Call vote 661.

RUSSIA BANNED FROM WINTER OLYMPICS BY I.O.C.

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, include in the RECORD following article:

[From the New York Times, Dec. 5, 2017]

RUSSIA BANNED FROM WINTER OLYMPICS BY I.O.C.

(By Rebecca R. Ruiz and Tariq Panja)

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND.—Russia's Olympic team has been barred from the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The country's government officials are forbidden to attend, its flag will not be displayed at the opening ceremony and its anthem will not sound.

Any athletes from Russia who receive special dispensation to compete will do so as individuals wearing a neutral uniform, and the official record books will forever show that Russia won zero medals.

That was the punishment issued Tuesday to the proud sports juggernaut that has long used the Olympics as a show of global force but was exposed for systematic doping in previously unfathomable ways. The International Olympic Committee, after completing its own prolonged investigations that reiterated what had been known for more than a year, handed Russia penalties for doping so severe they were without precedent in Olympics history.

The ruling was the final confirmation that the nation was guilty of executing an extensive state-backed doping program. The scheme was rivaled perhaps only by the notorious program conducted by East Germany throughout the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

Now the sports world will wait to see how Russia responds. Some Russian officials had threatened to boycott if the I.O.C. delivered such a severe punishment.

President Vladimir V. Putin seemed to predict a boycott of the Pyeongchang Games with a defiant dismissal of the doping scandal and a foreign policy in recent years that has centered on the premise that he has rescued Russia from the humiliation inflicted on it by the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, said no boycott was under discussion before the announcement, however, and the news broke late in the evening in Moscow when an immediate official reaction was unlikely.

In barring Russia's team, Olympic officials left the door open for some Russian athletes. Those with histories of rigorous drug testing may petition for permission to compete in neutral uniforms. A panel appointed by the International Olympic Committee will rule on each athlete's eligibility.

Although it is unknown exactly how many will clear that bar, it is certain that the contingent from Russia will be depleted significantly. Entire sports—such as biathlon and cross-country skiing, in which Russia has excelled and in which its drug violations have been many—could be wiped out completely.

Olympic officials made two seemingly significant concessions to Russia:

Any of its athletes competing under a neutral flag will be referred to as Olympic Athletes from Russia. That is a departure from how the I.O.C. has handled neutral athletes in the past. For example, athletes from Kuwait, which was barred from the 2016 Summer Games, were identified as Independent Olympic Athletes last year in Rio de Janeiro.

Olympics officials said they might lift the ban on Russia in time for the closing ceremony, suggesting the nation's flag could make a symbolic appearance in the final hours of the Pyeongchang Games.

Thomas Bach, president of I.O.C., has said he was perturbed not only by Russia's widespread cheating but by how it had been accomplished: by corrupting the Olympic laboratory that handled drug testing at the Games, and on orders from Russia's own Olympic officials.

"This decision should draw a line under this damaging episode," Mr. Bach said at a news conference, noting that Alexander Zhukov, the president of Russia's Olympic Committee whom the I.O.C. suspended from its membership Tuesday, had issued an apology—something global regulators have long requested from the nation.

In an elaborate overnight operation at the 2014 Sochi Games, a team assembled by Russia's sports ministry tampered with more than 100 urine samples to conceal evidence of top athletes' steroid use throughout the course of competition. More than two dozen Russian athletes have been disqualified from the Sochi standings as a result, and Olympic officials are still sorting through the tainted results and rescinding medals.

At the coming Games, Mr. Bach said Tuesday, a special medal ceremony will reassign medals to retroactive winners from Sochi. But, in light of legal appeals from many of the Russian athletes who have been disqualified by the I.O.C., it is uncertain if all results from Sochi will be finalized in time.

The Russian Olympic Committee was also fined \$15 million on Tuesday, money that global officials said will be put toward drug-testing international athletes.

[Read The Times's report that first laid out the details of Russia's doping scheme, and the exclusive story of a whistle-blower's personal diaries that were shared with investigators.]

The punishment announced Tuesday resembles what antidoping regulators had lobbied for leading up to the 2016 Summer Games, where Russia was allowed to participate but in restricted numbers. It is likely to face a legal appeal from Russia's Olympic Committee.

The decision was announced after top International Olympic Committee officials had met privately with Mr. Zhukov; Vitaly Smirnov, Russia's former sports minister who was last year appointed Mr. Putin to lead a national antidoping commission to redeem Russia's standing in global sports; and Evgenia Medvedeva, a two-time world skating champion.

"Everyone is talking about how to punish Russia, but no one is talking about how to help Russia," Mr. Smirnov said, sipping a hot beverage in the lobby of the Lausanne Palace Hotel before delivering his final appeal to officials. "Of course we want our athletes there, and we want the Russian flag and anthem," he said.

That appeal was rejected in light of the conclusions of Samuel Schmid, a former president of Switzerland whom the Olympic committee appointed last year to review the findings of a scathing investigation commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency.

"The analysis is clear and water-tight," Mr. Schmid said Tuesday. In a 30-page report, he affirmed the credibility of whistle-blowers and investigators who had followed their leads and evidence.

Tuesday's penalty was in line with what had been advocated by two key whistle-blowers whose accounts upended Russia's standing in global sports over the last several years and were cited in Mr. Schmid's report: Grigory Rodchenkov, the chemist who spent 10 years as Russia's antidoping lab chief and was key to carrying out the cheating schemes in Sochi; and Vitaly Stepanov, a former employee of Russia's antidoping agency who married a runner for Russia's national team and was the first to speak publicly about the nation's institutionalized cheating.

"The world knows that hundreds of Olympic dreams have been stolen by the doping system in the country where I was born," Mr. Stepanov wrote in an affidavit submitted to the International Olympic Committee this fall. He had suggested banning Russia's Olympic Committee for two years, or until the nation's antidoping operations are recertified by regulators. Russia and its individual athletes are all but certain to miss the 2018 Paralympics given regulators' refusal to recertify the nation last month.

"The evidence is clear, that the doping system in Russia has not yet been truly reformed," Mr. Stepanov wrote.

Dr. Rodchenkov is living in an undisclosed location in the United States under protection of federal authorities. In August, "Icarus," a film detailing Dr. Rodchenkov's move to the United States and tell-all account, was released. In addition to sworn testimony and forensic evidence, Mr. Schmid cited the film as further evidence in his report.

"Russia's consistent denials lack any credibility, and its failure to produce all evidence in its possession only further confirms its high-level complicity," Jim Walden, a lawyer for Dr. Rodchenkov, said Tuesday. The Russian sports ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tuesday's decision could have consequences for another major sports event scheduled to be held in Russia, next year's \$11 billion soccer World Cup. The nation's deputy prime minister, Vitaly Mutko, was Russia's top sports official during the 2014 Sochi Games and was directly implicated by Dr. Rodchenkov. As part of Tuesday's ruling, Mr. Mutko was barred for life from the Olympics.

Mr. Mutko is also the chairman of the local organizing committee for the World Cup, but FIFA said in a statement Tuesday that the I.O.C.'s punishments for Olympic doping would have "no impact" on its preparations for the tournament, which begins in June.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Legal Services of New Jersey on its 50th anniversary. This milestone and the

incredible work of Legal Services of New Jersey are truly deserving of this body's recognition.

Established in 1962, Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) became the umbrella organization of the coordinated county legal services programs in 1963. Since then, LSNJ has provided a strong, unified administration of services across New Jersey and continues to be a leading voice and advocate for economically disadvantaged communities. Today, LSNJ serves clients in all twenty-one counties across New Jersey through its five regional programs, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey, Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, Essex-Newark Legal Services, Central Jersey Legal Services and South Jersey Legal Services. With twenty-three local offices throughout its network, LSNJ aims to be as accessible as possible. To date, over 2.4 million cases have been handled.

LSNJ affords low-income individuals resources, information and representation to pursue civil legal action. These services and aid help ensure that there is equal opportunity and protections for those who would otherwise be unable to secure a lawyer.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in congratulating Legal Services of New Jersey as it celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The organization continues to provide essential legal assistance to New Jersey's neediest residents.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I missed roll call vote 653 on the Motion to go to Conference on H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, taken on December 4, 2017. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted YEA.

I was not present for this vote due to an emergency illness on Sunday and due to a previously scheduled commitment with a large group of constituents in Waco, Texas.

Pro-growth tax reform that provides a simpler, fairer tax code will lead to more jobs and bigger paychecks for hardworking American families.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE SCALISE

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 653.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. RUBEN BURKS, DEDICATED UAW LEADER AND LIFE-LONG COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

HON. DANIEL T. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the lifelong service Mr. Burks has

given to the United Automobile Workers and our community. He has upheld worker's rights by serving as the UAW Michigan CAP Chair and on UAW General Motors Sub Council 2. Additionally, his dedication to community activism has included service to the Special Olympics, Women's Council, March of Dimes, American Red Cross, and Easter Seals.

These accomplishments coupled with his dedication to our community are exemplary. As I continue representing Michigan's Fifth Congressional District, I stand by Mr. Burks' example of promoting unity by strengthening communities.

Mr. Burks is a testament to the power of one individual's ability to create meaningful, lasting change. As a conscientious and hardworking UAW leader, his love for the community and the laborers he served comprise a lasting legacy. After 62 years of membership at Local 598, Mr. Burks is bestowed the honor of the rededication of the 598 union hall as the "UAW Local 598 Ruben Burks Union Hall".

CELEBRATING THE 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF WILLIAM AND MARILYN WILKINSON

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate William and Marilyn Wilkinson of South Bend, Indiana, on celebrating 60 years of marriage.

William and Marilyn met in college and married in 1957. Reaching this milestone speaks volumes about the love and compassion they share for one another and the family they built together.

For nearly five decades, the Wilkinsons have called northern Indiana home. Their life revolves around faith, love, and family, and over the years they have made lasting contributions to our Hoosier community. William and Marilyn have not only spent their lives giving back to those in need, they have remained active in ensuring future generations have a bright future in this country.

In 1987, this passion to help others drove William and his son Jay to create PeopleLink, a staffing company in Mishawaka. The success of this family business is a reflection of the strength of William and Marilyn's partnership and their determination to achieve the American Dream.

They have instilled in their two children, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren the ideals of courage, kindness, determination, and service. Today is a celebration not only of their love, but also of the incredible legacy they have created.

It is truly an honor to represent such kind-hearted, hardworking Hoosiers who inspire us all to live more meaningful lives and make a positive difference in the world around us.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 2nd District Hoosiers, I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to William and Marilyn Wilkinson on their anniversary, and I join their family in celebrating the occasion.

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the victims who were killed during the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy.

Seventy-six years ago today, more than 2,000 American citizens lost their lives and more than 1,000 others were injured in a surprise attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The attack on Pearl Harbor shook our nation to its core. Up until this point, the United States had largely remained neutral during the Second World War. However, as a testament to our strength and our resolve, the United States declared war against the Japanese and entered World War II just one day following the attack. Contrary to what the Japanese had intended, the attack had only emboldened our nation to forge our own path to victory.

Tragedies such as the attack on Pearl Harbor serve as a stark reminder of the great personal sacrifices that our men and women in uniform must make in the service of protecting our nation. While many soldiers are fortunate enough to return from service, plenty of others have given up their lives in the act of duty. We are forever indebted to these men and women who have given their lives to protect our freedoms and way of life.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is also about paying tribute to those who served—and survived—during the attack. Petty Officer Doris "Dorie" Miller was one such American who fought bravely during the conflict. Petty Officer Miller displayed remarkable courage when his ship, the USS *West Virginia*, came under attack. As the fighting occurred, Miller dragged his ship's commander, who was mortally wounded by shrapnel, out of the line of fire to safety. He then manned a 50-caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun and shot down at least three of the 29 Japanese planes that went down that day until he was ordered to abandon ship. While Petty Officer Miller survived the attack on Pearl Harbor, he sadly lost his life during a second attack during the Battle of Makin Island when a Japanese submarine and aircraft attack sunk his ship.

Mr. Speaker, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a defining moment in United States history. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day helps to remind us of the importance of defending our freedoms and the heavy cost of doing so. We are reminded on this day of those who lost their lives, but also the countless other veterans—such as Dorie Miller—who have made invaluable contributions to our success during the Second World War.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, December 4, 2017, I was absent from the House Chamber during Roll Call votes 653

and 654. Had I been present, I would have voted nay on Roll Call vote 653 and yea on Roll Call vote 654.

**CONGRATULATIONS COACH JOHN
RODERIQUE**

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach John Roderique, head coach of the Webb City High School football team. The football program at Webb City in southwest Missouri has been highly successful under his leadership.

After graduating from Webb City, Coach Roderique went to Pittsburg State University where he was a two-time All-American linebacker. He returned to his alma mater and became head coach in 1997, when he first led the Cardinals to the state championship after a perfect season. To take home the championship ring during his inaugural year is something most coaches can only dream of. Coach Roderique and the Cardinals would go on to take home 9 more of those rings and was the runner up twice. With 245 wins under his belt, Coach Roderique has the best percentage of success in all of Missouri high school football.

This spring, Coach Roderique was inducted into the Joplin Area Sports Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the Missouri Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame, an accolade only available to a select few of Missouri's best leaders on the gridiron. Coaches have to be teachers, counselors and sometimes another parent to their team. To take on those three mammoth responsibilities at once is something that takes great commitment. Few have shown more commitment than Coach Roderique.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 7th District of Missouri, I would like to congratulate Coach John Roderique on this most recent honor. Even though he does not need it, I wish Coach Roderique the best of luck in the next season and every season after.

HONORING WES KAHLEY OF PENNSYLVANIA ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 29 YEARS OF SERVICE IN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Chief Wes Kahley of the York City Police Department, upon his upcoming retirement from almost 30 years in law enforcement.

I've long appreciated the commitment of people who devote themselves selflessly to serving our Nation and communities. After growing up in York, Mr. Kahley began his law enforcement career in 1998, where he rose through the ranks and later was named Chief of Police in 2010.

Mr. Kahley has earned the respect of his peers and the residents he served for his

dedication to improving relations between police and the community. His tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom he served to be the best. His legacy of service to our community will endure.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Wes Kahley on his service and wish him and his family Godspeed, great happiness and success in their future adventures.

**CONGRATULATING THE
COTTONDALE FUTURE FARMERS
OF AMERICA AGRICULTURAL
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Cottondale Future Farmers of America Agricultural Communications Team for representing the Second District of Florida at both the state and national FFA competitions. The Cottondale team—Caleb Reed, Laramie Pooser, Carl Young, and Kasey Lathan, along with their advisor, Stan Scurlock, placed first in the state competition and 11th nationally, where they were recognized as a National FFA Gold Team.

These bright students were tasked with creating and implementing a campaign to recognize a member of their local FFA chapter through webpage design, opinion writing, video production, and more. Their devotion to learning about the agricultural communications industry is inspiring.

Agriculture is vital to the economy and livelihood of North Florida and I am confident the industry will continue to thrive with dedicated students like Caleb, Laramie, Carl, and Kasey leading the way.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Cottondale Future Farmers of America Agricultural Communications Team and wish them luck in their future endeavors.

PRESERVING ACCESS TO MANUFACTURED HOUSING ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 1, 2017

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker. I oppose this bill. It would remove consumer protections put in place by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. H.R. 1699 would weaken Home Ownership and Equity Protection Act (HOEPA) requirements for people who buy manufactured homes. HOEPA requires additional disclosures to people taking out a loan to buy a home when the interest rate is 6.5 percent or 8.5 percent above the annual percentage rate (APR) for the average Prime Offer Rate (APOR). Those disclosures include: Explaining the consequences of default, disclosing loan terms and monthly payments, and ensuring the borrower receives homeownership counseling.

In addition, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, under Regulation Z, forbids firms

selling manufactured homes from steering buyers into loans. This bill would remove these protections.

Manufactured homes are the biggest source of unsubsidized affordable housing in the country. More than 17 million people live in manufactured homes. If you removed manufactured housing, our national homeownership rate would fall 6 percent. The homes are of good quality.

Thanks to the Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, high-cost loans to manufactured homeowners are rare. Wednesday, we received updated Duty-to-Serve requirements from the Federal Housing Finance Agency which will provide even more affordable financing to these buyers.

Before Democrats enacted the Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the financing for manufactured homes was notoriously predatory. If you want to see how badly manufactured homebuyers used to be treated, read the award-winning series of articles in the Seattle Times. The investigation showed that the main seller of manufactured homes—Clayton Homes—steered borrowers to lenders like Vanderbilt Mortgage and 21st Mortgage which Clayton actually owned.

Clayton's loans are particularly expensive compared with those of its peers. The company locks buyers in loans at interest rates that can exceed 15 percent. If this bill, H.R. 1699 was enacted, borrowers could again be asked to pay 14 or 15 percent without being told that there might be cheaper options.

I've also introduced bills to help manufactured home buyers:

The Energy Efficient and Manufactured Home Act (H.R. 515) helps manufactured home buyers replace their outdated homes.

Two bills—the Frank Adelman Manufactured Housing Community Sustainability Act, (H.R. 3296) and the Fair Tax Treatment for Manufactured Home Communities (H.R. 3399)—help residents of mobile home parks buy the land and run their community as a co-operative.

Let's bring those bills to the House floor. Not this bill which would steer borrowers to high-cost lenders. Now is the time to keep hard fought protections for manufactured home buyers so they can buy homes they can afford. People who work with manufactured homebuyers oppose this bill. Therefore, I include in the RECORD letters of opposition from the Housing Assistance Council, Americans for Financial Reform and MHAcon.

Protect homebuyers. Oppose H.R. 1699.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE COUNCIL,
Washington, DC, November 27, 2017.

Hon. KEITH ELLISON,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ELLISON: As a national voice for affordable rural housing, the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) opposes HR 1699. HR 1699 would eliminate reasonable safeguards for consumers of manufactured homes put in place by the Consumer Protection Financial Bureau (CPFB). Examples include protections against high-interest loans when lower cost options are available.

Manufactured homes are an important source of housing for millions of Americans, especially those with low-incomes and in rural areas. While the physical quality of manufactured homes continues to progress, the basic delivery system of how these homes are sold and financed needs improvement. HAC continues to work with manufactured housing stakeholders—including the

industry, housing finance entities, and consumer-focused groups—to improve the system, starting with improved data collection. Moreover, “Duty to Serve” requirements of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac represent an important infusion of capital into the manufactured housing market. HR 1699’s enactment could undermine such progress.

As housing costs rise for poor rural Americans—exacerbated by recent natural disasters—it is important that Congress seek opportunities to make housing for the rural poor more accessible and fair. HR 1699 is a step in the opposite direction.

Sincerely,

DAVID LIPSETZ,
Executive Director.

AMERICANS FOR FINANCIAL REFORM,

Washington, DC, November 30, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the undersigned community organizations and public interest groups, we ask you to oppose H.R. 1699, the so-called Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2017. This bill poses significant dangers for consumers and homebuyers by exempting manufactured housing lenders from requirements that protect borrowers against inappropriately high-cost loans.

This bill would undermine already vulnerable homeowners by stripping away protections created by Congress and implemented by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). These protections were put in place for a reason: to give manufactured-homeowners the same protections as traditional homeowners. The last housing crisis showed that loan-originator compensation and exorbitant loan pricing were particular areas of abuse. Congress and the CFPB decided to protect homeowners from those practices. However, H.R. 1699 would repeal those protections for the buyers of manufactured homes. In particular, H.R. 1699 would reverse much of this progress by:

Raising the interest-rate trigger for protections under the high-cost mortgage protections of the Home Ownership and Equity Protection Act (HOEPA).

Under H.R. 1699, chattel loans (the type used for most manufactured homes) that are less than \$75,000 and that have an interest rate close to 10 percentage points above the prime rate would no longer receive HOEPA protections. In the current market, this would permit an interest rate of more than 13% for a 15- or 20-year loan on a family’s home mortgage without enhanced protections. In comparison, the going rate for traditional real-estate mortgages is around 4% or less.

Raising the points-and-fees trigger for HOEPA protections.

Currently, borrowers who sign high-cost loans get HOEPA’s protections if the loan has points and fees totaling the lesser of 8% of the loan amount or \$1,000 for loans under \$20,000 and 5% of the loan amount for larger loans. However, under H.R. 1699, borrowers would not be protected for chattel loans under \$75,000 until the points and fees exceeded the greater of 5% or \$3,000. This would weaken protections for low-income homeowners where they are needed most. This means that a homeowner with a \$70,000 chattel loan could pay almost \$3,500 in documents or other junk fees without getting any of the federal protections intended for such borrowers. It also suggests that every loan less than \$60,000 will incur \$3,000 in fees regardless of actual origination costs.

Exempting manufactured-home retailers from the definition of mortgage originators.

This would perpetuate the conflicts of interest and steering that plague this industry and allow lenders to pass additional costs

onto consumers. This provision would also stifle competition and likely discourage new entrants to the manufactured housing finance market, just as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac begin implementing their plans to serve this sector.

Despite claims from industry lobbyists that the new protections are squelching manufactured housing lending, the data tell a different story. There was an initial dip in lending in 2014, the year the new rules went into effect. However, since then, lending volumes have started to recover. In 2015, lending volume was roughly similar to what it was before the new rules went into effect. And these loans were broadly safer, without the predatory features that were common before the new rules, and few of them had very high rates and fees. Last year, loan volume decreased slightly by about 5 percent—however, loan quality remained improved. As the industry adjusts to the new standards and as new competition enters the market, we expect loan volumes and loan quality to continue improving. Historically, failure rates for these loans have been exceedingly high. The industry wide default rate for most manufactured-home loans, those made as personal property loans, has been about 28 percent. Improved loan quality as a result of the Dodd-Frank rules should decrease this astronomical default rate.

In short, H.R. 1699 would harm homeowners through weaker consumer protections and costlier loans that are harder to repay. It would make homeownership more costly for those who can least afford it.

We strongly urge you to stand up for consumers and oppose H.R. 1699.

Sincerely,

Allied Progress; Americans for Financial Reform; Center for Responsible Lending; Consumer Action; NAACP; National Association of Consumer Advocates; National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients); National Fair Housing Alliance; National Manufactured Home Owners Association; Prosperity Now (formerly CFED); UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza); Woodstock Institute; California Coalition for Rural Housing (CA); Housing and Economic Rights Advocates (CA); National Housing Law Project (CA); San Marcos Mobile Home Residents Association (CA); The Committee to Elect Pierre Beauregard for Congress (CA).

AMISTAD (CO); C-MOB Boulder (CO); Orchard Grove Neighbors Association (CO); Vista Village Homeowners’ Association (CO); Vista Village Manufactured Home Association (CO); Honorable Al-Bey J.L.Esq. & Affiliates, LLC. (DE); Affordable Homeownership Foundation Inc. (FL); Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. (FL); MHOAI (IL); Coasap (IA); Public Justice Center (MD); Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MA); All Parks Alliance for Change (MN); Opportunity Alliance Nevada (NV); New Hampshire Community Loan Fund (NH); Native Community Finance (NM); Coalition on Human Needs (C.H.N.) (NY); Friends of the North Country, Inc. (NY); HomeSmartNY (NY); MHAction (NY).

Mobile Manufactured Homeowners Association Suffolk Inc. (NY); National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, Inc. (NY); North Carolina Justice Center (NC); CASA of Oregon (OR); Network for Oregon Affordable Housing (OR); Fayette County Community Action Agency Inc. (PA); Cantrell Legal PC (SC); New Level Community Development Corp. (TN); Addison County Community Trust (VT); CVOEO Mobile Home Program (VT); Law in the Public Interest, L3C (VT); Helping Overcome Poverty’s Existence, Inc. (VA); Virginia Housing Alliance (VA); H&R Properties of River Falls LLC (WI); Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (WI).

As manufactured homeowners, we are writing to express our opposition to the Pre-

serving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2017 (H.R. 1699). MHAction works with homeowners and residents in manufactured home communities across the country on housing and economic justice issues. We believe that manufactured home communities play a key role in providing affordable, safe and accessible housing for all families.

This bill would make it easier for dealers to steer potential buyers of manufactured homes, commonly referred to as mobile homes, to high cost loans resulting in financial hardship for borrowers. This bill would remove recent consumer protections for manufactured homebuyers implemented by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. This bill, if passed, would only undermine the economic and retirement security of thousands of prospective manufactured homeowners.

I am passed, this legislation would add additional fuel to the harmful trends that are chipping away at this important affordable housing sector that thousands of seniors, low-income workers and immigrant families rely on for their housing needs. Beyond the abusive and discriminatory lending practices that have been well documented in an award-winning series of articles in the Seattle Times, the manufactured housing sector overall is bearing witness to disturbing trends that are disrupting the housing security of families across the nation.

Over the past 20 years, manufactured home communities increasingly have gone from “mom and pop” enterprises to ownership by large, multi-state corporations and private equity. While many residents own their own homes, they pay rent, known as lot fees, for use of the land. The increase of multi-state, corporate ownership has brought with it an unsustainable business model that is based on rapidly escalating lot fees and decreasing investments in community maintenance. This creates an economic trap for homeowners, who are unable to move their home for structural or regulatory reasons and therefore must either pay increasingly high lot fees or abandon their property.

Cost cutting by corporate owners also leads to decreasing investment in community maintenance resulting in increased wastewater treatment/septic system failures, improperly maintained roads and other infrastructure issues. Each act of disinvestment increases the economic, health and safety risks for manufactured homeowners and negatively impacts the quality of life of the surrounding community.

Our organization views H.R. 1699 as simply another indication of harmful trends being perpetrated by corporate community owners and predatory lenders that are causing havoc to the economic, retirement and housing security needs of manufactured home owners. Please retain the Consumer Bureau’s rules that protect manufactured home buyers from loans that strip their wealth. We are asking that you oppose H.R. 1699.

Signed on behalf of MHAction and the 16,873 members we represent.

Aimee Inglis, California; Patti Ann Rose, California; Yvonne McCurley, California; Cesiah Guadarrama Trejo, Colorado; Maria De La Luz Galicia, Colorado; Clara McNichol, Delaware; Patricia Norberg, Delaware; Samuel Saunders, Delaware; Terry Saunders, Delaware; Marjorie Mathers, Florida; Debra Kiel, Illinois; Jeffrey Kiel, Illinois; Linda Reynolds, Illinois; Pat Bohlen, Illinois; Terry Nelson, Illinois; Ronel Remy, Massachusetts; Shandra BP-Weeks, Michigan; Amanda Devecka-Rinear, New Jersey; Joe Mangino, New Jersey; Dianne Enriquez, New York; Kevin Borden, New York; Nathalie Hernandez, New York; Rachel Rivera, New York; Richard Robinson, Utah; Sondra Robinson, Utah.

RECOGNITION OF ARMY COLONEL
EDWARD J. SWANSON

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to honor Army Colonel Edward J. Swanson, a native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to our nation. After 30 years of exemplary service, Colonel Swanson will retire from active military duty in December 2017, leaving behind a legacy that will continue for generations to come.

Colonel Swanson was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Chemical Corps upon graduation from Officer Candidate School in 1988 and has served with distinction throughout his career. After completing the Officer Basic Course, Airborne School, and Ranger School, he was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in Germany, followed by the 4th Infantry Division in Colorado Springs, CO.

Since joining the Acquisition Corp, Colonel Swanson has served as an instrumental and dependable leader. He deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan in April of 2011, and served 13 months as the Security Cooperation Division Chief. Following this deployment, he successfully led Project Office for Warfighter Information Network—Tactical (WIN-T) for four years. His career culminated as the Chief of Staff for Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, a position he was handpicked to fill.

Colonel Swanson has performed at the top of his profession throughout his career and truly is an American patriot with the utmost character. He has spent his career ensuring that soldiers and their families are taken care of, as well as the safety and security of our nation. He has left a positive impression on every organization he has served.

With profound admiration and respect, we pay tribute to the accomplishments and sacrifices that he has made for our nation. We thank Colonel Swanson, and his children, Benjamin and Abbie, for their unwavering support. It is my honor to recognize them and wish them peace and happiness in retirement.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF GARRICK
MALLERY, A NOBLESVILLE, INDIANA
LEGEND

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Garrick Mallery, a pillar of the community in Noblesville, Indiana. Garrick was born on a farm east of Noblesville on December 21, 1927 to John and Della Cragun Mallery. Garrick's family were some of the original settlers to Noblesville in 1820. A 1945 graduate of Noblesville High School, Garrick attended Purdue University for one semester and played on the football team. He left Purdue to serve as an officer in the Cryptography Division in the U.S. Army. Returning to Purdue, Garrick earned a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Ec-

onomics in 1951. During his days at Purdue, he was a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity, President of the Young Republican Club and hosted a weekly farm show on the Purdue radio station, WBAA. In 1954, Garrick married Nancy L. Everson. Together, he and Nancy had four children, Carol, John, David and Fred.

Garrick began selling real estate in 1948 while still in college and owned his own company. Initially, he was a partner in Aldred and Mallery, and later owned Garrick Mallery, Realtor. Prior to his passing, Garrick held the oldest active real estate license in the state of Indiana—69 years! He also worked as an appraiser, developer and started breeding and racing Standardbred horses in 1970, first in Noblesville, and later on their farm in Sheridan. He worked to expand the horse racing industry in Indiana.

Garrick's notable contributions to the Noblesville community include being a founding member of Noblesville Elementary Football League, finance chairman for the construction of Noblesville First United Methodist Church, 4-H leader, and president and director of the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce. In September 2017, Garrick was awarded the Hamilton County Commissioners' Continental Award, the highest honor bestowed upon Hamilton County residents who contribute to making the community a better place to live. Among his many contributions, Garrick organized Hamilton County's first Health Department. It was established in 1966 and only had three staff members at its inception. Today, it employs 28 full and part-time employees with a \$2.9 million annual budget. Garrick served as the first chairman of the Hamilton County Board of Health in 1966 until 1972, and then again in 2003 until his passing. His service on the board totaled 43 years. In that role, he helped guide the growth of the county Health Department, which is dedicated to communicable disease prevention, health promotion for residents of all ages in Hamilton County and to protecting the environment in which they live. He also organized the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and Hamilton County Savings and Loan.

In 1962, Garrick played Santa Claus in the inaugural Noblesville Christmas Parade, continuing for several years afterward. He reprised the role for the 50th anniversary of the parade, and then served as Grand Marshal in 2015. Garrick was a member of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers and former member of the Lions Club and the Elks Club.

Garrick was not just a citizen of Noblesville but was a part of the city's history. On behalf of all Hoosiers, I would like to salute Garrick Mallery for his service to the Noblesville community. His work with Hamilton County's Public Health Department and other organizations was unmatched and his presence will be greatly missed. Garrick was a treat to be around and I will always cherish the times I spent with him. I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to his sister, Jane, his children, Carol, John and David, his eight grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and the rest of his family in their time of mourning.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
GEOENGINEERING RESEARCH
EVALUATION ACT OF 2017

HON. JERRY MCNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to further our understanding of geoengineering as a potential strategy to prevent the most detrimental impacts of climate change. The evidence of climate change and its effects can already be seen around the world. The situation in the Arctic is alarming, as sea ice is declining by more than 13 percent per decade. Increased global temperatures, warming oceans, rising sea levels, more intense hurricanes and droughts—the writing is on the wall.

Slowing these trends and eventually reversing them is the greatest challenge humankind has ever faced. Our first priority in addressing climate change should be to embrace climate mitigation strategies. This includes drastically reducing our emissions, embracing clean energy, and shifting our economies away from fossil fuels. This problem stops getting worse when we stop emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which means we have a long way to go.

Scientists have made very clear that as global temperatures rise there will be severe consequences to our society—it will harm public health, our economies, and our very way of life. While geoengineering should be considered a potential last resort in preventing climate change, it is something we need to better understand.

My bill would direct the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics to lay out a research agenda and governance principles for geoengineering research. I want to be clear—this is not authorizing any large-scale deployment and, frankly, we are decades if not longer from any serious consideration of geoengineering as a legitimate strategy for temporarily addressing climate change. The bill would authorize a rigorous review process to determine where we should make federal investments in this emerging research field and how we should set up oversight of this research.

There is no substitute for drastically reducing carbon pollution. Our focus can no longer just be a question of how much we can mitigate against climate change, but also how fast we can do it. The urgency of climate change forces us to consider every option, and geoengineering is one that should be researched as we continue our mitigation efforts.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this well-vetted, thoughtful approach to better understanding geoengineering and its potential to combat the effects of climate change.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ROCK
CREEK NATIONAL PARK ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill to redesignate the National Park

Service-owned Rock Creek Park, in the District of Columbia, as “Rock Creek National Park.” Renaming this park will highlight its significance to the nation, including visitors to the nation’s capital, and will help get much-needed funding for the park’s inviting trails, waterways and other unique features.

Rock Creek Park is already a national park, established by Congress in 1890 “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States,” and is the oldest urban park and the third federal park ever created, after Yellowstone and Sequoia. Rock Creek Park was designed to preserve animals, timber, forestry and other interests in the park, and to ensure that its natural state is maintained as much as possible, for all American people, not just for D.C. residents.

Over time, several structures have been established or donated to further preserve Rock Creek Park. In 1892, for example, the federal government acquired Peirce Mill in Rock Creek Park, one of the mills used by local farmers during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. In 1950, the Old Stone House, located at 3051 M Street NW., with its great pre-Revolutionary War architectural merit, was acquired by the park. The building was restored, and programs explain the house’s rich history from the colonial period to the present day. The Fort Circle Parks were also acquired to interpret and preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, which created a ring of protection for the nation’s capital during the Civil War.

Today, Rock Creek Park offers residents of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Northern Virginia, as well as thousands of visitors, an escape from our increasingly urban environment. Residents and tourists alike also enjoy many activities in the park’s 2,000 acres, including hiking and bike riding on the historical trails, horseback riding, picnicking, tennis and other recreational activities in some of the open fields. Our residents have expressed their appreciation by volunteering to clean up and maintain the trails and waterways.

Redesignating Rock Creek Park as Rock Creek National Park will help recognize the national status of the park and protect and revitalize this remarkable resource in our nation’s capital.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING 2017 MONSTER ENERGY
NASCAR CUP SERIES CHAMPION
MARTIN TRUOX, JR.

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Martin Truox, Jr. on winning the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championship in historic fashion.

The journey to Martin Truox Jr.’s success came with a lot of adversity, both on the track and in Martin’s personal life. On the personal side, Martin and his partner, Sherry Pollex, faced one of life’s toughest challenges when Sherry was diagnosed with Stage III ovarian

cancer three years ago. Sherry has faced this challenge with the heart of a champion. She’s continued to fight this dreaded disease even when it returned earlier this year, and Sherry has used her personal battle as an opportunity to advocate for cancer patients everywhere through her work with the Martin Truox, Jr. Foundation and SherryStrong.org. She has inspired millions through her work, and as Martin will tell you, Sherry is the true champion in their family.

On the track, Martin has faced his own adversity. In 2013, through no fault of his own, Martin ended up losing his ride. Instead of giving up, Martin turned this setback into an opportunity—he landed on his feet at Furniture Row Racing and became a champion four short years later.

Martin is a champion on the track and in life. Today I have the honor of congratulating Martin Truox, Jr. on winning of the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championship, and I can’t think of anyone who deserves this victory more than him.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in honoring a true champion in every sense of the word, Martin Truox, Jr.

TAYLOR FORCE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ANTHONY G. BROWN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, today in Israel and Palestine—it’s hard to see fertile ground for peace. Peace is cultivated by tolerance and mutual understanding; when we work to move beyond hatreds and accept paths of compromise.

I’m disappointed that the Palestinian Authority has continued to fund further bloodshed and hatred by tolerating, encouraging, and even glorifying violence. They do so by making payments to those who kill in the name of hatred. This year alone, the Palestinian Authority has devoted hundreds of millions of dollars in its budget to provide payments to Palestinians in prison for terrorist attacks, and to the families of those who died while carrying out such attacks.

The Palestinian system provides more money to those who serve longer sentences, meaning the more heinous the attack—the greater the financial compensation. These payments are higher than the assistance provided to Palestinians living in poverty, and is four times higher than the average salary in the West Bank.

There is no question that this policy of financially rewarding convicted terrorists is abhorrent and must stop.

We’ve heard a lot about Captain Taylor Force—a U.S. citizen, a West Point graduate, and U.S. Army veteran who had survived combat in Iraq and was studying entrepreneurship at Vanderbilt University. Like the men and women with whom I served during my 30 years in the Army, Taylor was an American patriot whose future was bright. Yet his life was stolen from him by a knife-wielding terrorist. Shortly after the murder of Taylor,

Fatah—the political party of President Mahmoud Abbas—posted a statement online praising Captain Force’s attacker as a hero and “martyr.” Taylor wasn’t murdered by a single assailant, but by a political cultural and political system that foments hatred and rewards terror.

Yes, I understand the opposing arguments that seek to justify these payments or attempt to explain the context of the historic and political relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, the violence is unacceptable and cannot be supported by payments to those who commit violence.

There is no reason to believe these payments will end, without strong external pressure—and year after year, the United States is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority. The United States government is right to seek a way to convince President Abbas to end this horrible behavior that incentivizes violence against civilians and who sees this as “an integral part of the weave of Arab Palestinian society.” Conditioning our Economic Support Funds might finally convince President Abbas to end financial support for terrorists and their families.

It’s important to note that the House version of this bill preserves humanitarian democracy assistance, that has a direct impact on the daily lives of Palestinians—it will keep a network of hospitals running in East Jerusalem, allow for investments in wastewater infrastructure projects, and continue childhood vaccinations.

While the Taylor Force Act aims to push the Palestinian Authority to stop rewarding hate, violence, and terrorism, we need to do more to change the underlying culture of intolerance between the Israelis and Palestinians. Congress should consider increasing alternative forms of assistance outside of our traditional programs—assistance that could counter the influence of incitements and support civil society.

USAID oversees a \$26 million people-to-people reconciliation fund—of which \$10 million is allocated annually for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—through its Conflict Management and Mitigation program. These grants provide funding for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs that bring people together to change attitudes and build bridges, like the Center for Shared Society that goes into schools to increase dialogue between Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Jewish youth. When I visited Israel in August, I heard directly from prominent Arab Israelis who described to me how effective these programs are.

We should also support economic partnerships that promote the least ideological and most pragmatic elements of Palestinian society—like tech companies and startups—that will increase economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for Palestinians. These include the “Peace for Profits” initiatives.

Directing U.S. taxpayer dollars towards these program, would send a loud and powerful signal that we remain invested in Palestinians and are choosing those who promote reconciliation and peace over those who support violence. The Taylor Force Act gives us an opportunity to reassess our assistance to the Palestinians. And we must do it in a way that brings us closer to peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION (NIAAA)

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), headquartered in Indianapolis. The NIAAA is an organization founded in 1977 to preserve, enhance and promote the educational value of interscholastic athletics through the professional development of its member athletic administrators. Extracurricular activities, such as interscholastic athletics, emerged about a century ago as part of education reform with the idea to use extracurricular activities to help teach “soft skills”—strong work habits, grit, self-discipline, teamwork, leadership, and a sense of civic engagement. The NIAAA champions the profession of athletic administration through educational opportunities, advocating ethics, developing leaders, and fostering community.

The NIAAA, with its 11,000 individual members and athletic administrators nationwide, makes available the resources and support that our secondary school athletic administrators need to administer safe, high quality athletic programs that provide participation opportunities and positive experiences for students. The NIAAA became the first national association to be accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement in the post-secondary division. It has also developed and administers the only comprehensive Professional Education Program and Certification Program for secondary school Athletic Administrators.

Involvement in interscholastic athletics has shown a strong association with a variety of positive outcomes during the school years and beyond, including higher grade-point averages, lower dropout rates, lower truancy, better work habits, higher educational aspirations, lower delinquency rates, greater self-esteem, more psychological resilience, less risky behavior, more civic engagement (like voting and volunteering), and higher future wages and occupational attainment.

That is why the work of the NIAAA, and the school administrators and programs they recognize, including those in my district, deserve our recognition—for taking the steps to help ensure our secondary school athletic programs are the best they can be and students athletes have the opportunity to develop into the leaders our nation will depend on in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the NIAAA and the recognized exemplary programs and administrators for their commitment to America’s future, its youth.

INTRODUCTION OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, in 2015, Congress for the first time enacted a military student identifier (MSI) program to track and collect data on military-connected students’ education. However, this provision only requires states to identify and monitor the academic progress of active-duty military-connected students. This excludes the children of National Guard members and Reservists. Students with parents in the National Guard and Reserves may face the same challenges, such as constant moving and the stress of parental deployment, as students whose parents are in active-duty service. That is why, today, I am introducing the “Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Act.”

The need for an MSI for all military-connected children, not just those in active-duty, is important because it allows educators, parents, and policymakers to make informed, evidence-based decisions on how to positively affect the educational progress of all their students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, on November 14, 2017, I missed a recorded vote for Roll Call vote 631. I was called away from the floor for a phone call pertaining to the health of my mother.

The vote was on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted nay on Roll Call 631.

HONORING ROSA PARKS AND THE POWER OF ONE

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, Sixty-two years ago last week, an African-American seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama bus.

Her defiance and subsequent jailing sparked the peaceful, Montgomery Bus Boycott that eventually led to the desegregation of public transportation.

Though small in stature, Rosa Parks became an enormous figure in the Civil Rights Movement and earned the title: “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”

Her life and actions showed me and so many Americans how the “Power of One” person can make a difference in the pursuit of what is right and just.

When I served in the state assembly, I championed legislation that made Ohio the first state in the nation to designate December 1st as Rosa Parks Day.

Monday of this week, I hosted a Community Leaders’ Forum: “The Power of One: We Are Walking in It” to remind and educate hundreds of my constituents of the work of Rosa Parks.

I believe it is our collective responsibility to walk in the footsteps of Rosa Parks and honor the Power of One.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.J. Res. 123, Further Continuing Appropriations Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7897–S7935

Measures Introduced: Ten bills and seven resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2204–2213, S.J. Res. 50, and S. Res. 350–355. **Pages S7929–30**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 150, recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

S. 1901, to require global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7929**

Measures Passed:

Further Continuing Appropriations Act: By 81 yeas to 14 nays (Vote No. 311), Senate passed H.J. Res. 123, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018. **Pages S7923–25**

State of Mississippi Bicentennial: Senate agreed to S. Res. 351, recognizing the bicentennial of the State of Mississippi on December 10, 2017. **Page S7935**

National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 352, designating the week of December 9, 2017, as “National Nurse-Managed Health Clinic Week”. **Page S7935**

Wreaths Across America Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 353, designating December 16, 2017, as “Wreaths Across America Day”. **Page S7935**

House Messages:

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act: Pursuant to the order of Wednesday, December 6, 2017, on H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, the Chair was authorized to appoint the following conferees on the part of the Senate: Senators Hatch, Enzi, Murkowski, Cornyn, Thune, Portman, Scott, Toomey, Wyden, Sanders, Murray, Cantwell, Stabenow, Menendez, and Carper. **Page S7925**

Grasz Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit. **Page S7925**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Thursday, December 7, 2017, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2017. **Page S7925**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S7925**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 4 p.m., on Monday, December 11, 2017, Senate resume consideration of the nomination. **Page S7935**

Willett Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. **Page S7925**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit. **Page S7925**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S7925**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S7925**

Ho Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit. **Pages S7925–26**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. **Page S7926**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S7925**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S7926**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule XXII, the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, December 11, 2017. **Page S7926**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 61 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. EX. 310), Joseph Balash, of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior. **Pages S7905–09, S7935**

Susan Parker Bodine, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. **Pages S7909, S7935**

Messages from the House: **Page S7927**

Measures Referred: **Page S7927**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S7927**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7927–28**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S7929**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S7929**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S7930**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7930–34**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7926–27**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7934–35**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7935**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—311) **Pages S7909, S7925**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:21 p.m., until 4 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7935.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

DOD ACQUISITION REFORM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Department of Defense acquisition reform efforts, after receiving testimony from former Representative Heather A. Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force, Mark T. Esper, Secretary of the Army, Ellen M. Lord, Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, and James F. Geurts, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition, all of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Finance: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Kevin K. McAleenan, of Hawaii, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

21ST CENTURY CURES ACT IMPLEMENTATION

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act, focusing on progress and the path forward for medical innovation, after receiving testimony from Francis S. Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health, and Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Food and Drug Administration, both of the Department of Health and Human Services.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Leonard Steven Gras, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, Terry A. Doughty, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Terry Fitzgerald Moor, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Alabama, Mark Saalfeld Norris, Sr., to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, Claria Horn Boom, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky, John

W. Broomes, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, Rebecca Grady Jennings, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, and Robert Earl Wier, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 24 public bills, H.R. 4581–4604; and 7 resolutions, H. Res. 648–654, were introduced. **Pages H9756–57**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H9757–58**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 4015, to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry (H. Rept. 115–451);

H.R. 4324, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–452); and

H.R. 1638, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–453, Part 1).

Page H9756

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Brat to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H9711**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H9717**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Steven E. Boes, Boys Town, Boys Town, Nebraska. **Page H9717**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 215 yeas to 205 nays with two answering "present", Roll No. 668. **Pages H9717, H9731–32**

Recess: The House recessed at 3:40 p.m. and reconvened at 4:14 p.m. **Page H9742**

Small Business Mergers, Acquisitions, Sales, and Brokerage Simplification Act of 2017: The House

passed H.R. 477, to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies, by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 426 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 669. **Pages H9739–42, H9742–43**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–43 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H9722**

Agreed to:

Sherman amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–443) that makes several changes that provide additional protections for investors and small businesses, which will align the bill with a Securities and Exchange Commission no-action letter issued January 31, 2014; specifically the amendment includes provisions that would prohibit passive buyers in the M&A transaction, prohibit M&A brokers from binding a party to a transfer of ownership, prohibit M&A brokers from providing financing for the transfer, and require M&A brokers that represent both the buyer and seller to disclose that to both parties and receive written consent. **Pages H9741–42**

H. Res. 647, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 477) and (H.R. 3971) and the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) was agreed to by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 238 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 666, after the previous question was ordered by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 236 yeas to 190 nays, Roll No. 665. **Pages H9722–30**

Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018: The House passed H.J. Res. 123, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 193 nays, Roll No. 670. **Pages H9722–39, H9743**

H. Res. 647, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 477) and (H.R. 3971) and the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) was agreed to by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 238 yeas to 188 nays, Roll No. 666, after the previous question was ordered by a ye-a-and-nay vote of 236 yeas to 190 nays, Roll No. 665. **Pages H9722–30**

Suspensions-Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Tuesday, December 5th.

Expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela: H. Res. 259, amended, expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ ye-a-and-nay vote of 419 yeas to 8 nays, Roll No. 667; and **Pages H9730–31**

Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017: H.R. 2658, amended, to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ ye-a-and-nay vote of 388 yeas to 29 nays, Roll No. 671. **Pages H9745–46**

Admiral Lloyd R. “Joe” Vasey Pacific War Commemorative Display Establishment Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker’s table and pass H.R. 4300, to authorize Pacific Historic Parks to establish a commemorative display to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II. **Page H9746**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, December 11th for Morning Hour debate. **Page H9746**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H9755.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Seven ye-a-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9729, H9730, H9730, H9731, H9742, H9743, and H9745. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Committee Meetings

THE MISSION OF THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled “The Mission of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency”. Testimony was heard from Scott Pruitt, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

EXAMINING THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL RESEARCH

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “Examining the Office of Financial Research”. Testimony was heard from Richard Berner, Director, Of-

fice of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit held a hearing entitled “Legislative Proposals for a More Efficient Federal Financial Regulatory Regime: Part II”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS IN AFRICA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Counterterrorism Efforts in Africa”. Testimony was heard from John J. Sullivan, Deputy Secretary, Department of State; and David J. Trachtenberg, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense.

EXAMINING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY’S EFFORTS TO COUNTER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held a hearing entitled “Examining the Department of Homeland Security’s Efforts to Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction”. Testimony was heard from James F. McDonnell, Assistant Secretary, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction and Director, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, Department of Homeland Security; William Bryan, Acting Under Secretary, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security; and Chris P. Currie, Director, Emergency Management, National Preparedness, and Critical Infrastructure Protection, Homeland Security and Justice Team, Government Accountability Office.

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE CONGRESSIONAL WORKPLACE: EXAMINING REFORMS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Congressional Workplace: Examining Reforms to the Congressional Accountability Act”. Testimony was heard from Victoria A. Lipnic, Acting Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Susan Tsui Grundmann, Executive Director, Office of Compliance; Gloria Lett, Counsel, Office of House Employment Counsel; and a public witness.

OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Oversight of the Federal Bureau of

Investigation”. Testimony was heard from Christopher Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

TRANSFORMING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “Transforming the Department of the Interior for the 21st Century”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 805, the “Tulare Youth Recreation and Women’s History Enhancement Act”; H.R. 1349, to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes; H.R. 3371, the “Modoc County Land Transfer and Economic Development Act of 2017”; and H.R. 3961, the “Kissimmee River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2017”. Testimony was heard from Representatives McClintock, LaMalfa, and Soto; Glenn Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service; Elizabeth Cavasso, Supervisor, District 4, County of Modoc, Alturas, California; Maritsa Castellanoz, Vice Mayor, City of Tulare, California; and public witnesses.

OVERSIGHT OF IT AND CYBERSECURITY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Technology held a hearing entitled “Oversight of IT and Cybersecurity at the Department of Veterans Affairs”. Testimony was

heard from Scott Blackburn, Acting Chief Information Officer, Department of Veteran Affairs; Dominic Cussatt, Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Veteran Affairs; and David A. Powner, Director, IT Management Issues, Government Accountability Office.

NEW NAMES, SAME PROBLEMS: THE VA MEDICAL SURGICAL PRIME VENDOR PROGRAM

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “New Names, Same Problems: The VA Medical Surgical Prime Vendor Program”. Testimony was heard from Ricky Lemmon, Acting Chief Procurement and Logistics Officer, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Shelby Oakley, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, Government Accountability Office; and a public witness.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: business meeting to consider the nomination of Stephen Alexander Vaden, of Tennessee, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture, 5:45 p.m., S-216, Capitol.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

4 p.m., Monday, December 11

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12 noon, Monday, December 11

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Leonard Steven Gras, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 5:30 p.m.

House Chamber

Program for Monday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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