

state and enforcing the ceasefire, Russia egregiously has prevented the ceasefire from taking hold.

Once again, Russia is abetting Assad's defiance and destruction for its own perverse purposes. At the very least, it is abdicating its role as a permanent member of the Security Council.

What can be done about this devastating situation? Regrettably, there are no easy answers.

But a President who previously argued that "heinous actions by the Bashar al-Assad regime are a consequence of the last administration's weakness and irresolution" has to demonstrate some resolve. I call on President Trump to put genuine pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin to rein in Assad and end Russian obfuscation in the U.N. Security Council as the carnage and number of likely war crimes mount.

Any discussion with Putin must also address deeply troubling—and seemingly ignored—reports that Russian mercenaries controlled by Yevgeny Prigozhin attacked U.S. Special Operations Forces in Syria, with approval of the highest levels of the Kremlin. Prigozhin is the same Russian oligarch who was recently indicted on charges of running a troll farm targeting American voters.

Donald Trump has also called on "all civilized nations" to help end the "slaughter and bloodshed in Syria." I have to imagine that the United States is included in his exhortation. Unhappily, he has also recommended a 30-percent cut in our already minuscule foreign assistance and diplomacy budget. The United States must do more to meet the humanitarian needs of Syrians suffering the ravages of a dreadful war.

Incredibly, at a time when a long-term diplomatic and political solution will be needed in Syria, this administration has marginalized our top diplomatic expertise at the Department of State. This is wildly self-defeating.

We have taken a back seat to Russia and Iran in Syria long enough. We can see every day the devastating results: more violence and the further fracturing of a country and a region that have suffered at the hands of tyrants too long.

Despite the important achievement made by our military in destroying ISIS in Syria, Syria will remain a monumental security, humanitarian, and governance challenge for the United States and its allies, including Israel, for years to come. Russia and Iran are vying for the spoils of the civil war, with civilians paying the highest price. We don't want to leave U.S. forces in Syria indefinitely, but doing nothing to bring a lasting peace to Syria is the worst option.

As such, President Trump, I call on your administration to come up with a real Syria strategy to bring an end to a war—and the senseless suffering—that has gone on for too long.

#### REMEMBERING MATT NIEMEYER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to recognize and celebrate the life of a friend, a colleague, and a trusted adviser whom we tragically lost last week.

That is what Matt Niemeyer was to me, but Matt would say that he was a husband and a father first. Everything else was secondary. Matt leaves behind his beloved wife, Amy, and their two beautiful children, Anna and Peter.

I first met Matt in 2005 when he was an Assistant U.S. Trade Representative. He was well known in the trade community, and he stood out as a substantive expert in his field. Matt would say that his time at USTR was the most fun he had ever had in government. That says a lot as Matt also worked on Capitol Hill for the National Republican Congressional Committee and as a congressional liaison for a number of private companies and organizations throughout his life.

Matt played a key role in our successful efforts to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement. He was a happy warrior in that he loved trade, USTR, and getting things done. I think his thick skin and constant hopefulness was a credit to his upbringing as a long-suffering and then long-celebrating Boston Red Sox fan. He always found a way to get his mission accomplished and always had a quick wit.

I was lucky to remain close with Matt after our time together at USTR had ended. He would go to any length for his friends, and he was always thoughtful, kind, and jovial. He never passed at the opportunity to joke about one of his earliest experiences in politics, when he worked for the first primary opponent I ever faced. He would generously tell me how happy he was that, for one of the only times in his career, he wasn't successful in that job.

While Matt is no longer with us in person, his memory lives on through his family who love him dearly and friends and colleagues like myself who will forever cherish his impact on our lives.

#### TRIBUTE TO JANET JONES

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to honor Janet Jones for her distinguished public service to the U.S. Senate.

Janet began her Senate career in the Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment in 2006 as a litigation paralegal. Not long after that, she took on the tremendous responsibility of getting Senate offices prepared for their mandatory OSHA inspections by the congressional Office of Compliance.

During the 114th Congress alone, Janet pre-inspected almost a half-million square feet of office space, assisting Senate offices with identifying potential hazards and potential safety violations.

Janet's tireless work with Senate offices over the past 12 years has contrib-

uted to making the offices that serve this body safer for our employees, our visitors, and our constituents. With Janet's assistance, many Senate offices, including my own, have earned Safe Office Awards.

We will miss Janet's institutional knowledge and unparalleled professionalism.

Janet, thank you for your service, and I wish you great happiness in retirement.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO BILL GALT

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing a hard-working Montana rancher for his contributions to the community in Meagher County. Bill Galt is a third-generation Montana rancher; he has been ranching all his life. His dedication to White Sulphur and the surrounding community, however, extends far beyond his work in agriculture.

Bill has rescued numerous folks from plane crashes and accidents on the Smith River as part of his volunteer search and rescue work. He has served on the White Sulphur Springs Airport Board, the Meagher County DUI Task Force, the Conservation District Board, and the Mountainview Medical Center Foundation, just to name a few.

Bill has been a volunteer firefighter and has volunteered with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and 4H. I would be remiss to not include his service in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps during Vietnam as well.

Bill is humble and civic-minded in all he does, and his service to Meagher has not gone unnoticed.

Thank you, Bill, for exemplifying what it means to be an active member of a Montana community.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

##### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 9:50 a.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. 831. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 West Pike Street in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Police Officer Scott Bashioum Post Office Building".

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 11:31 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1917. An act to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with such rule.

At 12:21 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1119. An act to establish the bases by which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall issue, implement, and enforce certain emission limitations for existing electric utility steam generating units that convert coal refuse into energy.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1119. An act to establish the bases by which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall issue, implement, and enforce certain emission limitations for existing electric utility steam generating units that convert coal refuse into energy; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 1917. An act to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants for brick and structural clay products or for clay ceramics manufacturing before requiring compliance with such rule; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

#### ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, March 8, 2018, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 831. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 West Pike Street in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Police Officer Scott Bashioum Post Office Building".

#### 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-4529. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of three (3) of-

ficers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4530. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Commission Guidance on Pay Ratio Disclosure" (17 CFR Part 229 and 249) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4531. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Commission Guidance Regarding Revenue Recognition for Bill-and-Hold Arrangements" (17 CFR Part 231, 241, and 271) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4532. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Updates to Commission Guidance Regarding Accounting for Sales of Vaccines and Bioterror Countermeasures to the Federal Government for Placement into the Pediatric Vaccine Stockpile or the Strategic National Stockpile" (17 CFR Part 231, 241, and 271) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4533. A communication from the Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oil and Gas and Sulfur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf-Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments" (RIN1010-AD99) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2018; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4534. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the progress made in licensing and constructing the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4535. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Administering Section 113 of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4536. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Medicare Secondary Payer Commercial Reimbursement Center in Fiscal Year 2017"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4537. 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 "Balanced System for Measuring Organizational and Employee Performance Within the Internal Revenue Service" ((RIN1545-BL88) (TD 9831)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4538. A communication from the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2018 Trade Policy Agenda and 2017 Annual Report of the President of the United States on the Trade Agreements Program; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4539. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Depart-

ment of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2018-0018 - 2018-0023); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4540. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs of the Department of Homeland Security, transmitting legislative proposals relative to the President of the United States' Fiscal Year 2019 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4541. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's 2017 Annual Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4542. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2018; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4543. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustments" (RIN3245-AG96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2018; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-4544. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Assistance Provided to Foreign Aviation Authorities for FY 2017"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-179. A resolution adopted by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Gautier, Mississippi, urging the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to finalize a 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Program that maintains and expands access to Gulf of Mexico energy resources, and urging the United States Congress to keep its commitment under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act to share OCS revenues with Gulf producing states and their coastal political subdivisions, and to lift the existing cap on revenue-sharing with the Gulf Coast states; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-180. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to Social Security benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

#### 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. UDALL:

S. 2519. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to reform the renewable fuel program under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.