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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, teach us how to praise You at all times, constantly glorifying Your Name and expressing gratitude for Your prevailing providence.

Lord, thank You for sustaining our lawmakers as they strive to fulfill Your purposes for our Nation and world. Set them free from all fears, reminding them that You have been their help in the past and should be their hope for the years to come.

Forgive us all for duties unperformed, promptings disobeyed, and beckonings ignored.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 20, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator

from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SASSE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO OKSANA MASTERS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, during Sunday's closing ceremonies at the Pyeongchang Paralympics, the American flag was held high by a special member of Team USA. Oksana Masters of Louisville, KY, was elected by her teammates to represent our Nation at the ceremonies, capping off her remarkable trip.

Born in Chernobyl with radiation poisoning, Oksana was adopted at the age of 7 and came to the United States. She underwent a number of medical procedures at a young age, including the amputation of both of her legs, but that didn't stop her. Regardless of the obstacle, she pushed through.

This year marks her fourth Paralympics. She entered Pyeongchang with a silver and two bronze medals, but this time, this talented multisport athlete set her sights on the gold, and I am happy to report that Oksana, once again, achieved her goal. She ascended to the top of the podium, not once but twice.

Kentucky is very proud of Oksana and all that she has accomplished. She is a fine representative of our Commonwealth and our Nation.

ALLOW STATES AND VICTIMS TO FIGHT ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a totally different matter, the Senate continues to consider a bill that would strike back against the evils of sex trafficking. The topic is all too familiar to me and many of my colleagues who have fought against child exploitation for decades. In recent years, as trafficking has migrated from street corners to smartphones, reports of child sex trafficking have ticked up dramatically.

My friend and colleague from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, has been especially committed to rooting out the cause of this crisis. He has built a broad bipartisan coalition in support of the legislation currently before the Senate. It is designed to close a loophole in existing law that allows websites to avoid responsibility, even as they knowingly facilitate trafficking. It would ensure that any institutions that are party to this reprehensible practice are subject to strict penalties—the ones they deserve.

I urge each of my colleagues to join us in taking decisive action for our Nation's children.

YEMEN RESOLUTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, later today the Senate will vote on a resolution offered by the junior Senators from Vermont and Utah. Their goal is to end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabian-led coalition fighting the Houthi insurgency in Yemen, and they propose to do this using provisions of the War Powers Resolution and the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act.

I oppose their resolution for two reasons. The first reason is that my colleagues' substantive policy aim is actually misguided. Supreme Leader Khamenei and his regime know what

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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their goals are: Preserving their rule, expanding Iranian hegemony across the region, and harming the United States and Israel. That is what they want to do. That is why Iran exports violence, intimidation, and coercion. That is why Iran expands its ballistic missile program. That is why Iran uses proxies, such as the Houthis, Hezbollah, and other Shia militias, along with cyber attacks and other terrorism, to meddle in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, and beyond.

During the Obama administration, America drew down our forward-deployed military and conventional force structure. We chased after a flawed nuclear agreement. We reduced our commitment to our Sunni Arab partners. Iran noticed our reticence and saw an opportunity. It expanded its support of proxies and built strategies to exploit the unrest following civil wars in Yemen and Syria and the rampage of ISIL into Iraq.

If this meddling is to be confronted, if terrorist threats are to be countered, and if arms shipments are to be curtailed, the United States will need the help of our regional partners. One key partner is Saudi Arabia. We have shared common interests for decades. We have worked together to counter Iran, support the Free Syrian Army, and combat ISIL. Today the support the United States provides to the Saudi-led coalition, including aerial refueling over the Red Sea, contributes to greater precision in their air campaign and actually leads to fewer civilian casualties. So let me say that again: Withdrawing U.S. support would increase, not decrease, the risk of civilian casualties, and it would signal that we are not serious about containing Iran or its proxies. The Houthi presence would continue threatening shipping lanes in the Red Sea. Iranian missiles would continue threatening Riyadh, and Iran would be further emboldened. That is why the goal of this resolution is bad policy.

But my colleagues' resolution is also procedurally mistaken. The expedited authorities they wish to draw upon are meant for removing U.S. forces from actual participation in hostilities, but our support for the Saudi coalition has not caused us to enter active warfare or hostilities in Yemen.

The Department of Defense and Secretary Mattis have made clear that U.S. forces are not engaged in exchanges of fire with hostile forces. According to the Acting General Counsel of the Department of Defense: "The limited military and intelligence support that the United States is providing to the [KSA-led] coalition does not involve any introduction of U.S. forces into hostilities for purposes of the War Powers Resolution or of section 1013 of the Department of State Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1984 and 1985."

I support that assessment. The refueling of aircraft over the Red Sea does not equate to introducing U.S.

forces into hostilities nor does intelligence sharing. U.S. forces are not transporting Saudi forces into combat within Yemen by air, land, or sea. So the expedited procedures this resolution seeks to exploit simply do not apply here.

If Senators disagree with my assessment of the merits and oppose our support for the coalition, they have several legislative tools available to them. They could try to restrict funds through the appropriations process, amend the Arms Control Export Act for the licensing of defense services or the National Defense Authorization Act. Instead, we face a resolution which purports to require the President to withdraw U.S. forces from hostilities in Yemen—hostilities which we have not entered.

In a recent speech, Secretary Mattis explained:

History proves that nations with allies thrive. . . . Working by, with and through allies who carry their equitable share allows us to amass the greatest possible strength.

Imagine how challenging that would become if every advise-and-assist mission our forces undertake around the globe becomes subject to misapplication of the War Powers Resolution.

Thus, I oppose this resolution on grounds of policy and on grounds of procedure, and I urge our colleagues to join me this afternoon.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a final matter, later this week, the Senate will consider an omnibus spending package to address a number of critical priorities, from rebuilding America's infrastructure to fighting the opioid epidemic. In particular, building on the funding agreement passed in February, the measure will deliver the resources and certainty that America's military deserves. To be specific, this legislation will provide the largest year-on-year increase in defense funding in 15 years. After years of disproportionate cuts to our armed services, Congress has begun to provide adequate resources to put an end to the harmful decline in combat readiness, to fulfill our commitments to American families who sacrifice through service—many of them in my home State of Kentucky.

For our men and women in uniform, this means a well-deserved pay raise. For our veterans back home, it means increased oversight and modernization in the Veterans' Administration care system, thanks to a record level of VA funding. Our warriors on the frontline deserve to be trained to the highest standards, as do the units that replace them. Now our commanders can work to restore combat readiness—and not a moment too soon. Threats around the world are only growing in number and intensity. By strengthening our investment in missile defense, by funding new weapons systems, by scaling up

shipbuilding and aircraft procurement, and by investing in our all-volunteer servicemembers, we will send a strong message to our allies and our foes alike that America's military is regaining dominance.

This week, my colleagues will have the opportunity to follow through and address the pressing needs of the defense community. I hope each of them will join me in voting to swiftly pass the omnibus, thus giving our Armed Forces the resources they need and deserve.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, while the Senate conducts an important debate today on Yemen, we continue to negotiate an omnibus spending bill. It will follow through on the bipartisan budget deal we struck in February that, for the first time in a long time, will robustly fund our military and provide substantial investment in our middle class.

For too long, the arbitrary and pointless sequester caps held back Federal investment in jobs, scientific research, healthcare, and education. They also handicapped our military and prevented long-term planning at the Pentagon. The budget deal paved the way to do away with the harmful sequester caps, and now the omnibus will put the nail in the coffin.

Negotiations continue between the four leaders. A few sticking points remain but we are very close to signing off on legislation that both Houses will be able to take up and pass by the end of the week.

Mr. President, on the omni, I agree with the leader. Hopefully, we can come to an agreement and pass it this week. It has some things no one likes, and it has a lot of things not everybody likes but most people like. The basic structure of it was a fair compromise, and, hopefully, we can come to an agreement. Our staffs are working really hard.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS HURRICANE RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I would like to say a word about Puerto Rico. Today marks the sixth anniversary of Hurricane Maria's landfall on the island—the 6-month anniversary. We all know that the storm in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands was one of the most powerful and devastating ever to have struck those islands. There was terrible damage to schools, hospitals, water systems, roads, homes, and businesses.

For months and months, people didn't have electricity or clean water or cell service. Far too many people are still waiting for relief. There are 120,000 people without electricity. Hundreds of thousands continue to lose power on a temporary basis. Calculating the hours of lost electricity service, Puerto Rico has experienced the longest blackout in the history of the United States.

Tens of thousands are still awaiting permanent shelter, and 10,000 small businesses are closed.

Puerto Rico struggled with a severe debt and healthcare crisis before Hurricane Maria came to its shores. The damage wrought by the hurricane has set the island even further back, despite the valiant efforts of its people.

Congress has passed significant relief as part of the bipartisan budget agreement earlier this year. We have to make sure that the aid goes to where it needs to go and that we provide additional aid if it is required.

To the long-suffering citizens of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the thousands who have relocated to the mainland, we haven't forgotten you. We are here to help you. You are on our minds, and we are going to keep fighting to help you rebuild your homes, your communities, and your beloved islands.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, finally, on the tax bill, I just note that, once again, every day the more people learn about this tax bill, the more they don't like it. Stock buybacks continue at a hugely rapid rate. Aid to workers is much, much smaller, and the American people are learning this bill was of, by, and for the wealthiest Americans and the most powerful corporations. That is wrong. We welcome the debate on the tax bill because the more people learn about it, the more they don't like it.

Since the beginning of the tax debate, Republicans have insisted their bill is about cutting taxes for working Americans. Even though the bill would direct 83 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent, Republicans said workers were the focus. Even though they made corporate tax cuts permanent but let the individual tax cuts expire, they said the middle class would be the real winners.

Democrats warned that if you gave big corporations and the wealthiest Americans the lion's share of the tax cuts, those benefits wouldn't trickle down to employees and the middle class. We warned that corporations would do what they always do when they have profits—distribute them amongst themselves. Even though big companies like AT&T were already paying low effective corporate rates, they had been shedding jobs and investment for years even before the tax bill.

Unfortunately, our warnings proved prescient. Almost every day, we hear a new story about a corporation using

the savings from the Republican tax bill to purchase its own stock, called a stock buyback, which boosts the corporation's stock price to provide a reward for wealthy executives and shareholders.

Just this morning, the Kentucky-based chemical company Ashland announced a brand-new \$500 million share repurchasing program. And last night, the total amount of corporate share buybacks surpassed \$225 billion since the Republican tax bill became law.

Stock buybacks are a big reason why workers no longer see the benefits of record corporate profits. Why? Because instead of investing corporate profits in things that benefit the long-term health of the company and its workers—like higher wages, new equipment, research and development, or new hires—corporations spend the money on share buybacks.

In fact, stock buybacks were illegal until 1982, which is about the same time that wages stopped increasing with corporate profits.

Republicans dutifully remind us that companies are also handing out bonuses. Yes, a few. But let me highlight the disparity between buybacks and investment in workers: According to a recent analysis by Just Capital, only 6 percent of the capital allocated by companies from the tax bill's savings has gone to employees, while nearly 60 percent has gone to shareholders.

The theory behind the Republican tax bill was to allow corporations and the richest Americans to keep more of their already outrageous wealth, and maybe the benefits will trickle down to everyone else. As we are already seeing, that idea was a folly, and the American middle class will eventually pay the price.

Because of the enormous cost of the Republican tax bill, \$1.5 trillion, the deficit and debt will grow over the next several years and Republicans are already targeting Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare for cuts to make up the difference. So on top of a tax cut that mostly goes to the folks who need it the least, the Republican tax bill is an excuse for Republicans to come after Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

That is why the bill is so unpopular that Republicans have abandoned it in last two special elections in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

The American people are already waking up to the reality that the Republican tax bill was not the middle-class miracle the Republicans promised, and in November, they will have the chance to move America in a dramatically different direction by voting for a party that actually wants to focus tax relief on working America, not corporate America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

ALLOW STATES AND VICTIMS TO FIGHT ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1865, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 339, H.R. 1865, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of such Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sexual exploitation of children or sex trafficking, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

S.J. RES. 54—MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, pursuant to section 1013 of the Department of State Authorization Act, fiscal years 1984 and 1985, and in accordance with the provisions of section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976, I make a motion to discharge S.J. Res. 54 from the Committee on Foreign Relations.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there is 4 hours of debate on the motion, equally divided between the proponents and the opponents.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states in no uncertain terms that "Congress shall have power to . . . declare war."

Let me repeat it. Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states it is Congress that has the power to declare war.

The Founding Fathers gave the power to authorize military conflicts to Congress, the branch most accountable—not to the President but to Congress—and that is the issue we are going to be debating today.

For far too long, Congress, under Democratic and Republican administrations, has abdicated its constitutional role in authorizing war. The time is long overdue for Congress to reassert that constitutional authority, and that is what today is about.

That is why I and 14 cosponsors of this resolution—Senators LEE, MURPHY, WARREN, BOOKER, DURBIN, LEAHY,

MARKEY, FEINSTEIN, WYDEN, MERKLEY, BLUMENTHAL, GILLIBRAND, SCHATZ, and BALDWIN—that is what we are doing with S.J. Res. 54.

What we are saying is, if Congress wants to go to war in Yemen or anyplace else, vote to go to war. That is your constitutional responsibility. Stop abdicating that responsibility to a President, whether it is a Republican President or, as in the past, Democratic Presidents.

I expect that colleagues today will be arguing about what the word “hostilities” means within the context of the 1973 War Powers Resolution. What does the word “hostilities” mean? Some will argue that American troops are not out there shooting and getting shot at, not exchanging gunfire with their enemies, and that we are not really engaged in the horrifically destructive Saudi-led war in Yemen. That is what some will argue on the floor today—that we are really not engaged in hostilities; we are not exchanging fire.

Well, please tell that to the people of Yemen whose homes and lives are being destroyed by weapons marked “Made in the USA” and dropped by planes being refueled by the U.S. military on targets chosen with U.S. assistance. Only in the narrowest, most legalistic terms can anyone argue that the United States is not actively involved in hostilities alongside Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

Let me take a minute to tell my colleagues what is happening in Yemen right now because a lot of people don’t know. It is not something that is on the front pages of the newspapers or covered terribly much on television.

Right now, in a very poor nation of 27 million people—that is the nation of Yemen—in November of last year, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator told us that Yemen was on the brink of “the largest famine the world has seen for many decades.” That is from the United Nations. So far, in this country of 27 million people—this very poor country—over 10,000 civilians have been killed and 40,000 civilians have been wounded. Over 3 million people in Yemen, in a nation of 27 million, have been displaced—driven from their homes. Fifteen million people lack access to clean water and sanitation because water treatment plants have been destroyed. More than 20 million people in Yemen—over two-thirds of the population of that country—need some kind of humanitarian support, with nearly 10 million in acute need of assistance. More than 1 million suspected cholera cases have been reported, representing potentially the worst cholera outbreak in world history. That is what is going on in Yemen today as a result of the Saudi-led war there.

Here is the bottom line: If the President of the United States or Members of Congress believe that support for this war is in the U.S. interests—and I think some do—if you think that the

United States right now, for our own interests, should be involved in the civil war in Yemen, being led by Saudi Arabia, then Members of the U.S. Senate should have the courage to vote for U.S. participation in that war. It is nothing more complicated than that.

If you want to come to the floor of the Senate and make the case as to why you think it is good public policy for us to be involved in the civil war in Yemen, come to the floor and oppose our resolution, but what I hope very much that we will not see today is the tabling of this motion and the refusal by Members of the Senate to vote up or down as to whether we wish to continue aiding Saudi Arabia in this humanitarian disaster.

If you believe, as I do, that we should not get sucked into this civil war, which has already caused so much human suffering, please vote against tabling the motion to discharge and vote with us on final passage. If you believe the United States should continue to assist Saudi Arabia in this war, I urge you to have the courage to tell your constituents that is your decision and why you have made that decision when you vote against final passage. In other words, if you support the war, have the courage to vote for it; if you don’t, support the resolution Senator LEE, Senator MURPHY, and I have introduced.

Let me give my colleagues at least two reasons why Congress must reassert its constitutional authority over the issue of war and why we cannot continue to abdicate that responsibility to the President, and those have everything to do with the two most significant foreign policy disasters in the modern history of the United States—the war in Iraq and the war in Vietnam. In both of these cases, Congress sat back and failed to ask the hard questions as two administrations—one Republican, one Democratic—led us into conflicts with disastrous consequences.

Interestingly, today is a historically significant day for us to debate this resolution. Fifteen years ago today, on March 20, 2003, the war in Iraq began, and the bombs started falling in Baghdad—15 years ago today. I was one of those who opposed the Iraq war in the beginning, and today it is now broadly acknowledged that the war—that war—was a foreign policy blunder of enormous magnitude. That war created a cascade of instability around the region that we are still dealing with today in Syria and elsewhere and will be for many years to come. Indeed, had it not been for the war in Iraq, ISIS would almost certainly not exist.

That war deepened hostilities between Sunni and Shia communities in Iraq and elsewhere. It exacerbated a regional conflict for power between Saudi Arabia and Iran and their proxies in places like Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, and it undermined American diplomatic efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The devastation experienced by Iraq’s civilians was enormous. A recent academic study by U.S., Canadian, and Iraqi researchers found that over 400,000 Iraqi civilians—nearly half a million people—were killed directly or indirectly as a consequence of that war.

That war led to the displacement of nearly 5 million people, both inside and outside Iraq, putting great stress on the ability of surrounding countries to deal with these refugee flows.

We have also seen this more recently in Europe as the large numbers of people fleeing the Syrian war have generated a backlash in European countries, giving rise to anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments.

The war in Iraq led to the deaths—to the deaths—of some 4,400 American troops and the wounding, physical and emotional, of tens of thousands of others, not to mention the pain inflicted on family members. By the way, that war in Iraq cost us trillions of dollars—money that could have been spent on healthcare, education, infrastructure, and environmental protection.

The Iraq war, like so many other military conflicts, had unintended consequences. It ended up making us less safe, not more safe.

It must be said that the Bush administration and the President lied when he told the American people: “[Saddam’s] regime is seeking a nuclear bomb, and with fissile material could build one within a year.” That was not true.

Vice President Dick Cheney lied when he told us:

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.

Dick Cheney—not true.

No one disagrees that Saddam Hussein was a brutal, murderous dictator, but it is now known he had nothing to do with 9/11. The Bush administration lied to the American people. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. It was not connected to 9/11.

The American people were misled by the Bush administration into believing that the Iraq war was necessary to prevent another 9/11, and Congress did not challenge them on those claims in a way that Congress should have—with disastrous consequences.

That was a Republican administration. Now let me tell you about a Democratic administration where, once again, Congress refused to assert its constitutional responsibility.

Let us go back to 1964, to a conflict that began under similarly false premises. President Lyndon Johnson cited an attack on a U.S. ship in the Gulf of Tonkin as a pretext for escalating the U.S. intervention in Vietnam and sending more and more and more troops into that quagmire.

But we now know from declassified recordings that Johnson himself doubted that the USS *Maddox* had come

under fire on August 4, 1964. As we all know, that alleged attack was used to push for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution authorizing Johnson to escalate U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, and we now know that the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, misled Congress and the public in order to generate support for that resolution.

You don't have to believe me. This is what LCDR Pat Paterson wrote in a paper for the U.S. Naval Institute: "The evidence suggests a disturbing and deliberate attempt by Secretary of Defense McNamara to distort the evidence and mislead Congress."

Paterson, interestingly enough, also quotes another author who wrote:

To enhance his chances for election, [Johnson] and McNamara deceived the American people and Congress about events and the nature of the American commitment in Vietnam. They used a questionable report of a North Vietnamese attack on American naval vessels to justify the president's policy to the electorate and to defuse Republican senator and presidential candidate Barry Goldwater's charges that Lyndon Johnson was irresolute and "soft" in the foreign policy arena.

Interestingly enough, that author is H.R. McMaster, President Trump's current National Security Advisor.

Lyndon Johnson's administration misled both Congress and the American people into that war, just as the Bush administration misled us into the war in Iraq, and what disasters both of those wars were. The war in Vietnam nearly destroyed an entire generation of young people. Almost 60,000 died in that war, and God knows how many came back wounded in body and in spirit. It almost destroyed an entire generation. Yet Congress abdicated its responsibility in Vietnam, as it did in Iraq.

The truth about Yemen is that U.S. forces have been actively engaged in support of the Saudi coalition in this war, providing intelligence and aerial refueling of planes whose bombs have killed thousands of people and made this humanitarian crisis far worse. U.S. involvement in the Yemen war has also proved counterproductive to the effort against al-Qaida's affiliates. The State Department's "Country Reports on Terrorism 2016" found that the conflict between Saudi-led forces and the Houthi insurgents has helped al-Qaida's and ISIS's Yemen branch to "deepen their inroads across much of the country." In other words, as we see again, when there is chaos, when there is mass confusion, ISIS and their allies are able to jump in.

Furthermore, while Iran's support for Houthi insurgents is of serious concern for all of us, the truth is that this war has increased, not decreased, the opportunities for Iranian interference.

The Trump administration has tried to justify our involvement in the Yemen war as necessary to push back on Iran. Well, another administration told us that invading Iraq was necessary to confront al-Qaida, and another told us that the Vietnam war was

necessary to contain Communists. None of that turned out to be true.

The Congress, at those times, should have asked the hard questions, which they didn't ask. The Congress should have taken its constitutional role seriously and should have done what the Constitution demands that it do, and that is what my cosponsors and I are doing today.

I see my colleague Senator LEE here. He has been very active in standing up for the Constitution on this issue, and I will yield to him in a minute. But here is the bottom line—and it is not a complicated line; the Constitution is clear: The U.S. Congress decides whether we go to war. There is no question in my mind that by aiding Saudi Arabia in the way that we are doing, we are assisting in war. We are in a conflict.

If Members of the Senate think that conflict makes sense and is good public policy for the United States of America, vote down our resolution. If you agree with Senator LEE and me that it is a bad idea, support us. But what I would urge in the strongest possible terms is that Members of the Senate have to end the abdication of our constitutional responsibility. Accept it; vote yes or vote no. Do not vote to table this resolution and duck the constitutional responsibility that we have.

I yield the floor to my colleague, Senator MIKE LEE.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the issue we are confronting today is one that deals with the separation of powers outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

Our system of government was set up in such a way as to protect the people from the dangers associated with the excessive accumulation of power in the hands of a few. We knew from our experience under British rule that bad things happen, especially at a national level, when too few people exercise too much of the power. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the war power. In fact, much of the Revolutionary struggle that led to the creation of our Nation resulted from wartime activities undertaken by a monarch thousands of miles and an ocean away. It is important today that we remember those same concerns and the constraints placed in our Constitution as we run our government nearly 2½ centuries later.

I am happy to be here with my colleague, Senator SANDERS, to file a discharge motion for our resolution, S.J. Res. 54.

Whether you are present in the Chamber today, physically with us, or whether you are tuning in at home, I hope you will listen closely so that we can fill you in on the unauthorized Middle East war that your government—the government of the United States of America—is supporting and actively participating in as a cobelligerent.

This war in Yemen has killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians—

human beings, lest we forget—each one of them possessing innate, immeasurable worth and dignity. This war has created refugees, orphans, widows; it has cost millions of dollars; and, believe it or not, at the end of the day, it actually has, quite arguably, undermined our fight against terrorist threats such as ISIS. I will expand on these unfortunate facts in a moment, but for now, let's just focus on one thing. Our military's involvement in Yemen has not been authorized by Congress as required by the Constitution.

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states that the Congress shall have the power to declare war—Congress, not the President, not the Pentagon, not someone else within the executive branch of government, but Congress. Yet in 2015, then-President Obama initiated our military involvement in Yemen and did so without authorization from Congress.

The current administration has continued Obama's war. Senator SANDERS, Senator MURPHY, our cosponsors, and I are now giving Congress a chance to fix this error by debating and voting on our Nation's continued involvement in this unauthorized, illegal war in Yemen.

If, as our opponents claim, this war is necessary, then surely they can defend that argument before this body and before the House of Representatives and, ultimately, secure authorization from Congress, just as the Constitution demands under article I, section 8. But if, on the other hand, they cannot defend this war and they cannot persuade a majority of the Members of this body and a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives that this is a war that needs to be fought, then it needs to end. Let's have an honest reckoning about this war today.

Before this debate gets underway in earnest, there are a few points that I would like to clarify.

First, let's talk about Iran for just a moment. Yes, the Houthis did fire on a U.S. Navy vessel. This only reinforces the fact that Yemenis view the United States as a participant in this war, regardless of whether or not Congress wants to acknowledge that participation or approve it, as the Constitution requires. But overall, there are conflicting reports about the extent of Iranian support for the Houthi rebels.

What we do know is this: The Houthis are a regional rebel group that does not itself threaten the United States. While the Houthis are no friends of ours, neither are they a serious threat to American national security. The longer we fight against them, the more reason we give them to hate America and embrace the opportunists who are our true enemy in the region—Iran. And the more we prolong activities that destabilize the region, the longer we harm our own interests in terms of trade and broader regional security.

The bottom line is this: We are spending a great deal of time and treasure to defeat a regional rebel group

with no desire to attack the homeland and unclear ties to Iran. Iran's influence is much clearer in other parts of the Middle East with other groups—for example, with the murderous terrorist group, Hezbollah.

If we want to counter Iran, let's have that debate in Congress and vote to equip this administration with the necessary authorization to use our vast and fearsome military resources to defeat its proxies—not to create new proxies by turning rebel groups against us.

Let's talk about ISIS for a moment. Our resolution would not impede the military's ability to fight terror groups, like ISIS, inside Yemen. The resolution itself requires the removal of U.S. forces from hostilities in Yemen, except—except, and I quote—“United States Armed Forces engaged in operations directed at Al Qaeda or associated forces.” That is a direct quote from the text of the resolution itself. It should put to rest the notion that this would somehow jeopardize our ability to fight terrorists.

The Pentagon and the executive branch have long insisted that they have adequate authority under the authorization for the use of military force enacted in 2001—adequate authority under the 2001 AUMF to fight against ISIS.

If those at the Pentagon and elsewhere in the executive branch or any of my colleagues now claim that this resolution specifically needs to exempt operations against ISIS, then what are we to make of their previous confidence in the 2001 AUMF? Have they suddenly lost faith in that document overnight or are they merely using this argument as a pretense to oppose our resolution?

I personally believe that the 2001 AUMF has been stretched too far. Our resolution, however, is completely agnostic on this point. It is entirely agnostic about whether counterterror operations against al-Qaida and ISIS can proceed in the wake of the resolution. Our resolution is specific, and our resolution relates specifically to the Houthis. Nothing in this bill may be interpreted as an AUMF.

Lastly, with regard to Saudi Arabia and the ongoing visit of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman in Washington, DC, at the moment, I have been deeply concerned about our illegal war in Yemen since its inception and have taken steps to end our involvement in that war. I presented questions to our combatant commanders on the topic, just as I have for other unauthorized operations in the past. I had hoped the new administration might take prompt action to end our unauthorized activities in Yemen. Sadly, that has not occurred.

Last fall, after countless missed opportunities and some broken assurances, my colleagues and I decided it was time to take matters into our own hands. By “matters,” I mean those matters that are specifically already in

our hands, those matters that are already granted to the Congress and to no other branch of government.

There may be some short-term impact on the U.S.-Saudi relationship, but overall the Crown Prince should understand that this protracted and clearly nonconclusive war only hurts his government's stability and legitimacy. He, too, should want a quick end to this conflict. Saudi Arabia is an indispensable partner in the region, without which the United States would be less successful. But the Saudis themselves are at an inflection point within their own government. Working with the United States should be a goal for the Crown Prince and should be a credibility-lending endeavor.

The resolution before you is the product of years of effort. It was not timed in any way, shape, or form to coincide with the Crown Prince's visit. It was drafted with one thing in mind, which is to make sure that before we put U.S. blood and treasure on the line, before we put the sons and daughters of the American people who have served in harm's way into an area in which hostilities are ongoing, to get involved in combat capacities in an area where conflict is brewing, we owe it to them, we owe it to their parents, we owe it to their families, and we owe it to ourselves, having taken an oath to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, to do it the right way—not just because the Constitution requires that but also because of the reasons the Constitution requires that.

It makes sense that when we are doing something that has a greater capacity to impact our government, our standing in the world, our own security, and the lives of those who were sworn to protect us, we do it in the right way, not just through the appropriate branch of government but through the appropriate branch of government in part because that is the only place where an open, honest, public debate can occur.

It is one thing to make a decision somewhere within the military chain of command on whether to undertake a particular action, but this is one of the reasons why, in order to declare war, in order to get us involved in a war in the first place, it requires action by Congress, because this is the branch of the Federal Government most accountable to the people at the most regular intervals.

Over the course of many decades, under the leadership of Congresses and White Houses of every conceivable partisan combination, we have seen a gradual shift of power in a number of areas—including regulatory policy, trade policy, and the exercise of the war power—over to the executive branch of government. When we don't exercise that power, it starts to atrophy; the Constitution means less, and it is less able to protect the American people. That is why this resolution matters. That is why I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. Let's do this the right way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, may I ask my colleague from Utah a very simple question? Whether or not he agrees with me that we are talking about two separate issues.

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

Mr. SANDERS. It seems to me we are talking about two separate issues, one of which is really a no-brainer. The no-brainer is that the Constitution is very clear that it is the Congress, not the President, that determines whether we go to war; that we are currently in an unauthorized war in Yemen; and that the first vote—if there is an attempt to table this, that would be absolutely unacceptable because we would be abdicating our decisionmaking. And then the second vote is the vote on whether we think it is a good idea to be in Yemen.

Would the Senator agree with me that at least on the motion to table, every Member of the Senate should allow us to go forward and vote against tabling so that people in the Senate accept their constitutional responsibility to vote yes or no on the war in Yemen?

Mr. LEE. I would certainly agree that the answer is yes in response to that question. It is Congress that gets to decide whether we go to war; it is not the executive branch.

For that very same reason, when we have brought up this resolution calling into question whether we have authorized that war and whether we should continue in the absence of an authorization for that war—if we are asked to table that, that very request amounts to a request for abdication of our constitutional responsibility.

A favorite song of mine called “Freewill” by the band Rush came out several decades ago, and it says: “If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice.”

If we choose in this moment to table this resolution, we are making a choice to be willfully blind to the exercise of a power that belongs to us, to allow someone else to exercise it without proper authority. That is wrong. That cannot happen, not on our watch.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me concur with what Senator LEE just said. There may be disagreements about the wisdom of being allied with Saudi Arabia on the war in Yemen. There will be honest disagreements about that. But there cannot be and there must not be an abdication of constitutional responsibility in terms of making that decision.

If you think that U.S. participation in the war in Yemen is a good idea, you can vote against our resolution. If you agree with us that it is a bad idea, support our resolution. But simply to abdicate your responsibility on this issue would be absolutely irresponsible.

I hope we have virtually unanimous support in voting against the effort to table. Then let's get into the debate about the wisdom of the war and vote it up or down. Needless to say, I hope

the Members support our resolution. Let's at least have that vote and not abdicate our responsibility.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, some of our colleagues from time to time may ask us how we would define the term "hostilities" and what the United States might be doing that triggers that definition. I welcome that discussion. It is important to note that the U.S. Code is somewhat vague on that question, defining "hostilities" broadly to mean any conflict subject to the laws of war. I don't necessarily view that broad definition as problematic. It is something that allows Congress to assess the unique circumstances in each instance on specific grounds at each point in time.

Our involvement in war and in conflict has greatly changed over the years, and it will continue to change as the nature of international relations changes and as the technology we use in war changes and develops. It doesn't mean we are not involved in hostilities. I welcome further discussion on this matter.

Let's look at the facts of our involvement in Yemen today. Since 2015, U.S. forces have aided the Saudi coalition with midair refueling and target selection assistance, or, as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said in December 2017, our military is helping the Saudis "make certain [they] hit the right thing." In other words, we are helping a foreign power bomb its adversaries in multiple ways. If that doesn't include aid and amount to and itself constitute hostilities, then such words have lost their meaning.

There are those within the executive branch of government who would define the term "hostilities" so narrowly that it would apply only when our armed services personnel are on the ground firing upon or being fired upon by an enemy force. It is understandable in some respects that they would want to define it that way because if they define it that way, that puts the executive in power.

That is one of the reasons we have to remember that there is a natural tension built into our constitutional structure to make sure that not all power is concentrated in any one branch of government. It is one of the reasons Alexander Hamilton pointed out in Federalist No. 69 that war power would not be exercised by the Executive in our system of government. In this instance, as in many others, the Executive in our system of government would differ from the monarch under the old system, the one that was based in London. The King had the power to take Great Britain to war. The King didn't have to seek a declaration of war from Parliament; the King could act in and of himself to decide when to take us to war. It is one of the reasons why it matters here.

When we see the definition of "hostilities" narrowed to the point that it

very often will not exist given the way we engage in hostilities today, given modern technologies that frequently allow us to engage in acts that anyone would have to acknowledge amount to combat, amount to conflict, amount to hostilities, they can still explain it away as something the Executive can do independently of Congress.

This resolution will not do anything, according to some, because we are not engaged in hostilities in Yemen. I am building upon this argument that is based upon a very narrow, cramped, distorted interpretation of the word "hostilities."

When people ask what we think the resolution would do if it were to pass—first of all, it is clear that we are engaged in hostilities because when we are involved as a cobelligerent, involved in midair refueling in combat flights, when we are identifying targets for the Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen against the Houthis, those are combat operations, and those are clearly hostilities. But even if we were to suppose that U.S. activities in Yemen somehow did not constitute hostilities according to the War Powers Resolution, the text of our resolution is crystal clear about what constitutes "hostilities" for its purpose; namely, "aerial targeting assistance, intelligence sharing, and mid-flight aerial refueling." Our resolution would end those very specific activities against the Houthis in Yemen—nothing more and nothing less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I speak only for myself on this issue and will tell you why I am so motivated about this resolution.

If we think back on the modern history of our country and if we think of the two most significant foreign policy decisions—the war in Vietnam and the war in Iraq and the unbelievable unintended consequences that those two destructive wars had—what we conclude is that in both of those wars—one under a Democratic President and one under a Republican President—the Congress abdicated its responsibility. It did not ask the right questions. In both instances, we got into those terrible wars based on lies. The Johnson administration lied as to why we should get involved in the war in Vietnam, and the Bush administration lied as to why we should get involved in the war in Iraq.

It just seems to me that if nothing else, based on those two examples of what the war in Vietnam did and what the war in Iraq did, Congress has to take a deep breath and understand that the people who wrote the Constitution were not fools when they said it must be the elected people who are closest to the constituents who have to debate these issues and who know that decisions being made will result in the loss of lives of the people in their own States, and we have abdicated that responsibility.

No one can predict whether the decisions made by Congress are going to be good decisions with regard to war and peace, whether we are going to do better than Presidents did. I don't know. At the very least, we have to accept our responsibility and not simply take the word of Presidents who in the two most recent, significant wars have lied to the American people.

Once again, I know there may be differences of opinion regarding the wisdom of involvement by the United States in the war in Yemen. If you think it is a good idea, vote against our resolution. There should be no difference of opinion about accepting our responsibility under the Constitution and voting on whether it is a good idea.

I yield to the Senator from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Senator SANDERS mentioned some previous wars and how this may or may not relate to those previous wars. One of the other questions we get from time to time is also a related question: How does this impact or influence operations somewhere else in the world where the United States is engaged? Would the passage of this resolution mean that every other type of operation anywhere else in the world would have to stop too? What about our global counterterrorism activities? We sometimes get those questions.

The main reason we drafted this resolution was to bring our activities in Yemen into line with our laws as expressed in the Constitution. So if we are fighting unauthorized wars in other places around the globe, then those wars need to be authorized by Congress, or else they would need to end. Importantly, however, this resolution does not itself make law or set precedent for other operations. This resolution applies just to this conflict in Yemen against the Houthis. Each conflict or operation ought to be evaluated on its own merits and measured against our national interest and any existing authorizations for the use of military force. We can't evaluate this resolution as being something that requires us to swallow the entire elephant at once. This is just focusing on one issue in one part of the world. We need not take any kind of a "sky is falling" approach that will say this will immediately jeopardize everything else we are doing in any and every other part of the world.

Global counterterror operations under title 10 or title 50 involve U.S. action but arise in different ways, and any other activity that we undertake or authority that we cite in introducing our armed service personnel into hostilities cannot serve as a substitute for congressional action as contemplated by the Constitution. The power to declare war belongs to Congress and not to the Executive. Just because government breaks the rules often—and sometimes with impunity—it does not mean it has the right to

break the rules, nor does it mean, certainly, that we shouldn't call out rule-breaking when we see it going on, but that is a debate for another day.

The resolution before us today is specific to our activities against the Houthis in Yemen. It does not authorize or deauthorize military force in any other part of the globe or against any other foe. In fact, the resolution specifies that it does not interfere with existing operations against al-Qaida and its affiliates. Our resolution is narrowly tailored to end our efforts to assist forces that are fighting against the Houthis. It is deliberately narrow in order to address a black-and-white situation that is clearly not covered by any existing authorization for the use of military force. Counterterrorism operations that are supported by the 2001 AUMF and other legitimate authorizations would not be affected by this resolution.

I yield to Senator MURPHY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am grateful to join for a few moments the cosponsors of this resolution—Senator LEE and Senator SANDERS.

It is important to pick up on what Senator LEE was just putting down—the notion that this is a limited resolution that speaks to our participation in an unauthorized, illegal partnership with the Saudis to bomb the country of Yemen. It does not affect our partnership with Saudi Arabia and others in the gulf region to continue to confront terror, to continue to confront al-Qaida—a specific carve-out in this legislation that allows for 2001 AUMF authorized activities to go forward.

It is also important to note that if you care about the priority of taking on al-Qaida and taking on ISIS in the region, then you should support debating our resolution because all of the evidence suggests that the continuation of this civil war inside Yemen is making ISIS and AQAP, which is the arm of al-Qaida that has the clearest intentions of attacking the homeland, both more powerful. The AQAP controls much more territory inside Yemen than it did in the beginning of this civil war.

If you take the time to meet with Yemeni-Americans, they will tell you that inside Yemen, this bombing campaign is not perceived as a Saudi bombing campaign; it is perceived as a U.S.-Saudi bombing campaign. What we are doing is radicalizing the Yemeni people against the United States. Add to this the new information that suggests that some of our partners in the coalition, although not directly working with al-Qaida, are starting to arm some very unsavory Salafi militias inside Yemen that are filled with the types of people—the types of extremist individuals—who could take the training they have received from the coalitions and the weapons they have received from the coalitions and easily turn against the United States.

If you care about the mission against terrorism, then you should support debating our resolution.

Just to recap the reasons we are here today, we need to have a debate on the lack of authorization for military force because it is time for Congress to step up and do our constitutional duty.

The administration wrote in its letter to us that we do not have the authority as the U.S. Congress to weigh in on military activity that is waged by the administration unless there are two armies firing at each other on the ground in an area of conflict. That is the administration's definition of "hostilities," and admittedly that is a definition that has been used by Democrats and Republicans. This is not exclusive to the Trump administration. The problem with that is that it would allow for the United States, through Executive decision only, to wage an air campaign against a country that wipes it out without there being any say from the U.S. Congress.

Clearly, what is happening in Yemen today meets the definition of "hostilities." We have shown pictures on this floor before of entire cities that have been wiped out. More than 10,000 civilians have been killed in the largest outbreak of cholera in the history of the world in terms of what we have recorded. Those are hostilities, and the United States is clearly engaging in those hostilities because we are helping with targeting and refueling the planes that are supplying the munitions. If we cede to unlimited Executive authority with respect to this engagement, there will be no end to that.

Lastly, let me speak to what is happening on the ground. There is zero evidence that U.S. participation in this coalition has made things better. Civilian casualties are not getting better. The day after Christmas, over 60 civilians were killed in a series of airstrikes. Reports are that last month, the Saudis engaged once again in something called double tapping, by which they targeted an area in which civilians lived, waited for the emergency responders to arrive, and then hit again—something that is not allowed by international humanitarian law. The humanitarian catastrophe itself is getting worse, not better.

Maybe most important is that the battle lines inside Yemen are not changing. The Saudis have been telling us for years: Stick with us. If you keep on helping us bomb the Yemeni people, we will win this war. We will get back control of Hudayda and of Sana'a.

That is not happening. At the beginning of this war, the Houthis controlled about 70 percent of the population inside Yemen. Today, the Houthis control about 70 percent of the population inside Yemen. If we continue to support this bombing campaign, nothing will change except that more people will die, except that more civilians will be hit by the bombs we help to drop, except that al-Qaida will continue to control big portions of that country.

While Senator LEE notes that this resolution is actually not on the merits of our engagement there and that it is whether we have the legal justification to be there, let's admit that if you do consider the merits, other than backing the play of our historic ally, there is nothing to suggest that our participation there is making things better rather than worse.

I yield to Senator SANDERS.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me ask my friend from Connecticut the same question I asked Senator LEE, and that is whether he agrees with me that we are really dealing with two separate issues here.

The first issue is really, in a sense, a no-brainer. It is whether the Congress or, in this case, the Senate of the United States accepts its constitutional responsibility on issues of war. We are now engaged in a war in Yemen with Saudi Arabia. The Constitution is very clear in article I, section 8 that it is the Congress that determines whether this country goes to war.

I believe what will happen in a few hours is that a motion to table will come up. Would you agree with me that it would be an act of cowardice, in a sense, an irresponsibility, an abdication of congressional responsibility, for somebody to vote to table that resolution?

Mr. MURPHY. By voting to table the consideration of this resolution, you are voting to stop a debate, a conversation, from happening in the Senate about whether proper authorization exists.

Let's be honest about what this first vote is. This first vote is, do we want to talk about whether there is authorization to perpetuate this war? By voting to stop debate, by voting to table this motion and refrain from proceeding to a conversation about this topic, we are, in a very clear way, signaling to the administration and to the American public that we are not interested in exercising our article I authority on the issue of war-making.

Mr. SANDERS. In other words, no matter what one's view may be about the wisdom of the war, to vote to table is to abdicate our constitutional responsibility?

Mr. MURPHY. It sends a very clear signal to the administration that we are not interested in even having a debate here about complicated questions of legal authority for serious military engagements overseas.

Mr. SANDERS. All right. Let me just concur with Senator MURPHY.

If you think it is a good idea for the United States to be involved in the war in Yemen with Saudi Arabia, you can vote against our resolution. Yet I can think of no reason at all as to why any Member of Congress would vote to table this resolution and prevent that discussion, and I would hope that we would have strong support against any motion to table and allow that debate to go forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

STOP ENABLING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this week we are discussing, among other topics, the sad fact of sex trafficking online. The reason is because yesterday we voted to advance a piece of legislation called SESTA, or the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. The purpose of this legislation is crystal clear. We want to put an end to this abominable practice, and we want to stop shielding or protecting those web platforms that promote it.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation. Over the past year, like many of my colleagues, I met with law enforcement and victims' rights groups across the country who talk about this as a continuing problem. I met with technology providers who want to end the practice but want to make sure they maintain their independence from Federal regulation writ large. I have been in regular contact with my colleagues over at the House to make sure this bill is considered and passed in a timely fashion. I think it is fair to characterize the negotiations as delicate.

A small group of Senators, including our colleague JOHN MCCAIN, the senior Senator from Arizona, wanted to make sure that everyone understood what this bill does and what it does not do. What it does do is to protect our children. It provides justice to victims, and it makes sure that Federal laws don't protect those who profit from sex trafficking online. What it does not do is somehow to stymie free speech. It does not restrict web platforms from publishing objectionable content.

For example, under the Communications Decency Act, now websites have to screen for child pornography. That is one of the explicit exceptions to the Communications Decency Act, which basically provides immunity to these web platforms from liability. What we are doing is adding to that human trafficking, and it is appropriate that we do so.

This does not discourage websites that are already taking steps to proactively remove improper conduct and police their own networks. I would say to those who do: Keep up the good work.

Today the internet and other forms of technology have made certain forms of predatory behavior easier to engage in. This bill addresses this development head-on. It would allow sex trafficking victims to have their day in court by eliminating Federal liability protections for technology providers who knowingly facilitate online sex trafficking. It would allow State and local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute providers that violate Federal sex trafficking laws.

This bill was introduced last summer after a 2-year inquiry by the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which produced a report. That report found that not only had sex trafficking run rampant in certain online spaces but also that some websites had tried to cover it up.

Well, no longer. Last fall, the Senate Commerce Committee unanimously approved SESTA, the bill on the floor that the House passed last month. Now it is our turn.

Senator PORTMAN, the junior Senator from Ohio, has been this bill's greatest champion since its inception. I believe he was one of the members of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which produced the report I mentioned. He has been involved in this issue for a long time. He has been informing us time and again of the ways in which sex trafficking has morphed from the street corner to the smartphone.

In the committee's investigation, one website in particular came up time and again, and the name is no stranger to the Senate or the Congress. It is backpage, a notorious publication now online that is responsible for three-quarters of all child trafficking reports.

It eventually became clear that even though that site was actually helping to sell young women for sex, and even the victims and their families were suing backpage, none of the lawsuits were successful because of what some people are coming to believe is an outdated immunity protection for technology providers under the Communications Decency Act, which I mentioned a moment ago.

The original law was intended to protect free speech online, which is important. I am a firm believer in the First Amendment, as I know we all are, but free speech is no license to engage in criminal activity.

At last count, 67 Senators have joined our effort as cosponsors. We are joined in support of SESTA by anti-human-trafficking advocates, law enforcement, State attorneys general, the civil rights community, faith-based groups, and tech companies like Facebook and Oracle.

Our colleague from Oregon has introduced two amendments, which I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose. The first would appropriate new money for the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute website operators that criminally facilitate sex trafficking. The problem is that this would violate the blue slip rule and subject the bill to a point of order. In other words, there are constitutional issues raised about where that sort of legislation would originate. It has to originate in the House. It would almost certainly guarantee the demise of this legislation. In other words, it is a poison pill. It is not that we will not support funding to prosecute traffickers. In fact, we will provide ample funding through the Department of Justice later this week. It is that those funds should be appropriated through the usual process and then handed over to State and local officials who can use them effectively.

The second amendment that will be offered is the "Bad Samaritan" amendment. This would prevent websites from being held accountable for any ef-

forts to moderate content, even when those efforts are taken in bad faith or obviously intended to miss their mark and instead protect sex traffickers. In some States courts have found that websites like backpage might be held liable when they selectively edit sex trafficking ads to make them more difficult to be identified by law enforcement.

The "Bad Samaritan" amendment could protect platforms like backpage.com from liability for bad-faith editing practices, leaving victims with even less of a recourse than they have today. Simply put, it could eviscerate the steps we are taking in SESTA. I am confident that our colleague does not intend this result, but that would be the consequence of adopting either one of those amendments.

So I hope my colleagues will join me in voting in favor of SESTA this week and opposing these two amendments. That is the best way we can ensure that these websites and online platforms can be held accountable for facilitating sex trafficking.

Mr. President, later today the Senate will be voting on a privileged resolution that I spoke on yesterday, offered by three of our colleagues. Simply put, it would direct the President to cut off all U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Now, some people may be looking at a world map to figure out where Yemen is and what the import of this conflict may be, but suffice it to say that this is another proxy war being conducted against the United States and its allies by Iran, now in Yemen, just to the south of Saudi Arabia, our ally.

So as to the motion to table, I was interested to hear my friends from Connecticut and Vermont suggesting that the motion to table would stop debate. Well, that is not exactly true. What it will do is to facilitate full debate and full consideration of the merits of the underlying resolution, starting with the Foreign Relations Committee. It is very unusual for resolutions like this to come immediately to the floor, where 100 Senators vote on it, because, frankly, not all of us are as up to speed on the details of this or what the unintended impact might be as the Foreign Relations Committee that is set up for the purpose of examining legislation with regard to our international relationships in matters like this.

This is an important and timely matter, as high-level Saudi officials are in Washington this week. The Crown Prince is scheduled to meet with President Trump today. I met with him this morning, along with other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Saudi Arabia is an important partner in our counterterrorism operations and as a counterpoint to Iran. In Yemen, we see both terrorist operations—that is, ISIS and al-Qaida—and Iran actively deploying missiles and using Yemen as

a launching pad to shoot missiles into Saudi Arabia.

I mentioned that this support for our Saudi coalition is narrowly circumscribed. It takes the form of intelligence sharing, military advice, and logistical support, including air-to-air refueling. This is part of a plan that started under the Obama administration and now has continued under the Trump administration not to put American troops on the ground—boots on the ground, as we frequently refer to it—but rather to facilitate for our allies by working by, with, and through those allies to address the threat not only to them but ultimately to the United States and to peace in the region.

The role we play in Yemen is clearly a noncombat support role, and it is meant to minimize civilian casualties by improving the processes and procedures and increasing compliance with the international law of armed conflict. In other words, we are trying to help them target the terrorists and the Iranian-backed rebels and not innocent civilians, something they are not able to do as well without our assistance.

Contrary to the resolution's sponsors' claims, the United States is not engaged in hostilities in Yemen, as it has been traditionally understood, since it is not in direct conflict with the Houthi rebels. We are not fighting the Houthi rebels. U.S. soldiers are not fighting the Houthi rebels directly. We are providing support.

Proponents of this legislation rightly point out that there is a humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Unfortunately, what they sometimes leave out is that the humanitarian crisis only started when the Iranian-backed rebels overthrew the existing government. Our military assistance is helping the Saudis with their targeting to help prevent civilian casualties, to restore law and order, and to create conditions necessary to provide aid.

Let's remember, too, that it was President Obama who first implemented the refueling and logistical support policy. This is not a political matter. There is no real difference in the way that the Obama administration and the Trump administration provide this support by, with, and through our allies the Saudis and the Emiratis.

It is clear why this has been the policy of the last two administrations. Yemen is a place of great geopolitical concern. When I visited Bahrain recently with our colleagues—the U.S. Fifth Fleet is housed in Bahrain—we heard concerns about a chokepoint near an area called the Bab el Mandeb. I probably butchered that pronunciation, but we have all heard more frequently about the Straits of Hormuz, through which a lot of the world's commerce and oil flow.

Bab el Mandeb is off to the west of Yemen, only 18 miles at its narrowest point, connecting the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. That is one of the rea-

sons why it is so important geopolitically—because 3.8 million barrels of oil pass through it each day, many of them in route to the Suez Canal and beyond. Bab el Mandeb shows the geopolitical importance of Yemen in the surrounding region. When rebels attempt to shut down shipping in this passage, the impact is global, including on the United States, and our Nation has every right to be concerned.

I fear the resolution I mention deals with our shared concerns in the wrong way. We all want to avoid civilian casualties. Most everyone is aware that Yemen has been suffering from a severe humanitarian crisis for years, including a terrible cholera outbreak. But if we were to remove U.S. involvement and logistical support for the Saudi coalition, the humanitarian crisis would likely get even worse.

The Department of Defense has critiqued the resolution on which we will be voting on the grounds that it would undermine our ability to foster long-term relationships with allies in the Gulf region. We also benefit from increased interoperability, burden-sharing, and strong security architectures throughout the world. In other words, the alliances we have in the Middle East fight the common enemy of ISIS and al-Qaida and try to contain Iran, which has been at war with the United States since 1979 in the Iranian Revolution in one form or another. All of these are on the table and all of these should be matters of our concern, but they are best considered, at least initially, in the context of the Foreign Relations Committee. They can then make a recommendation to us, and we can have the sort of fulsome debate that people have come to expect in the Senate, I hope, on matters of global importance. So all of the reasons I have mentioned here suggest that the need for our auxiliary and limited role in Yemen remains important.

Secretary Mattis, the Secretary of Defense, has said that a withdrawal of our noncombatant support could embolden Iranian-backed rebels in the area, enable further missile strikes on Saudi Arabia, our ally, and threaten the shipping lanes in the Red Sea, like the one at Bab el Mandeb. All this combined could stoke the embers of an even greater regional conflict in the Middle East.

So I hope our colleagues will vote for a tabling of this resolution, which does not cut off debate but just moves that debate, at least initially, to the Foreign Relations Committee, where, under the able leadership of Chairman CORKER and Ranking Member MENENDEZ, I have every confidence that they will explore every nook and cranny of this issue and come out with a reasoned and reasonable recommendation to the Senate and the Congress on how the U.S. Government should conduct itself.

I believe in a strong congressional role when it comes to wars and military conflict. This has been a fight,

though, that has been going on for a long time between the executive branch and the legislative branch. We have the ultimate tool. We can cut off money, but that is a rather blunt instrument. I think this administration, like previous administrations, needs to recognize that the Congress is a partner in making these decisions, not an adversary. It is important that we each play our respective role, and I am confident that we will play that role responsibly, which is really what this is all about.

If the Senate takes this vote and passes this resolution, we lose the chance for that kind of careful, deliberate, informed consideration that starts in our standing committees. We lose the chance to have the Senate Foreign Relations Committee issue a thoroughly researched recommendation.

So I hope our colleagues will vote to table the resolution and not to close off debate but to insist that this debate take place, at least initially, where it belongs, in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and that this debate then continue among all 100 Members of the Senate. We will be better informed, we will be better prepared, and we will be better able to prevent unintended consequences from taking a rash action like voting for the resolution today.

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. MENENDEZ. 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. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senators LEE, SANDERS, and MURPHY, as well as the other cosponsors of the resolution we are debating, for their commitment to elevating this debate in the Senate. I agree with my colleagues that this is an important debate with significant implications. As the elected representatives of the American people, we must serve as an effective check on the executive branch, fulfill our commitments to protect the national security interests of the United States, and be responsive to our constituents.

This debate is about how we best leverage the tools in our national security toolbox, including military tools, to protect U.S. national security. Although the resolution focuses on one particular element of U.S. policy, limited military support—basically, refueling, intelligence, and advice—to the Saudi coalition, I encourage my colleagues to expand the aperture of this debate so we may call on the administration to assert real leadership, diplomatic heft, and nonmilitary resources to move the conflict in Yemen toward a political tract.

As the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I remind

my colleagues that it is this committee that has the jurisdiction over the questions of use of force. I remind my colleagues that it was also under my leadership as chair of this committee that it twice voted on authorizations for the use of military force—once in 2013, in response to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people, and once in 2014, in response to the rapid rise and spread of the Islamic State. I remind my colleagues of these two committee votes to underscore my commitment to open debate, my willingness to take tough votes, and my enduring commitment to a robust role for the legislative branch of the U.S. Government in the use of force and oversight of that force.

Now, I am pleased that Chairman CORKER has agreed to hold a public hearing with administration witnesses on the war in Yemen—I think a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is critically important—to look at the U.S. military support to the Saudi coalition and our overarching U.S. policy for resolving the war in Yemen. I appreciate that the chairman has also made a commitment to a markup in the committee in the near future on legislation that deals with the question of Yemen, and I also welcome his commitment to markup an AUMF, or an authorization for the use of military force, in the committee. Those are significant and actually will go a long way toward an informed process about how we deal with this challenge.

In considering S.J. Res. 54, I encourage my colleagues to assess the best way to promote core U.S. security interests in the Middle East, including pushing back on Iran's aggressive and destabilizing actions across the region, countering terrorism, and ensuring the freedom of navigation. To achieve these goals, our longstanding policy has been to partner with the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to promote the security and stability of the Arabian Peninsula.

As we consider this resolution, we must fully grasp the situation on the ground and the scope of attacks on one of our traditional security partners. Saudi Arabia has endured Yemeni-originated attacks inside its territory on a scale that no American would accept—ballistic and Scud missile attacks aimed at major Saudi population centers, cross-border attacks by Iran-backed Houthis. Those are significant.

Now, having said that, I share the concerns, I think, of a majority of my Senate colleagues regarding the conduct of the Saudi-led coalition operations, the unacceptable scale of civilian casualties, the severity of the humanitarian crisis, and the seeming lack of momentum on all sides toward a political tract to negotiate an end to this conflict.

The Saudi coalition bears significant responsibility for the magnitude of human suffering and the scale of destruction in Yemen. Seventy-five per-

cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance, and more than 8 million are on the brink of famine. The conditions have also led to the worst outbreak of cholera in modern history, with an estimated 1 million people suspected to be infected.

While the Houthis bear much responsibility for the violence, the Saudi-led campaign has played a significant role in exacerbating, however, the current humanitarian catastrophe. We must remember that the Houthis overthrew the internationally recognized and lawful government of Yemen and continue the conflict by resisting a political solution. So we ask the Saudis to have a political solution, but we need the Houthis to engage in a political solution as well. We also have to remember that the Houthi insurgency has vastly expanded the opportunities for al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

At the same time, I worry that withdrawal of limited U.S. military support to the Saudi coalition will weaken our leadership and our ability to influence a political settlement, improve humanitarian conditions, and could even make the situation worse.

Let us be clear-eyed about who will most benefit from an absence of American power. As it has done in political vacuums throughout the region, Iran will continue to expand its proxy power, and through its Revolutionary Guard, Iran will continue shipping weapons to the Houthis in violation of the arms embargo. With an emboldened Iran as patron, the Houthis will continue their campaign within Yemen and their attacks on Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, other nations in the region will be left questioning the commitment of its long-term security partner, the United States. In Saudi Arabia's darkest hours, as ballistic missiles are launched at major population centers in Saudi Arabia and Lebanese Hezbollah is on their border training Houthi fighters while Iran continues to transfer lethal equipment, we risk sending a signal to our partners and to our adversaries that the United States is not reliable.

Across the world, from Canada to the United Kingdom, President Trump has damaged our credibility as a reliable partner, even to some of our most stalwart allies. We must push against those concerns and show our allies that the United States upholds its international commitments. Consideration of withdrawal of support for the Saudi coalition must be taken in concert with other ways in which the United States is working to end this war—the totality of U.S. policy—which I fear is lacking.

The solution, I believe, is to bolster our diplomatic, humanitarian, and political presence to help solve this crisis, to end the human suffering, and to assert practical, concerted leadership. Thus far, the administration's approach has effectively abdicated leadership on the global stage. Thus far, while we have heard senior officials as-

sure us that there is no military solution to this conflict and a political settlement is necessary, this administration is actively dismantling the State Department and antagonizing the United Nations—the two entities that have the potential to play the most critical roles in moving toward a political settlement and addressing the humanitarian crisis.

We have vacancies at the Assistant Secretary of State level for the Middle East and the Ambassador in Riyadh—a failure of leadership.

With this dangerous approach to our diplomatic institutions, we will not be in a position to promote political solutions, and our military, once again, will be called on to do the critical work of diplomacy and development, distracting their attention from other pressing challenges—a failure of leadership.

Regarding a broader diplomatic strategy, the administration has also failed to develop a comprehensive strategy to confront Iran, including holding Iran accountable for continuing to provide missile supplies and lethal training to the Houthis.

Across land and sea, we know Lebanese Hezbollah operatives are in Yemen. Yet we have seen no sanctions and no action at the Security Council for this illicit, illegal activity. The administration has not made one designation for Iranian violations of arms embargoes, as directed by the legislation passed here 98 to 2, the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act—again, a failure of leadership.

I expect the administration to articulate and implement a comprehensive strategy for addressing Yemen that includes requisite conditions for continuing to support the Saudi coalition, a strategic push for a political settlement, efforts to alleviate the human suffering, and a comprehensive strategy to decisively push back on Iran's destabilizing actions in Yemen. This includes tough diplomacy with countries that will continue to facilitate or, at a minimum, fail to push back on Iran's actions.

I will continue pushing the administration to assert critical American diplomatic leadership rooted in the values of democracy, human rights, and human dignity.

Based upon Chairman CORKER's commitments to those hearings and future markups and based upon the totality of the situation, I will vote to table the motion to discharge from the committee because I am not ready to either abandon our partners that face an existential threat from Iran run amok in Yemen, but my support is not unconditional, and I will demand responsive actions.

I want to see, as I told the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia earlier today, a renewed commitment and a rapid movement toward a political track by the Saudi coalition. I want to see consistent demonstrations of commitment

to humanitarian access and alleviating the humanitarian crisis. I want to see followthrough in pledges of assistance to stabilize and rebuild Yemen by members of the Saudi coalition. I want to see energy and diplomacy from the Trump administration.

This week's visit of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman is an opportunity to press forward on a path for ending the war and addressing the civilian suffering. That certainly was my message to him. The limited support the United States provides is leverage. Now the Trump administration needs to use it.

In conclusion, I invite my colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to join me in holding the administration to account and pushing the administration to use our leverage to drive this conflict toward a political track. I also invite my colleagues to join me in conducting oversight of our policies and programs to counter Iran's activities in the region, including implementing CAATSA.

Finally, I want to be very clear that my vote today is not a blank check for U.S. military support, nor an endorsement of the current policy and strategy, and, finally, not a thumbs-up for the Saudi coalition that we should continue business as usual. I expect to see improvements on all fronts, as I have previously stated, and I will review future decisions with respect to potential arms sales and other votes with that type of extreme scrutiny.

There is no more time to waste. We must move toward a political settlement to end the war in Yemen, and the people of Yemen must see improvements in their situation immediately.

I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to ensure we are working toward a policy that embraces American leadership in promoting a political solution and alleviating the devastating humanitarian suffering in Yemen. I look forward to this continuing debate before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from New Jersey, my good friend, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for his comments.

Today we met with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, a very impressive young man who is transforming the country. We talked about the importance of our relationship, no doubt, but we strongly, strongly pushed back on what is happening right now in Yemen and asked them to take strong corrective action. I was there when this occurred, and I certainly expressed the same.

We also talked about the enrichment they are pursuing and some of the concerns that exist there. I want to thank the ranking member for his leadership and the words he just spoke.

Let me just speak to the debate we are having on the floor. This is a very

entrepreneurial move. I don't say that to be pejorative. I know one of the Members is on the Judiciary Committee that is bringing this to the floor. I can imagine some highly important judicial issue not being debated in the Judiciary Committee but just being wafted to the floor for a debate. I know that is not the way the Judiciary Committee operates.

One of the other Members is on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I can imagine some complex cap-and-trade bill being offered, and instead of it being worked through the committee—or some ethanol bill or some other type of bill—instead of it being worked through the committee, somebody just decides to bring it directly to the floor. That is what is happening here today.

I certainly don't shy away from this debate. I appreciate the fact that MITCH MCCONNELL understood that very few Members of our body—unless they are on the Foreign Relations Committee, Armed Services Committee, or happen to take a particular interest—even know much about what is happening in Yemen, and a lot is happening there. So I appreciated the briefing that took place last week to give Members a sense as to what is occurring there, but the proper way to deal with these issues is to deal with them in committee.

One would think that maybe there is some Yemen legislation that the committee is holding and not acting on. That is not the case. Any of these Members could have offered Yemen legislation relative to this issue, and the committee would take it up. That has not occurred.

So let me tell my colleagues what is happening in the committee. We have a bill that is being worked on by Senator YOUNG and Senator SHAHEEN dealing with this very issue. They are building support. They are working with the administration to make sure the definitions are correct, and they have had numbers of people involved with them. We plan to have a Yemen hearing in the next few weeks to deal with this issue but also to take up appropriate legislation. That is the way we typically deal with issues of such importance.

Let me say this: This is an issue of great importance. It not only affects the tremendous humanitarian crisis that is occurring in Yemen and the radicalization of the Houthis, supported by Iran—a proxy of Iran—but also Saudi Arabia's own security. It also affects the way we deal with other countries. I think many people here understand fully that right now, or recently, we have been involved in the same kinds of activities with France, as they have dealt with issues in Mali, including refueling and helping them some with intelligence issues.

So this is something, again, that we need to take up in a serious way, and the committee is committed to doing so.

What I hope will happen today is that Members of this body will let the Foreign Relations Committee do its job and that we will bring a bill forward that we can properly debate and amend.

I am hoping that later today, when I offer a tabling motion, Members of this body will respect the members of the Foreign Relations Committee who deal with this issue and let it go back to committee, with the commitment that we plan to bring forth legislation to actually deal appropriately with many of the issues relative to Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and ourselves.

Let me mention one other thing. We have been working for some time to deal with the authorization for the use of military force. It has been an issue that has been before us for many years. It is the replacement and revision of the 2001–2002 AUMF that many people in this body have had concerns about because it has been so long since they were enacted. We have activities that are taking place around the world still based on those two authorizations. We have a markup on an AUMF on April 19 scheduled to try to revise so we can give people an opportunity to weigh in on this issue on the floor.

By the way, the way the AUMF is being constructed at present, when we go into new countries, when we take on new groups, the Senate would have the ability to weigh in on those issues.

So I just would like to say to the body and those who are looking in, we are not shying away from this debate. There has been no legislation whatsoever that has been held up on this topic. Legislation is being introduced soon in a bipartisan way to deal with this terrible issue that is taking place in Yemen.

We are going to have a hearing. We will have a markup. In addition to that, we are going to have a markup on a new AUMF to deal with the issues our country is dealing with around the world with al-Qaida, ISIS, and other entities that have been associated parties.

With that, I just want to let people know that is kind of the way we deal with things around here. None of us is happy with the current status, but I think a better way for us to come up with a prudent solution to what is happening there is to go through the normal committee process. I hope the other Members of the body will respect that.

I am glad that, by the way, the ranking member—by the way, this policy has been taking place in Yemen. It started under the Obama administration, the same exact policy. The Senate has acted on it by voting for appropriations, so it is not as if we have not taken action ourselves. We have done that through the NDAA. We have done that through various State Department authorizations. So we have acted upon it. There are concerns about what is happening there. Legislation is going to be introduced to try to deal with

this, and that is the way we deal with complicated issues. No one is shying away from the debate. We just hope to table this and move it back and deal with it in the orderly, appropriate way.

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.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this afternoon there is going to be a vote on the Senate floor which is of historic importance. It is rare that I use those words to describe what is going on in the Senate Chamber. It is equally rare for us to actually take up an issue and debate it in this Chamber, but this afternoon we will face a critical vote.

I can recall, as can most Members, many votes we have cast in the course of service in Congress, both in the House and the Senate, but the votes that cause loss of sleep and worry, time and again, are votes involving war. You see, part of my responsibility in the Senate, shared by my colleagues, under article I, section 8, is to actually vote to decide whether the United States of America shall go to war.

The Founding Fathers were explicit. They wanted to give to Congress that responsibility so Members of Congress could represent their constituents—House districts and States—whom we all represent. That created an opportunity—in effect, an obligation—for us to really measure this grievous, important, historic decision against the feelings of the families who would be asked to support a war with their tax dollars or with the lives of people they love.

I can recall, back in 2001, what occurred on 9/11. Those of us alive on that date will never forget it, but I also recall that a year later we faced a decision right here in the Senate Chamber about whether, as a result of 9/11, we would go to war against Iraq and Afghanistan.

There was a long debate about whether we should invade Iraq. If you will remember, the leaders of the government told us there were weapons of mass destruction which threatened the region and the world, including the United States, and if we didn't move into Iraq and take out Saddam Hussein in his capacity, we would leave the United States in danger.

The debate went on for a long period of time, and the final vote was cast in the early morning hours in October of 2002. I remember it well and, for reasons I can't explain, I stayed on the floor after the vote. There were only two or three Members of the Senate still here. It was one of those moments where we had voted to go to war and weren't certain about what the next step would be. There were 23 of us—1 Republican and 22 Democrats—who

voted against the invasion of Iraq. I think it was one of the most important votes I ever cast.

The representations about weapons of mass destruction turned out to be false. We had no intelligence to back up that assertion. Yet that was the reason we were off to war. Well, here we are, some 16 years later, still engaged in a war in Iraq. I don't believe there is a single Member of the Senate who that night cast a vote for the invasion of that country who believed that 16 years later we would still be engaged in a war in Iraq.

Subsequently, there was a vote on the invasion of Afghanistan. It was a different circumstance. We believed Afghanistan had literally been the sourcing point for the terrorists who struck us on 9/11 and killed 3,000 innocent Americans. The argument made by the administration was, no one can do that to the United States of America without paying a price. I joined the overwhelming bipartisan majority supporting the invasion of Afghanistan to go after Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida.

I voted against invading Iraq. I voted for the invasion of Afghanistan. I can tell you, I would never ever have been able to stand here and say, with any certainty, that 16 years later, we would still be engaged in a war in Afghanistan, but we are.

The obvious question to ask is, In 16 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places in the world, how many other times has the United States and the House of Representatives come together to debate the wisdom of a decision about continuing a war or declaring a war? The answer is none—not once.

For 16 years, we have been observers and bystanders, through Presidents of both political parties, and the Congress has stood by and observed military action being taken all over the world.

Brown University did a survey called the Costs of War Project and recently published data saying that the United States fought terror in 76 countries, between October 2015 and October 2017, using its own troops and bases, through training of host country counterterrorism forces or through drone and air strikes.

In 76 different countries, we are engaged in military operations. How often has the Senate or the House come together to debate the wisdom or to even question whether those military actions were authorized? I think none. Perhaps someone could point to one, but I can't think of one time we have done it.

This afternoon is going to be different because we are being asked, as Members of the Senate, whether we are going to exercise our constitutional authority and responsibility when it comes to an ongoing war in a country most Americans couldn't find on a map—the country of Yemen.

Yemen now is embroiled in a civil war and an invasion by Saudi Arabia, and we are part of that military oper-

ation. There has been no vote in the U.S. Senate on those military activities. There is a loose connection to al-Qaida, which was referenced in the invasion of Afghanistan, as a rationalization for going after this terrorist operation now being found in Yemen, but there is more to that war in Yemen than just the presence of al-Qaida. There is an ongoing surrogate battle between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the United States is engaged. I believe we are engaged because of our friendship with Saudi Arabia; some have argued because we sold them the planes we are now refueling.

At the very least, we ought to bring this case to the American people. That is our constitutional responsibility, and that is why this vote is important: Because we took an oath—each of us—when we became Senators, to uphold the Constitution of the United States against enemies foreign and domestic. That Constitution says the people of the United States—the ones I represent in Illinois, the ones who are represented in Oregon or in Texas—are going to have a voice in this decision through us, through our debate, through our decision.

I thank the Senators who have brought this matter to the floor today: Mr. LEE, a Republican Senator from the State of Utah; Mr. SANDERS, a Democratic Senator from Vermont; and Mr. MURPHY, another Democratic Senator, from Connecticut. I have joined in cosponsoring this effort. It really is going to put us to a test to justify what we are doing in Yemen today.

What is happening in Yemen has been characterized by the United Nations as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world—and that is saying something. Some 8 million people are dying of famine in Yemen because of this war. Some 16 million are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance immediately.

This is no skirmish. This is not just an exchange of fire. This is carnage and destruction the likes of which the world has never seen, and we are part of it. If we are part of it and should be part of it, then we should make that decision as a Senate and a House of Representatives, as the Constitution requires, but going to the bleachers, standing by the sidelines, and watching more and more military operations take place around the world without asserting our constitutional responsibility is a mistake. That is why I have cosponsored this measure this afternoon and look forward to voting for it to move forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, America is very involved in a war in Yemen, and it is time we have a debate as envisioned under our Constitution.

Our Constitution did not lay out the power of deciding when to go to war with the executive branch. It places it

very clearly here, with article I, Congress is to act, but we have participated very directly, in partnership with Saudi Arabia, in the assault on Yemen, on the Houthis, and the result is a dramatic, dramatic humanitarian crisis. So we should absolutely hold that debate on this floor, as envisioned in our Constitution.

Article I, section 8 states, unequivocally, that “the Congress shall have Power . . . to declare War.” It is only Congress that is given this power under our Constitution.

If anyone has any doubts, then let’s pay attention to the other words of our Founders, James Madison himself: “In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found, than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department.”

The Founding Fathers’ vision was reinforced by the War Powers Resolution of 1973, also often referred to as the War Powers Act. That act was necessary because the executive branch tends to put our forces into conflict without the permission of Congress, in violation of the Constitution. So it is important to lay out the parameters under which they are allowed to do so under emergency action and the circumstances under which they are not allowed to do so.

The War Powers Act says: “It is the purpose of this joint resolution to fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgement of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities.”

It goes on to say that “the constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities . . . is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to (1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States.”

In the case of the Saudi war we are participating in against the Houthis, it is not triggered by an attack upon the United States, nor is there any specific statutory authorization—that is why we are going to have this debate today—nor is there a declaration of war.

So the standards of the War Powers Resolution have not been met, and I call upon my colleagues to shoulder your constitutional responsibility to have this debate and hold the Executive accountable when they are violating the law of the United States of America.

There are two components to our presence in Yemen which should not be confused. One is where we are directly involved against forces associated with al-Qaida. This debate is not about that. The administration contends and we do not dispute today whether that is covered by the 2001 authorization for use of military force.

I think many of us feel that initial 2001 AUMF, authorization for use of military force, has been stretched beyond recognition. That is a debate for a different day. This argument is directly about our support of Saudi Arabia in bombing the Houthis in Yemen. That is the central question.

For us to understand why this is so important is, one, the integrity of the Constitution. If we do not hold the Executive accountable to the Constitution of the United States of America, then we are essentially taking that key, critical clause that gave us responsibility for when military force is used by the United States out of the Constitution and delivering it to the Executive. That certainly is not the vision. If people want to have that vision, they will introduce a constitutional amendment to that point. Introduce a resolution to declare war to make this action in concert with the Constitution. Create specific statutory authority in concert with the Constitution. But do not fail your constitutional responsibility to hold this debate.

The War Powers Resolution lays out clearly that our participation in the support of foreign forces engaged in hostilities is engagement under the vision of our Constitution and certainly under the law of the War Powers Resolution. It says under section 8:

Authority to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations wherein involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances shall not be inferred—(1) from any provision of law . . . including any provision contained in any appropriation Act, unless such provision specifically authorizes the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities.

Again, specific authorization is required.

It goes on. In this section titled “Interpretation of Joint Resolution,” it states:

“[I]ntroduction of United States Armed Forces” includes the assignment of member of such armed forces to command, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or accompany the regular or irregular military forces of any foreign country . . . in hostilities.

Clearly, the law states that our engagement, our coordination with a foreign power engaged in war, is covered by this act. Our participation in the movement of their military forces into hostilities is covered by this act.

Therefore, we have to understand the details of our engagement.

First, the United States refueling the Saudi planes as they go to bomb the Houthis is very directly participation in the movement of military forces into engaged hostilities. We are refueling the planes en route. How can that not be participation in the movement? Certainly a plane is a part of a military force. Certainly refueling it is participation in the movement of that plane. Could this be any clearer? This is black and white. Not many things are. In terms of the violation of the War Powers Resolution and the offense against

our Constitution, this is black and white.

Second, we provide intelligence.

Third, we provide the weapons.

Fourth, we provide targeting assistance.

Fifth, we established a joint combined planning cell operation center to conduct military and intelligence activities in partnership with Saudi Arabia.

All of that fits into this direct section of the War Powers Act regarding coordination or participation in the movement of a foreign force engaged in hostilities. If this were a minor involvement—it is not. We have participated thousands of times in this manner. On a daily basis, we are involved in coordination.

The airstrikes Saudi Arabia is conducting have produced one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world. Think about the reports on these different strikes.

There were 3 airstrikes in Sa’dah last month, killing 5 civilians and wounding 14 more, including 4 children, as well as killing the paramedics who were trying to pull the survivors out after the first bomb dropped.

We had a strike on a hotel last August that turned the building’s ceiling black with the charred blood of 50 farmers who were in that building.

It is one horrific circumstance after another as these bombs drop on civilians in Yemen. It is time for us to reckon with the fact of our participation in this carnage. This carnage has resulted in 10,000 Yemeni civilians killed, and there are 8 million people on the brink of starvation. Why is it that humanitarian aid has not gotten to those folks? Because Saudi Arabia has blocked it. We are partnering with a country that is blocking humanitarian aid. Does that square with the principles of the United States of America, to participate in partnership with a country starving 8 million people?

Then we have the fact that the Saudi bombs have been dropping on the infrastructure of Yemen, and they have destroyed the water systems. When you destroy the water systems, the sewage contaminates the fresh water, and a direct consequence of that is cholera. At this moment, the cholera epidemic in Yemen has affected 1 million people. That is the single largest cholera epidemic in the recorded history of mankind.

There are 8 million people starving and 1 million people sick with the worst cholera epidemic ever. We are participating in creating this.

To my colleagues who say Saudi Arabia has partnered with us against ISIS, fine and good, as they should. However, this issue is different. This is about whether we are helping them and participating directly in the hostilities of dropping bombs on civilians, Houthis, and creating a massive famine and a massive cholera epidemic and massive deaths. A lot of children are dying every day.

The Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, warned that this famine could become “the largest famine the world has seen for many decades, with millions of victims.”

Every day, about 130 children die from hunger and disease. We pride ourselves on going to the assistance in the world when children are being slaughtered or starved or decimated by disease. In this case, we are participating in this carnage. Does any Member of this Senate want to stand up and say that is an appropriate mission for the United States to participate in, this carnage? I certainly hope not.

The death and destruction in Yemen is unimaginable. It is appropriate that we debate on the floor the Sanders-Lee-Murphy resolution, a bipartisan resolution to say: Let’s honor the Constitution. Let’s abide by the 1973 War Powers Act. Let’s hold the administration accountable because it is not just this issue—although this issue is massive—it is also the standard by which the Executive will operate in every potential war theater around the world for a decade to come.

If we proceed to say that it is OK that you trample the Constitution in Yemen, that you disregard the War Powers Resolution in Yemen, then we will be giving carte blanche to this administration to do so in one nation after another. We have long abdicated our responsibility. Let’s abdicate no more. Play the role, the responsibility the Founding Fathers gave us in the Constitution, and bring an end to our participation without authorization in this horrific conflict.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:39 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

S.J. RES. 54—MOTION TO DISCHARGE—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

JUDICIAL VACANCIES

Mr. HATCH. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, 1 year ago today, the Senate Judiciary Committee opened its hearing on the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. The Stanford Law & Policy Review has now published my article on one of the opposition’s arguments made in that hearing and sure to be repeated should President Trump have the opportunity to make another Supreme Court nomination.

Today, I want to look at the lower courts because no fewer than 138 positions on the Federal district and ap-

peals courts are vacant. That does not include 33 vacancies that we already know will occur in the next year or so. Everyone must understand both the seriousness and the cause of this crisis.

By itself, 138 is just a number. It is a big number, but it needs a frame of reference or a standard for us to know whether this number of judicial vacancies is normal or a serious problem that has to be addressed. I certainly don’t want to be accused of partisanship, so I will rely solely on the standards and criteria used in the past by my Democratic colleagues. Let’s first use some Democratic standards to evaluate the number of judicial vacancies that we face today.

One standard is that the Democrats have specifically identified how many vacancies are unacceptable. In February 2000, with a Democrat in the White House, the Democrats said that 79 vacancies were “too high.” In September 2012, with the Democrats both in the White House and controlling the Senate, they declared a “judicial vacancy crisis” when there were 78 vacancies.

If 78 vacancies is a crisis, what is the label for 138 vacancies? This is the highest judicial vacancy total since September 1991, but more than half of those vacancies were fresh from Congress’s having created new judgeships several months earlier. So I think it is fair to say that in either total or percentage terms, we face today the most serious judicial vacancy crisis that anyone in this body has ever seen.

A second Democratic vacancy standard is that, as they did in April 2014, we can compare judicial vacancies today with vacancies at the same point under previous Presidents. If that Democratic standard is valid, vacancies today are 35 percent higher than at this point under President Obama and 46 percent higher than at this point under President George W. Bush.

There is a third Democratic vacancy standard. In June 2013 and at least as far back as April 1999, the Democrats have complained that the Senate was not confirming enough judicial nominees to keep up with normal attrition. Well, judicial vacancies today are 30 percent higher than when President Trump took office, and, as I said, at least 33 more have already been announced.

Finally, the Democrats have frequently said that the 107th Congress—the first 2 years of the George W. Bush administration—should be our judicial confirmation benchmark. During that time, the Senate confirmed an average of just over four judicial nominees per month. The Senate has so far confirmed 28 of President Trump’s district and appeals court nominees or fewer than two per month.

Take your pick. By any or all of these Democratic standards, we face a much more serious judicial vacancy crisis than in years past. In addition to the gravity of this crisis, however, the American people need to know its

cause. I can tell you what is not causing this vacancy crisis. President Trump started making nominations to the Federal district and appeals courts on March 21, 2017, just 61 days after taking office, as you can see on this chart. By August of last year, he had made more than three times as many judicial nominations as the average for his five predecessors of both parties. President Trump has nominated 86 men and women to the Federal bench since he took office 14 months ago.

If the President is making so many nominations, perhaps the problem lies somewhere in the Senate confirmation process. Once again, my Democratic colleagues can help figure this out. In November 2013, then-Judiciary Committee Chairman PATRICK LEAHY spoke about obstructing judicial nominees “in other ways that the public is less aware.” The Democrats are using such below-the-public-radar obstruction tactics at each stage of the confirmation process.

The first stop in the confirmation process is the Senate Judiciary Committee. Under Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY’s leadership, the committee has held a hearing for 62 of President Trump’s judicial nominees—more than under any of the previous five Presidents at this point. So that is clearly not the problem. The first sign of Democratic obstruction is the unwarranted and partisan opposition to reporting judicial nominations from the Judiciary Committee.

In February 2012, 3 years into the Obama administration, the Democrats complained that five nominees to the U.S. district court had been reported by the Judiciary Committee on a party-line vote. This, they said, departed dramatically from Senate tradition. Today, just 14 months into the Trump administration, eight nominees to the U.S. district court have been reported by the Judiciary Committee on a party-line vote. The present rate of such party-line votes in the Judiciary Committee is more than four times what the Democrats criticized just a few years ago.

The below-the-radar obstruction tactics continue when the Judiciary Committee sends judicial nominees to the full Senate. The Democrats, for example, refuse to cooperate in scheduling confirmation votes. They can’t prevent confirmation votes altogether because they abolished nomination filibusters in 2013, but if they can’t make judicial confirmations impossible, they are determined to make them very difficult. Here is how they do it.

The Senate must end debate on a nomination before it can vote on confirmation. The majority and minority have traditionally cooperated to end debate and set up confirmation votes. In March 2014, not for the first time, the Democrats said that refusing consent to schedule votes on pending nominees was obstruction. When the minority refuses that consent, the only way to end debate and set up a confirmation vote is by the formal cloture

process, which requires a cloture vote and can add up to several days to the confirmation timeline, as seen here.

Since President Trump took office, the Democrats have forced the Senate to take 28 cloture votes on judicial nominations, compared to just two cloture votes at this point under the previous five Presidents combined. Even when cloture is invoked, Senate rules provide for up to 30 hours of debate before a confirmation vote can occur. Nearly half the time under President Obama, a judicial nomination cloture vote was followed by a confirmation vote on the same day. Under President Trump, that has plummeted to 17 percent. The average time between cloture and confirmation votes for President Trump's judicial nominations is more than 55 percent longer than it was under President Obama.

When a judicial nomination gets out of the Judiciary Committee, survives an unnecessary cloture vote, and then is subjected to postcloture delay, Democratic obstruction is still not over. In March 2012, the Democrats complained about Senators having voted against nominees to the U.S. district court who were supported by their own two Senators. In fact, the Democrats called this a new standard of obstruction because it departed so far from Senate tradition.

OK. Let's assume for the moment that this Democratic standard is also valid. At this point in the previous five Presidencies—from President Reagan to President Obama—U.S. district court nominees had received a combined total of 10 negative votes. So far, under President Trump, his confirmed district court nominees have received 72 negative votes.

Two weeks ago, the Pew Research Center released a new analysis showing that President Trump's confirmed judges have "faced a record amount of opposition." In fact, this analysis concluded that President Trump's judges have each received an average of more than 22 negative votes, "by far the highest average for any president's judges since the Senate expanded to its current 100 members in 1959." This level of opposition is more than four times what it was under President Obama—or should I say oppositional delay.

These tactics don't involve high-profile filibusters or headline-grabbing confirmation defeats but, rather, internal Senate rules and unwritten traditions. That is why they operate below the radar. Yet the Democrats have criticized these tactics precisely because they take their toll. Individually and especially in combination, they can add days and weeks to the time it takes to confirm a single judicial nomination even when the final confirmation vote is unanimous.

In November 2013, for example, the Democrats said that taking cloture votes on unopposed nominees amounted to "obstruction and abuse of Senate rules." At that point, almost 4 years

into the Obama administration, the Senate had taken one cloture vote on a judicial nominee who was later confirmed without opposition—just one. We are only 14 months into the Trump administration, and the Democrats have already forced the Senate to take five cloture votes on nominees who were later unanimously confirmed. It has already happened twice this month. If doing this once amounted to obstruction and abuse, what would my Democratic colleagues call doing it five times as often in one-fourth the time?

These are just a few of what then-Chairman LEAHY called obstruction tactics that the public may not be aware of. Believe me. There is more where these came from. As I said, I want to avoid partisanship. Each of these is a Democratic standard. These are Democratic criteria. If my colleagues who once thought these were valid standards want to abandon them now, then perhaps they were also wrong the first time around. Otherwise, we have to face the conclusions that follow from applying these Democratic standards and criteria.

We face an unprecedented judicial vacancy crisis. Since President Trump is making nominations and the Judiciary Committee, under Chairman GRASSLEY's leadership, is steadily processing them, there remains only one explanation for the vacancy crisis we face today—plain, old-fashioned, partisan obstruction. The Democrats are manipulating this process at every stage, using the very tactics that they have loudly condemned in the past to make confirmations as difficult and time-consuming as possible.

Even in politics, actions speak louder than words. In July 2012, when there were 76 judicial vacancies, Chairman LEAHY said that "we should be doing better." Today, with nearly twice as many vacancies, I challenge my Democratic colleagues to put actions to those words.

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. REED. 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. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern about the continued deterioration of the situation in Yemen and to share my views about the resolution that is currently before us.

The military conflict going on in Yemen has gone on for far too long and has affected tens of millions of civilians who face displacement, famine, and a widespread cholera outbreak. According to the United Nations, more than 15,000 Yemenis have been killed or injured since the war began in March of 2015. The humanitarian situation there has been described as the worst in the

world, with more than two-thirds of Yemen's approximately 29 million people facing severe food shortages. An outbreak of cholera has already infected at least 1 million people, marking the worst such outbreak in decades.

Continued instability in Yemen also benefits our adversaries. While we have sought to maintain pressure on al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, and ISIS, the lack of a functioning government or state security apparatus inhibits our ability to go after these groups. Additionally, it is clear that Iran has taken advantage of the current situation to spread its malign influence and provide lethal support to the Houthis, thereby further undermining regional stability and security.

Unfortunately, we have yet to hear any strategy from the administration as to how they would propose to use U.S. diplomatic leadership to help bring about an end to the conflict in Yemen. We still do not have an Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and occasional visits by White House officials are not a replacement for sustained diplomatic efforts by our experts in the Foreign Service. I am encouraged, though, by the appointment of a new United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and hope that the U.S. Government will seek to support his efforts wherever possible.

While the primary conflict in Yemen is between an Iranian-backed Houthi insurgency and a Saudi-led coalition, the United States is involved.

As stated in a letter sent by Secretary Mattis to congressional leadership last week, "Since 2015, the United States has provided limited support to Saudi-led coalition military operations to restore the U.N.-recognized government of Yemen and preserve Saudi territorial integrity from Houthi aligned forces in Yemen." Moreover, according to Secretary Mattis, U.S. forces are not authorized to use force against the Houthis but do support the Saudi-led coalition with "intelligence sharing, military advice, and logistical support, including air-to-air refueling."

Last week, the commander of U.S. Central Command, General Votel, testified before the Armed Services Committee that our support to the Saudi-led coalition is "primarily defensive" in nature and focused on the Iranian-supported ballistic missile threat to Saudi Arabia that originates in Yemen, maritime threats to international shipping in the Bab el Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, the defense of Saudi Arabia's southern border, and counterterrorism.

However, General Votel also acknowledged that when the United States provides aerial refueling to coalition aircraft, we do not know where those aircraft then go; therefore, they could be going to conduct offensive strikes against Houthi targets, which may result in civilian casualties, which is a major concern for me. Even more troubling, if these aircraft went to conduct strikes against targets outside of

Yemen, the United States would be complicit in a much more dangerous and provocative activity.

I have significant concerns about persistent reports of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure caused by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Far too many of the strikes by the coalition have killed or injured civilians and resulted in the destruction of infrastructure needed to provide basic services to the population, thereby exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

It is also clear that more must be done by both the coalition and the Houthis to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid into and throughout Yemen. The United Nations and humanitarian organizations continue to express concern about their ability to access seaports and airports and difficulties in distributing aid to vulnerable populations once it is inside the country.

It is important that shipments into Yemen be subject to inspection by the U.N. Verification and Inspection Mechanism to help prevent the transit of illicit materials in violation of the U.N. arms embargo, but all parties to the conflict in Yemen have a responsibility, including under international humanitarian law, to allow access to aid by those in need.

We are faced with a very difficult set of issues, and I certainly understand and commend my colleagues, Senators SANDERS, MURPHY, and LEE, for bringing this issue to the floor. The Saudi-led coalition clearly must do more to end this war and must prosecute this war in a way that limits civilian casualties and the humanitarian crises. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia and the United Emirates, or UAE, remain important partners for the United States, and we share many common interests in the region, including in the fight against al-Qaida, ISIS, and other violent extremist groups.

The resolution before us would establish a blanket prohibition on all assistance to the Saudi-led coalition except for the purposes of countering al-Qaida and associated forces. While I understand the argument for this approach, I believe it would prevent us from exerting influence to limit and hopefully end the conflict. Indeed, it may even cause harm as both sides potentially act more violently.

We can and should engage if there is a possibility that we can help minimize collateral damage by providing the coalition with training and advice on best practices. General Votel testified last week that U.S. assistance has contributed to improvement by the coalition on these issues. Specifically, the Department of Defense told us that engagement by U.S. military personnel has resulted in the introduction of a “no-strike” list. That is a process which actually puts targets off-limits and ensures that pilots and others understand those targets. They also caused a cessation—an ending—of the

use of cluster munitions by Saudi-led forces and the formation of a body to investigate noncombatant casualties. These are positive steps, but it is clear that much more must be done to minimize the impact of the war on Yemeni civilians. I support our continued engagement for that purpose.

Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE face a significant threat from Houthi rebels armed with ballistic missiles, apparently with the technical assistance of the Iranians. There have reportedly been dozens of attacks against Saudi Arabia since the spring of 2015, including against civilian targets like the international airport in Riyadh, which was attacked in December. I strongly support the right of our partners to defend themselves against these threats and believe that continued sharing of U.S. intelligence for defensive purposes is appropriate, especially in light of the fact that tens of thousands of U.S. civilians, military, and diplomatic personnel also face these threats while living and working in the region around Riyadh and throughout Saudi Arabia.

I also have concerns that ending all support to the Saudi-led coalition may cause the conflict to escalate. As Secretary Mattis wrote to congressional leadership this past week, restrictions on our “limited U.S. military support could increase civilian casualties, jeopardize cooperation with our partners on counterterrorism, and reduce our influence with the Saudis—all of which would further exacerbate the situation and humanitarian crisis.” Secretary Mattis also expressed concern that withdrawal of our support would “embolden Iran to increase its support to the Houthis, enabling further ballistic missile strikes on Saudi Arabia and threatening vital shipping lanes in the Red Sea, thereby raising the risk of a regional conflict.”

Therefore, I believe that support by the U.S. military of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen should not be absolutely prohibited but should be explicitly limited to the following objectives: No. 1, enabling counterterrorism operations against al-Qaida and ISIS; No. 2, defending the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, including against ballistic missile threats; No. 3, preserving freedom of navigation in the maritime environment around Yemen; and No. 4, enhancing the training and professionalism of their armed forces, with a primary focus on adherence to the law of armed conflict and prevention of civilian casualties.

Our support for the Saudi-led coalition needs to be considered in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. From a policy perspective, we should distinguish between assistance that is provided for defensive or noncombat purposes and that which could be used to enable offensive military operations in the Yemeni civil war.

Let me be clear. I am not in favor of giving the Saudi-led coalition a blank check. In fact, I believe we should no longer provide aerial refueling assist-

ance unless it is used to enable aircraft conducting counterterrorism missions pursuant to the 2001 authorization for use of military force or countering specific identified threats to Saudi territorial integrity. Indeed, use of our military assets to support Saudi-led coalition efforts or the efforts of other nations to conduct other operations outside this narrow scope would raise very serious legal questions.

Given its comprehensive approach, I do not believe the Sanders resolution is the appropriate vehicle for these issues to receive the careful and deliberate consideration they are due. I understand the Foreign Relations Committee may soon take up this issue, and I urge them to do that. I look forward to engaging further in those discussions when presented with the opportunity.

The administration must make clear to both the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis that there is no military solution to this conflict and that the time has come to reach a negotiated settlement. Congress also has an important role in setting the policy framework for the use of U.S. Armed Forces overseas and ensuring that U.S. military capabilities are only used for authorized purposes. At the same time, we should not take action that would unduly restrict our engagement with partners for legitimate purposes and, in doing so, undermine our ability to help bring an end to the conflict in Yemen, ease civilian suffering, and defend the territorial integrity of our partners.

With that Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is about time we had a debate, if only for a few hours, on the participation of the U.S. military in the civil war in Yemen. Frankly, I cannot comprehend nor am I able to explain to my Vermont constituents the ongoing involvement of U.S. troops in support of the Saudi-led coalition as it flies U.S.-origin planes and drops U.S.-made bombs—purchased at a discount thanks to American taxpayers—amid continued reports of indiscriminate targeting and horrific civilian casualties.

These are not isolated incidents in Yemen. They have occurred time after time over the past 3 years. Houses, health clinics, and markets are destroyed, millions of people uprooted from their homes. Whether extreme negligence or intentional and a war crime, the effect is the same for those who are killed, wounded, or displaced. There is no evidence that U.S. military involvement nor the recurrent appeals of international humanitarian and human rights organizations has improved the situation.

This is not just a matter of the carnage we have observed. It is that we are supporting these military operations at all. Only Congress has the power to declare war, and the ongoing participation of U.S. forces in the Saudi-led coalition’s war against the

Houthis in Yemen clearly meets the definition of the “introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities” under the War Powers Resolution. The War Powers Resolution also authorizes Congress to direct the removal of U.S. forces if their introduction has not been authorized by law, as is the case in the war against the Houthis.

That is why I support the resolution before us, S.J. Res. 54, which would exercise Congress’s prerogative to limit the involvement of U.S. forces, in this case to the narrow purpose of combating al-Qaida, which does serve our national security interests in the region. I recognize, as some others have pointed out, that the war in Yemen is part of a larger conflict of interests and ideology between Iran and Saudi Arabia. If there are other legitimate and compelling national security interests that justify the deployment of U.S. forces in that region, let us debate them.

We should also be doing more to demand greater transparency and accountability for civilian casualties in Yemen, regardless of the context in which they occur. If the Saudis want U.S.-taxpayer subsidies, they need to focus their efforts on terrorists, take effective steps to minimize civilian casualties, and credibly investigate such casualties when they occur.

I have heard Senators who oppose this resolution say they intend to hold hearings and focus more attention on what is happening in Yemen. I welcome that, but I have to wonder why it has taken so long and whether anything will change as a result. Yemen has been a humanitarian disaster for years, and there is no end in sight. The Foreign Relations Committee should have held hearings and voted to invoke the War Powers Resolution when the U.S. military first became involved in Yemen.

This is not a new crisis, and other than the increasing toll of death and destruction, the facts on the ground have not materially changed. The Saudis have seemingly done nothing to improve the conduct of their air force in Yemen.

The least we can do is support this sensible resolution to put an end to the unauthorized involvement of the U.S. military in this civil war, as the War Powers Resolution compels us to do. The alternative is conceding unchecked power to the executive branch to use U.S. troops in support of any armed conflict, without congressional debate or authorization. That is just what the War Powers Resolution was designed to prevent. It is time to live up to the responsibility entrusted to us in the Constitution. Only Congress can declare war. If we are unwilling to do so, we have no business asking the men and women of the U.S. military to risk their lives in Yemen today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. President. As you know, our Chamber

is focused on a heavy subject at the moment—human trafficking.

An estimated 25 million people are victims of human trafficking all around the world. Smuggling people for forced labor and sex slavery is a heinous crime. It is the kind of crime that we tend to think happens in some far-off place, but these atrocities are happening all across the globe—sadly, including, unfortunately, here in the United States. In fact, human trafficking appears to be on the rise in our country, according to data released by Polaris, which shows a 13-percent jump in cases reported to the help lines it runs.

Since Polaris began operating over 10 years ago, its help lines have received reports of 203 cases of human trafficking from my home State of Arkansas. Almost half of those were reported in the last 2 years. Fortunately, our State is fighting back. Last year, Arkansas legislators approved a law requiring State-licensed truckers to be trained in spotting the red flags of human trafficking. Using their position on the road, these drivers have the tools to recognize the signs of human trafficking and alert the authorities to any suspicious activity.

Congress is also increasing its efforts to combat human trafficking. In September, the Senate unanimously passed two pieces of legislation to renew existing programs in support of survivors and help bring perpetrators of these horrific crimes to justice.

The Abolish Human Trafficking Act provides more resources to law enforcement in its effort to combat human trafficking and establishes human trafficking justice coordinators at every U.S. attorney’s office and at the Department of Justice. In addition, the legislation helps survivors rebuild their lives by extending the Department of Justice Domestic Trafficking Victims’ Fund.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorizes key programs to help survivors in their recovery, as well as offering specialized training on human trafficking to judges and Federal investigators.

We have made progress, but more needs to be done, and the legislation on the floor this week will help by giving law enforcement and prosecutors additional tools to crack down on crimes involving exploitation of the vulnerable. It will help us to take on nefarious actors like Backpage, which hid behind the Communications Decency Act to avoid prosecution for trafficking crimes.

It is time to rip the cover away from these bad actors. We are going to do that by making narrowly crafted changes to the law to ensure that websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking online are held accountable. “Knowingly” is the keyword here.

During the last session of Congress, the Homeland Security Committee, under the leadership of Senators PORTMAN, MCCASKILL, and JOHNSON,

uncovered just how much Backpage knew. It was a lot. In fact, Backpage’s operators helped customers modify their ads to hide references to underage prostitutes. I think we can all agree that rises to the threshold of knowingly facilitating sex trafficking online.

Should this bill pass—and I believe it will in a very bipartisan way—these bad actors will not be able to fade quietly into the dark, as we are going to give State attorneys general the authority to prosecute websites that violate sex trafficking laws. That is why I support this bill. That is why I cosponsored similar legislation here in the Senate. It is also why I supported the inclusion of at least \$90 million in Federal funding to combat human trafficking. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will continue to support funding for these important programs, and I look forward to the Senate’s completing work on fiscal year 2018 funding bills.

I am pleased to see all levels of government lending their support to help fight this crime. Together we can end this attack on human rights in our State, our country, and around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, in light of the vote later today on the Sanders-Lee-Murphy legislation, or S.J. Res. 54, I rise today to discuss the situation in Yemen and the path forward. As many know, over the last year I have focused persistently on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

My activities have been manifold. I have issued letters to the administration and the Saudi Government, an administration nomination, hearings, a Senate resolution, and countless meetings, briefings, and phone calls with senior administration officials, Saudi officials, and leaders of the NGO community.

My goal? My goal has been to address impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance—food, fuel, and medicine—into the country of Yemen.

Now, we have seen some progress, and I have been encouraged by this. The USAID-funded World Food Programme cranes have been delivered, and the Red Sea ports have been opened. According to the United Nations, since the ports were open, we have seen more than 884,000 metric tons of food and more than 410,000 metric tons of fuel delivered to the ports of Hodeidah and Saleef alone.

Of course, we understand the importance of the food. But why is the fuel so important? Well, without the fuel, you can’t run the water treatment facilities and, therefore, the cholera epidemic that has broken out in Yemen will only get worse. So 884,000 metric tons of food and more than 410,000 metric tons of fuel have resulted in the saving of countless of lives in Yemen.

Look, there is a continued humanitarian crisis in Yemen. A lot of problems persist, and we need to address those. We have seen progress with respect to the delivery of some of the humanitarian assistance I mentioned, but commercial and humanitarian vessels have been offloading their lifesaving cargo less quickly than we would like. So there is a lot left for us to do.

The National Security Council presidential statement issued on March 15 related to Yemen indicated that there are still over 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. This is the world's largest humanitarian disaster. The risk of famine persists for millions of Yemenis.

The Saudi-led coalition continues, unfortunately, to impose unacceptable delays on ships carrying food and fuel into Yemeni ports. According to the U.N., the Saudi-led coalition caused 5.9 days of additional delay in the month of February on ships going to the major ports of Hodeidah and Saleef. Those delays continue this month.

Now, why does this matter? Well, this matters, of course, because we don't want people to suffer. It is inconsistent with our basic human values. It is inconsistent with what we Americans believe. When people suffer, it also exacerbates a national security crisis. It facilitates radicalization.

In fact, last week I chaired a Foreign Relations Committee subcommittee on this very topic—the connection between food insecurity, specifically, and the instability or radicalization of those who are food insecure. The hearing demonstrated that there is now a strong, evidentiary, and academic basis to conclude that it is in America's clear national security interest to address food insecurity, as well as a lack of fuel and medicine. A retired Marine Corps general testified at that hearing, Lieutenant General Castellaw. I thought he put it succinctly. He said: "Food crises [can] grow terrorists." Well, we have seen a lot of terrorists grown in Yemen in recent years.

The longer the civil war persists in Yemen, the worse the humanitarian crisis will grow. This will radicalize yet more people and provide even further opportunities to Iran to undermine our national security interests and those of our partners.

What are our objectives in Yemen? That is a fair question. It is one that all of us as policymakers and, really, all Americans ought to be asking. Well, consistent with our humanitarian principles and our national security interests, I believe we have to continue to pursue two primary objectives. First, we want to address the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and, second, we want to press all parties to end the civil war.

The real question here—because I don't think there is agreement on those two primary objectives—is how can we best achieve these two goals? That takes me to the Sanders-Lee-Murphy resolution before us today. We, of

course, need to fulfill our article I constitutional responsibilities. Article I, section 8, of the Constitution indicates that it is Congress's responsibility to declare a war, and it is Congress's responsibility to authorize the use of military force. I share Senator LEE's conviction, Senator SANDERS' conviction, and Senator MURPHY's conviction that we need to take that responsibility very, very seriously. This is why I introduced an authorization for the use of military force last year. It is also why I have been working with Chairman CORKER of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator KATINE, and other members of the committee to break a logjam in negotiations—some principled disagreements that exist with respect to what the authorization for the use of military force should look like moving forward.

We have finalized an updated AUMF against Islamic terrorist groups like al-Qaida and ISIS that will merit consideration in coming weeks. In fact, we heard from Chairman CORKER. He has now offered a public assurance that there will be hearings on the issue of authorizing military force and there will be marking-up and reporting of legislation so that this 17-year-old authorization for the use of military force can be re-upped. My own view is that whatever one thinks of the legal merits of this long war under the authorizations given in 2001 and 2002, the further away we get from that point in time, where a past Congress authorized force, the more attenuated that argument is and the less power it has. Moreover, we owe it to the men and women in uniform to consistently debate our involvement in overseas conflicts. So I commend the chairman for agreeing with other members of the committee that we need to have hearings and to pass legislation specifically on this matter through the committee of jurisdiction through what we call regular order.

Let me share with those who are watching my remarks here today what I believe the wrong approach is. I believe S.J. Res. 54 is the wrong approach. That resolution sidesteps the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It doesn't lead to the sort of fulsome debate. It doesn't allow us to hear from professional witnesses and members of the administration the way a formal committee hearing and markup would allow.

Moreover, the legislation is never going to become law. It will never become law. It is an exercise in messaging. Now, messaging is important. We need to make the argument, and I respect my colleagues for making their principled arguments. They are strong in conviction, and they make each of them quite articulately. But the administration has already indicated that the President wouldn't sign this into law. The administration has already indicated that they do not regard, under the law, that we are engaging in hostilities, which is required to

trigger the law they have invoked. So this will never become law.

Moreover, we most certainly will not be overriding a Presidential veto should this pass out of the Senate and the House and go to the President, whereupon he would veto it. So this will never become law.

The last reason I think S.J. Res. 54 is the wrong approach is because it will not achieve our shared objectives. It would fail to achieve its stated objective because the administration rejects the premise of the Sanders-Lee legislation related to hostilities, as I have already stated.

So there is a better approach. Rather than just criticizing S.J. Res. 54—and let me be careful to distinguish between criticizing the legislation that we will be voting on later and my colleagues, because I have great respect for my colleagues and their motives. I wanted to play a more constructive role in this debate. So I wanted to introduce legislation that would provide leverage to pressure the Saudis to actually end the civil war in Yemen and to actually improve the humanitarian situation. At the same time, we have to acknowledge and respond to Iran's malign behavior in Yemen, as well as the presence in Yemen of ISIS and AQAP—al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. This is arguably the most aggressive and most dangerous al-Qaida franchise in the world. We also have to recognize Saudi Arabia's legitimate right to not have ballistic missiles launched into their cities. This is our partner.

So I wanted to develop a bipartisan compromise that could actually pass out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, be passed by both Chambers, and signed by the President of the United States. I think we are well on our way to doing that. I wanted to develop legislation that would actually further its stated purpose and our objectives in Yemen—ending the civil war and addressing the humanitarian crisis.

So that is why I and Senator SHAHEEN introduced S.J. Res. 55 on March 8. Now, since then, we worked with the committee, we have worked with members of both parties, and we have worked with the administration and outside experts to further refine our legislation, making numerous substantive changes and principled compromises.

The current version of our legislation would require the Department of State to certify in an unclassified and written report that Saudi Arabia is undertaking the following: No. 1, an urgent and good-faith effort to conduct diplomatic negotiations to end the civil war in Yemen; No. 2, appropriate measures to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen by increasing access for Yemenis to food, fuel, and medicine, including through Yemen's Red Sea ports, the airport in Sana'a, and external border crossings with Saudi Arabia; and, No. 3, demonstrable action to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from its

military operations in Yemen, including by complying with applicable agreements and laws regulating the use of cluster munitions and other defense articles and services purchased or transferred from the United States.

Now, if the Department of State can't make that certification, then U.S. air refueling missions, which are essential to the Saudi coalition's operations, would end. They would be prohibited under our law. Given the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and our national security interests there, I appreciate Chairman CORKER'S commitment today to mark up Yemen legislation in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when we return from recess in April.

So based on this reasoning, which I have laid out quite clearly here today, I plan to oppose the Sanders-Lee-Murphy legislation today. Instead, I will support legislation like ours that could actually become law and would provide the administration the leverage they need to result in real change in Yemen.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I note that the Senator who was to be on the floor is not, so I ask to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to participate in the discussion on the conflict in Yemen.

In 2015, I received a phone call from a Saudi official informing me that the kingdom was about to take military action in Yemen. The official said the conflict would not last long. They would launch airstrikes to push the Houthis out of Sana'a, restore Hadi to power, and broker a political compromise. That was nearly 3 years ago, and the conflict has since grown into the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

More than 10,000 civilians have died, and more than 40,000 have been wounded. More than half of Yemen's healthcare facilities have been destroyed. Three-quarters of the population—almost 22 million people—need humanitarian assistance. Eleven million require urgent assistance to survive, which means they are close to starvation.

The situation for children is especially dire: 1.8 million children under the age of 5 are malnourished. Of that, more than 400,000 are so malnourished that they are now 10 times more likely to die.

On top of the bloodshed and famine, the people of Yemen are facing a horrific outbreak of cholera. More than 1 million cases of cholera have been reported, potentially the worst cholera outbreak in world history. More than 2,200 people have died from it, almost one-third of whom are children. Cholera has spread because more than 80 percent of the population lack clean drinking water.

We can't turn away from suffering because we are a party to this conflict. The United States is providing intelligence, military advice, logistical support, and aerial refueling to Saudi Arabia. The fact is, we are enabling a major proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

We do all that despite there being no military solution. This has not been a brief war. It has turned into a major war that must end. The longer we permit suffering to continue, the more innocent men, women, and children are going to die. Instead of facilitating endless fighting, we should be pushing for reconciliation.

I have personally urged Saudi and Iranian officials to meet to discuss their differences. To my great disappointment, they have refused to do so. Iran is expanding its influence across the Middle East. It continues to arm Hezbollah, back President Assad in Syria, and support the Houthis. Saudi Arabia and its partners will not back down. Just last week, Crown Prince Salman said his nation would pursue the same nuclear capabilities as Iran. What does that say to us?

Their fight in Yemen offers no military solution. Only a political resolution will end this miserable war.

It is time we separate ourselves from this bloodshed. The United States must make it clear that we will not continue to support unending conflict. That is why I support the Sanders-Lee resolution, which would require the United States to stop refueling Saudi and Emirati aircraft.

Now, this seems like just a small step, and it certainly will not immediately end the war, but it is a deeply symbolic one. This resolution will send a clear message that we will no longer enable this proxy war.

There is no reason a diplomatic solution can't be found to end this violence, and a strong push for reconciliation will save the lives of thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children in Yemen, but that peace is only achievable if we speak with one voice and pass the Sanders-Lee resolution, otherwise we will continue to enable this barbaric war.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor with a series of my colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Democratic side to enter into a colloquy about this administration's chaotic and incoherent approach to foreign policy—an approach that has left our allies confused and our adversaries emboldened and undermines the standing of the United States on the global stage.

To be fair, the President's own national security strategy echoes decades of bipartisan recognition that the founding values of the United States—democracy, the rule of law—should continue to drive our foreign policy.

Yet the President himself has shown a fundamental disrespect for these very principles: declining to publicly champion the importance of human rights and good governance, refusing to condemn dictators around the world who brutally repress their own citizens, sow instability across the world, or even attack those who attack the United States—something I fear will ultimately weaken our ability to promote the security and prosperity of all Americans.

Last week's unceremonious firing of our Nation's top diplomat was the President's latest and brazen example of disrespect for the role of diplomacy, diplomats, and of the State Department itself. While I had my differences with Secretary Tillerson, the reality is, it does not serve the interests of the United States when the President undermines his top diplomat on major foreign policy initiatives, from the crisis in the gulf to, ironically, his outreach to North Koreans.

Secretary Tillerson's legacy will be shaped not just by the President's misguided efforts but also his own ill-advised attempt to dismantle the State Department, leaving the United States without key voices to advance our interests around the world.

The administration has failed to even nominate critical, high-level positions—Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries—leaving a void of empowered voices. Meanwhile, there are gaping vacancies in some of the world's most troubled regions. For example, as we confront a nuclear-armed North Korea, the President has yet to nominate an ambassador to South Korea, our critical ally on the peninsula—one that has historically relied upon American assurances and allegiance.

Similarly, the President took more than a year to nominate an Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The impact of these vacancies was on full display last week when the President—without the knowledge of his top diplomat—announced a meeting with North Korean Dictator Kim Jong Un, an assertion that was then ultimately walked back and modified by his Secretary of Defense and his White House Press Secretary.

In the Middle East, as the President continues to send more and more American troops and we face an emboldened Iranian regime creeping further into Syria, facilitated by the Kremlin's military support, he has yet to appoint Ambassadors to consequential posts, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, and Jordan, which has proved a critical partner in our fight against terrorism in the region and in supporting refugees—two essential components of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

How can we possibly expect to assert American leadership and secure our interests with these posts unfilled and with no empowered individuals at the Department itself? Under the President's watch, the number of career Ambassadors, which is basically the State

Department's equivalent to four-star generals at the Department of Defense, has plummeted by 60 percent. If we were shedding four-star generals this quickly, we would be sounding the alarm of a national security crisis.

We have just one career-level Ambassador left at the State Department. Let me say that again: One career-level Ambassador left, and this administration has seen fit to ship him off to an academic institution rather than to engage him in frontline diplomacy.

We are witnessing a mass exodus of experienced diplomatic and security professionals who have dedicated their lives to this country. This is a forced exodus, and I am deeply alarmed to see reports revealing what we have feared for some time.

We just started to learn about disturbing efforts to purge the Broadcasting Board of Governors and impose a partisan editorial voice on U.S. international media. Alarming, last week, press reports highlighted emails that provided concrete evidence of the administration's efforts to effectively purge the Department of anyone they do not believe would be a purist for the President's vision. Emails showed political leadership describing some civil servants as "turncoats, leakers, and troublemakers."

The conversations showed senior political appointees working with outside organizations engaged in vicious smear campaigns against career civil servants and dismissing death threats against some of these same career officials. Diplomats who have served Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, who have spent their careers working to build a more prosperous and secure world so a Commander in Chief would not have to send our sons and daughters into war.

This is America. Our government functions because of apolitical civil servants across agencies who dedicate their lives to advance the interests of their fellow citizens, from distributing Social Security checks to negotiating nuclear arms treaties. It is outrageous. It is disgraceful. It is dangerous.

We face challenges from every corner of the globe. We simply cannot confront them if we are not present, and we cannot overcome these challenges when the President himself does not acknowledge them.

As China's political leadership consolidates power and as the country expands into the South China Sea and pursues an aggressive economic agenda around the world, the President, for his part, praises these dictatorial moves. Meanwhile, he has failed on his promise to deliver better trade deals.

In Latin America, while the President calls our neighbors to the south drug dealers, criminals, and rapists, China is expanding its economic and cultural presence in our own backyard.

In Mexico, one of our most integral bilateral partners—Mexico is the second largest market for U.S. goods and services in the world—we will soon lose

our Ambassador, as we hear about how the Russian Government is seeking to interfere in their upcoming elections.

When it comes to Russia, again and again, the President's own intelligence officials have made clear that the Russian Government not only meddled in our election in 2016 but continues its interference in the American political system to this day. Yet the President refuses—refuses—to condemn Vladimir Putin or impose congressionally mandated sanctions to hold them accountable for their attack on the United States. I understand today he congratulated him on his "election." That is not an election. Putin is seeking to be a czar, not to be a President.

The Russian Government continues its military aggression in the Ukraine and its disinformation campaigns across Europe.

In the Middle East, it continues to enable Bashar al-Assad's slaughter of innocent civilians and Iran's efforts to expand its presence and threaten Israel. In a brazen move this month, the Kremlin used an unlawful chemical agent to commit murder on British soil, showing how far they will go if they are unchecked.

Beyond these great power threats, we must also confront nonstate actors and new tools designed specifically to destabilize free and democratic societies.

We must demand more information to learn about Cambridge Analytica and the efforts of this organization to exploit private information from social media users across the world to promote particular political agendas.

The only way to confront old and emerging threats is to stand united with our allies. We have spent decades building these alliances based on mutual respect, accountability, and vigorous engagement in the international institutions and security agreements that are essential to promoting peace and security around the world. We ourselves must be a reliable ally and partner. We must speak with an authoritative voice. We must have our national security agencies executing clear, integrated, coherent strategies.

The President himself must champion the fundamental ideas that have made America secure and prosperous: democracy, human rights, free expression—values we champion not because simply they are right but because they are also strategic. We stand for these values because, globally, governments that uphold the rule of law, that respect human rights and freedom of expression, that welcome economic competition—these are the nations that form America's most reliable allies, most prosperous economic partners, and most strategic security relations.

Let me close with this: The American people and the institutions we have built remain resilient. Now more than ever, Congress must exercise its role as a coequal branch of government when it comes to our foreign policy. We need Republicans and Democrats in Congress to uphold our duty to conduct

oversight, to ensure that bipartisan values that have guided American foreign policy for decades can be executed by an experienced, empowered, fully funded and fully staffed State Department.

Together, we must ensure that our reputation as a leader of nations is not eroded by a President and an administration that thus far, in my view, far from putting America first, threaten to leave America isolated and behind. That is our challenge. That is our choice. I appreciate my colleagues who join us in this regard.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I would like to say how glad I am to have Senator MENENDEZ back in the saddle as our ranking member on Foreign Relations, and I thank him so much for his speech and for his leadership on our very important committee.

I join my colleagues from the Foreign Relations Committee in their critique of President Trump's handling—or maybe we would call it mis-handling—of foreign policy. I am most concerned about how U.S. power, prestige, and diplomacy have been weakened across the world as a direct result of this President. The United States has stood as a world leader of liberal democracy, the rule of law, and human values since the end of World War II. Our actions abroad have not always been perfect, but over the decades, we have earned the world's respect because we have acted on our principles.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, authoritarian regimes were in retreat. Today, authoritarianism is back on the march. The President himself even cheers them on, praising Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and others who fashion themselves President for life of one-party, repressive regimes.

In this President's short but raucous and chaotic tenure, he has diminished our standing within the world community by grossly offending other nations and their leaders, including many of our closest allies, by abruptly changing foreign policy with no clear policy basis, and by denigrating countries and an entire continent with comments laced with racism. The President issues conflicting messages. World leaders and international diplomats cannot rely on his word or his tweets. He has plenty of criticism for our friends and allies but little for strongmen like Vladimir Putin. The world is alarmed. It is less stable under this Presidency.

Secretary Tillerson had disagreements with the President, and early on, the President undercut and sidelined him. The day before Mr. Tillerson was shown the door, the Secretary broke with the White House by directly pointing the finger at Russia for using a chemical weapon on the ex-British spy in his homeland, and this incident shows that the President will not tolerate daylight between his own corrupt

political beliefs and the views of his lieutenants.

During confirmation hearings for Mr. Pompeo, our committee must find out whether he will hold fast to traditional American values or bend to the President's servility to Vladimir Putin and other autocrats around the world.

The President's own diplomacy has been chaotic and dangerous. He has alienated one of our closest friends and biggest trading partners—the country of Mexico. He insists that Mexico will pay for this offensive wall that he says is necessary to keep out rapists and criminals.

The President has imperiled our relationships with both Mexico and Canada with his threats to tear up NAFTA, which he seems to say over and over again. In my home State of New Mexico, border communities rely on the integrated border, and border communities rely on the economy that has been built up over the last 24 years. We have a trade surplus with Mexico. NAFTA negotiations continue, but there has been a chill on economic activity in States like New Mexico, Texas, California, and Arizona.

The President has shaken the world with his grade-school taunts about nuclear weapons—a deadly serious subject. He chided Secretary Tillerson that talking to North Korea won't work, undercutting the Secretary once again, and then suddenly agreed to meet and even negotiate with Kim Jong Un without the careful diplomatic work needed to ensure success. I support diplomacy as the best solution, but rash diplomacy can easily lead to rash wars, and impulsive decision-making is extremely risky.

I hope the President seriously studies the issues between now and any meeting, brings an experienced team, and sets realistic and achievable goals for any negotiation. He must understand that diplomatic failure is potentially catastrophic. A war would likely result in 20,000 casualties a day in the opening week, and Secretary Mattis has warned that there would be, in his words, “the worst kind of fighting in people's lifetimes.”

I do not trust this President to follow the constitutional process required to go to war. That is why I am cosponsoring S. 2047, prohibiting any President from launching a preemptive strike on North Korea. Starting a war with North Korea would only undermine the security of the United States and our regional allies and should not be done without approval of the American people through the Congress.

The President's attitude toward Russia and Vladimir Putin complicates our ability to gain support for our efforts overseas. Russia interfered with our democracy and continues to interfere in the affairs of our allies.

There is no good explanation why he has not directed our Nation's security agencies to take all possible action in response to Russia's interference with the 2016 election, and increasingly we

see in the special counsel's investigation how Russia is playing a bigger and bigger part. There is no reason why this administration took so long to begin to implement Congress's sanctions against Russia. Special Counsel Mueller's investigation has already produced indictments against Russians and key officials from President Trump's campaign, but the President himself does not send the message to deter future interference by Russia. The President's failure to fight back, his resistance to sanctioning the Russians, and his subservience to Putin betray the national trust.

The President's hostility toward Iran's agreement to disarm its nuclear weapons program is mind-boggling. Director Pompeo reportedly shares this hostility. But just last week, the commander of U.S. Central Command, Army GEN Joseph Votel, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Iran deal is in our national interest. Defense Secretary Mattis and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, Gen. Joseph Dunford, also agree. Our close allies—also signatories to the deal—agree it is in the international community's interests.

This is not the United States the world has come to know, rely upon, and believe in. The President's failure to protect our national interest weakens our position within the world community.

Morale at the State Department is suffering as our foreign policy suffers. Any new Secretary of State must work to reverse this. This Congress and the world have watched as the President and the Secretary of State have hollowed out the State Department.

Highly experienced and talented Foreign Service officers have been fired, pushed out, reassigned to menial tasks, and ignored. Many senior diplomats have just packed up and left. Nicholas Burns and Ryan Crocker, who served as Ambassadors in both Republican and Democratic administrations, have warned that “we are witnessing the most significant departure of diplomatic talent in generations.” On top of retirements, the number of people who took the Foreign Service exam dropped by more than half between 2016 and 2017. There is real concern that this will have a lasting and negative impact long after the Trump administration.

Director Pompeo will need to answer tough questions during confirmation: Will he impose congressionally mandated sanctions on Russia? What actions will be taken to counter Russia's ongoing cyber warfare? We are on the razor's edge with North Korea. As chief diplomat, does he support a preemptive strike against North Korea? What will he do to avoid a disaster? Does he agree with our military leaders about staying in the Iran denuclearization deal? Will he certify Iranian compliance if the facts show compliance? Does he support the President's proposal to decimate the State Department's budget? Will he continue Secretary

Tillerson's plan to decrease staff by 8 percent? What will he do to recover agency morale, which we hear over and over is at an alltime low? Will he stand up to this President when long-held American values are at stake?

Director Pompeo will need to prove to the Senate that he will put the State Department and the U.S. standing in the world back on track. Our international partners do not view the United States as the reliable and strong partner they had in the past. Dictatorships and harsh regimes are emboldened by our lack of attention to free speech and human rights.

President Ronald Reagan said at the Berlin Wall that “the totalitarian world produces backwardness because it does such violence to the spirit, thwarting the human impulse to create, to enjoy, to worship.”

Dictators now smirk and echo our President, saying “fake news” about any news outlet that shines a light on their indiscretions. Leaders like Vladimir Putin are emboldened to continue to try to undermine our democracy and sow conflict and division within the American public.

The world is less stable without a strong, principled United States to lead. It is imperative that the United States preserve and strengthen its diplomatic power, not sabotage it.

With lack of leadership in the executive branch, Congress must step up, particularly the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As I said at the beginning, I am so pleased that Senator MENENDEZ is back to work with Senator CORKER to try to assert the role that Congress should be playing in these very important issues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from New Mexico, a key member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for his insight, input, and continuing efforts to make sure we have a diplomacy in the world that ultimately pursues our national interests and security.

I understand there are some colleagues who are on their way to the floor—Senator SHAHEEN and Senator CARDIN. When they get here, we will hopefully have the Chair recognize them at that point.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator MENENDEZ, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and my colleagues from the committee to talk about the importance of diplomacy as

we look at the many challenges and conflicts that the world is facing right now.

From North Korea to Syria to Venezuela, there is really no end in sight for growing tensions and conflict in the world. Our military presence in Afghanistan is growing, we have approved lethal weapons for Ukraine, and we are forging a new partnership with NATO in Iraq. I support these efforts, but without a vigorous diplomatic capability to back our military, these initiatives risk failure. Sadly, instead of providing for a robust diplomatic corps, the administration has laid the foundation for a weakened U.S. hand on the international stage. Ultimately, this places Americans at risk. As Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said, it forces his men and women to buy more bullets. Equally critical is the opportunity this provides for the great power conflicts to continue and to fester.

In November, I wrote to then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, to express bipartisan concern over the administration's State Department hiring and promotion rates. I was told that the statistics we had received from the American Foreign Service Association were wrong and that the redesign of the State Department is not forcing anyone from their jobs.

Unfortunately, since that time, the State Department has lost even more precious, diplomatic talent. Congress has received a budget request that cuts even more personnel, and Foreign Service hiring and promotion rates continue to plummet. Last month, the highest ranking senior Foreign Service officer, Tom Shannon, announced that he, too, would be retiring. With his retirement, we will have no senior Foreign Service officers serving in the Department's leadership.

To date, we have only one active career ambassador who will serve in the entire State Department, and he is not even working in the building. Aside from the mass exodus of critical talent, we are allowing decades of investments made by our country and our diplomats to dwindle along with their ranks.

For the past 2 years, the Senate has also received abysmally low budget requests for the State Department and USAID.

Meanwhile, our problems aren't declining. The Kremlin continues to sow chaos across the globe. China increasingly flexes its muscle by buying strategic properties throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. We are facing the greatest refugee crisis since World War II. Our intelligence community repeatedly warns that in this year's midterm elections, Russia will repeat another hybrid operation against the U.S. election. The obvious response to these challenges should not and cannot be to reduce the operational capacity and personnel of the lead agency that is responsible for alle-

viating global crises and promoting the United States' public face throughout the global outreach. That is the State Department.

Just this month, the New York Times revealed that the State Department had failed to spend any of the \$120 million allocated to fund the Global Engagement Center, which is aimed at countering state-led misinformation campaigns. While America is under attack and Western democracies are under attack by misinformation campaigns, the State Department's response has been totally insufficient. It has been not to spend any of the money that Congress has allocated. It seems the administration is completely unaware of Special Counselor Mueller's indictment against Russia's Internet Research Agency.

I wish to spend a minute to read from excerpts of Mueller's indictment of 13 Russians, which came out last month. If we can look at this through objective eyes, it reminds us all of the threats we face because of Russia's interference.

This is stated in Mueller's document:

The [Internet Research Agency] is a Russian organization engaged in operations to interfere with elections and political processes.

I am quoting now from the indictment.

By in or around September 2016, the [Internet Research Agency's] monthly budget for Project Lakhta (its interference operation in the U.S.) exceeded 73 million Russian rubles (over 1,250,000 U.S. dollars).

They are spending, on a regular basis, 1.25 million in American dollars on this interference operation. For all of the people out there who think this is a partisan issue, this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue about interfering in our democracy. We can see how much they are willing to spend to do that.

Continuing to quote from the indictment:

Defendants and their co-conspirators also traveled, and attempted to travel, to the United States under false pretenses in order to collect intelligence for interference operations.

In or around 2016, the defendants and their co-conspirators also used, possessed and transferred, without legal authority, the social security numbers and dates of birth of real U.S. persons without those persons' knowledge or consent. Using these means of identification, defendants and their co-conspirators opened accounts at PayPal; created false means of identification, including fake driver's licenses; and posted on Internet Research Agency-controlled media accounts.

That is the Russian entity that is doing this.

Think about that. We know of the Kremlin's efforts to influence and use the American people to its own advantage. It is laid out pretty clearly in this indictment from Robert Mueller. Yet, somehow, the State Department is incapable of spending \$1 of the money that has been allocated by Congress toward countering Russia's most overt, public messages against the United States.

This is truly remarkable and, sadly, disappointing. The American people deserve better. Unfortunately, the Global Engagement Center is not alone in its lack of support from the administration. According to an analysis of data from the Office of Management and Budget, last year the State Department spent just 79 percent of the money that Congress had authorized for the conduct of foreign affairs, the lowest level in the last 15 years.

Many of us on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would agree that most of our greatest global achievements—the Marshall Plan, the end of the Cold War, and the reduction of nuclear weapons—have been secured through diplomacy. Without it, I fear we will stray far from President Trump's ideal of brokering deals and instead cause irreparable damage to one of America's most precious resources—our diplomatic corps. That will harm this country's standing in the world and will have us viewed as weak by our great power adversaries.

The hollowing out of the State Department under this administration will cause irreparable damage to America's diplomatic efforts, and it will harm our country's standing in the world. Congress has to step in and make sure this doesn't happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and under the leadership of Senator MENENDEZ to point out that now—I guess it has been 14 months under President Trump's leadership—we have seen a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy that jeopardizes our standing globally and our national security. It starts with this administration's hollowing out the State Department and our capacity to participate in diplomacy.

As my colleagues have pointed out, so many vacancies exist today, unfilled by this administration. It is not the slowness of the Senate in confirming the positions. Many of these positions are not even positions that require Senate confirmation. We have seen an exodus of the most experienced people in the State Department, and the capacity of the State Department has been dramatically reduced. President Trump's budget speaks volumes about his support for diplomacy, as we see 30-percent reductions in the State Department budget being proposed by this administration.

The role of diplomacy in solving international issues is at an all-time low. There are many times I disagreed with Secretary Tillerson, but he at least was an independent voice in the White House as it related to certain issues on Iran or climate change. Now his voice has been silenced in this administration.

America first is America alone. It is the isolation of our country. We have seen that with the United States under

President Trump and pulling out of the climate talks—the only country in the world. We see it now, potentially, in Iran, with reports that the President may unilaterally withdraw the United States from the nuclear agreement, putting the United States as the outlier where we should be putting our attention on Iran. This is reflected in the Gallup polls, showing that the global opinion toward the United States has dropped dramatically. We see the President embracing oppressive leaders around the world, such as the leaders of Russia, China, Turkey, and Egypt, and embracing the autocratic practices of the President of the Philippines. Then, he attacks our closest allies, calling into question the transatlantic partnership.

Perhaps more than anything else, this administration has trampled on America's values. As Secretary Tillerson said early in this administration, America's interests will no longer be dictated by our values. That is not what the trademark of America is about. The President over and over has questioned universally what America stands for when he gave space to hate in his response to Charlottesville and when he implies that people who come to our country of certain religions or certain races are less favored than others. When he suggests he cannot have a conflict because he is President of the United States and does not have to divest of his business interests or when he says things that we know are not true and the President of the United States is standing up for matters that are outright lies, it diminishes the value and strength of America and our global leadership.

One issue I want to talk about in the time I have is that of ignoring one of our greatest national security threats—what Russia is doing to the United States under Mr. Putin. We just saw in Russia's most recent election that it was neither free nor fair. The opposition candidates were not allowed to participate, as they were handpicked by Mr. Putin, and he controlled the media. As the OSCE observed, the election took place in an overly controlled legal environment, and it had pressure on the critical voices of the Russian people.

We find a Russia today under Mr. Putin that is contrary to the values we stand for. In January, I authored a report on Russia, with the other Democrats on the committee, that talked about the asymmetric arsenal Mr. Putin uses that includes propaganda. We saw this on display when he was asked about what happened in the United States. According to the transcript, as reported by the Washington Post, these are Mr. Putin's own words: "Maybe they're not even Russians," in his talking about who attacked our country and referring to those behind the election interference. "Maybe they're Ukrainian, Tatars, Jews—just with Russian citizenship." He also speculated that France, Germany, or

Asia might have interfered in the election or even Russians who were paid by the U.S. Government.

That type of rhetoric is straight out of the Soviet and Russian playbook to cast Jews and other minorities as undesirables—enemies of the state. As an American Jew who has family roots in Eastern Europe and Russia, I find that kind of rhetoric to be dangerous and frightening, but at its most basic, such rhetoric is part of Mr. Putin's grand design. That is what he does.

We saw it play out in the UK just 2 weeks ago when a person was poisoned in England who was an enemy of Mr. Putin's. We see it play out over and over again. Prime Minister May spoke out. She called it for what it was. She sent a clear signal to Moscow that that type of behavior by the Russian state against the British people would not be tolerated and that there would be consequences. This is how a leader of a great nation should speak out in defense of its people to counter a major threat from a global adversary.

Yet what happened here in Washington with the threat we saw to our own country by Mr. Putin? The President has said virtually nothing. His spokesperson condemned the crime but ignored that likely Russian link. The Secretary of State later did what the President could not or would not do by calling out the Russians. Maybe that was his swan song because it was the last thing we heard before he was silenced by Mr. Trump.

Never before in America's history has such a clear threat to our national security been so clearly ignored by the President of the United States. The President's difficulty in publicly acknowledging the Russia threat and leading our country forward to combat that threat is one of the most perplexing and reckless pieces of Mr. Trump's disastrous foreign policy. We in Congress took action. We passed legislation. We passed mandatory sanctions against Russia. Yet this administration has not taken full advantage of the law we passed. The President needs to protect America's interests, not appease Mr. Putin.

Congress's role in shaping and advancing U.S. foreign policy has never been more important. I will continue to advance legislation, conduct oversight, and speak out about these important issues in the name of the American people and the values and norms that define us and our place in this complicated world. I am proud to be a part of the group of Senators who will stand on this floor and work to make sure we protect our national security interests.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to share my deep concern over the Trump administration's approach to North Korea.

I thank the Senator from New Jersey, the leader of the Democrats on the

Foreign Relations Committee, for asking the Members to come out here to speak to the Trump administration's foreign policy.

North Korea is a serious and ever-worsening threat to its people, to our allies and partners in the region, and to the United States. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has mismanaged our North Korea policy, and the potential consequences of failure are too great to ignore. North Korea may have bent over backward to appear conciliatory during the Winter Olympics and through its offers of talks with South Korea and the United States, but Kim Jong Un has not stopped his dangerous activities—far from it. While the North Korean regime is all smiles and open arms, its malign behavior continues.

Its engineers race to perfect a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korean laborers around the world—modern-day indentured servants—send paychecks home to the regime to help fund its illicit military programs. Illegal ship-to-ship transfers of refined petroleum products continue. North Korea's army of cyber warriors grows more capable, and the Kim regime's thugs make no efforts to scale back rampant human rights abuses.

However, President Trump's approach to date threatens to make an already bad situation even worse. Despite his recent announcement that he would accept a meeting with Kim Jong Un, President Trump has systematically undermined the effectiveness of the very agency—the U.S. Department of State—he will need to make talks successful. By so doing, he has harmed U.S. foreign policy right as the United States is poised to embark on a crucial diplomatic effort with North Korea.

By firing Rex Tillerson, President Trump threw the State Department further into chaos when what we need right now is more consistency. This is indicative of a President who considers himself to be his own diplomat, negotiator, and strategist. Yet the gutting of the State Department goes much deeper. It has been badly depleted of both staff and resources by the Trump administration and is consistently ignored in the opaque process the White House is using to try to conduct American foreign policy.

President Trump has stifled dissent, ignored experience, politicized key diplomatic and national security agencies. The Special Representative for North Korea Policy, Ambassador Joseph Yun—the lead American negotiator with North Korea—has stepped down. One wonders whether he felt his advice was being heeded. We still don't have a U.S. Ambassador to South Korea more than a year into the Trump administration. We still don't have a confirmed Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. We still don't have a special envoy for North Korean human rights issues. We no longer have a sanctions coordinator.

Going into talks at the senior-most level with a hollowed-out State Department is no way to peacefully resolve a crisis. To the contrary, it exposes us to greater risk, and as if these vacancies were not enough, it gets worse.

The Trump administration's recently released budget request for fiscal year 2019 would drastically cut State Department funding. The State Department is already alarmingly underresourced and understaffed to handle the significant and increasing threats from North Korea. Yet there is no explanation as to why the President believes it is prudent to cut diplomatic resources, especially in the middle of a crisis.

We deserve an answer as to why the administration believes the State Department deserves fewer resources while trying to execute a wide-ranging strategy of diplomatic engagement and pressure. All the while, the White House is subjecting our allies and partners to contradictory statements that cause confusion and dampen the prospects of a peaceful solution.

We hear different thoughts on different days. Before firing him, President Trump routinely undercut Secretary Tillerson and, with it, our diplomatic high ground. Confusing our allies in South Korea and Japan, whose assistance in helping resolve the North Korean crisis is indispensable, only serves to embolden Kim Jong Un, who seeks to drive a wedge between the United States and our allies.

We cannot afford to fail. I am concerned that if these talks do not go well, President Trump will be able to claim he tried both economic pressure and diplomacy, with neither path having solved the problem. He will be left with the conclusion that the only approach remaining will be military force. We must be clear. There is no military solution to the North Korea crisis.

Today marks the 15th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Although the current situation we face with North Korea is not identical to the one we faced in the runup to the Iraq war in 2003, the North Korea situation is, in fact, worse, and the consequences are even more severe. Unlike Iraq, North Korea has nearly completed the development of long-range nuclear-armed missiles that will be capable of creating nuclear mushroom clouds in our cities.

We all agree we need to act to ensure that this never happens. The only responsible course of action is for the administration to use all tools of American statecraft to reduce the threats from North Korea. We have an obligation to American families, service-members, and our allies to say, unequivocally, that we did everything in our power without resorting to armed conflict.

Let's return the United States of America to the forefront of statecraft and allow for our diplomats to advance our interests without having to risk a

frivolous loss of life. That is what is at stake as the President moves further away from using the kinds of tools which are available that can try to peacefully resolve this conflict with North Korea.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators COONS, CARDIN, LEE, SANDERS, and I be recognized for up to 5 minutes each and then Senator CORKER be recognized for up to 15 minutes prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, I just returned from a trip to a major transatlantic conference in Europe. While the Europeans have spent a lot of time over the course of the last 12 months hand-wringing about whether the United States is committed to Europe, committed to NATO, committed to our common defense, my feeling upon going to Brussels for this particular conference is, they are kind of over the hand-wringing. They are now just making plans to move on without us. They are making plans to protect themselves without us. They are making plans to set the rules of the road economically, politically, and culturally around the world without the United States. The evidence of that was very clear.

The Europeans are setting up something called the European Defense Initiative, in which they are going to start doing military planning and purchasing outside of NATO because they are just not convinced, not confident that the United States is going to be seriously engaged in NATO. That compromises our security as the Europeans start to make plans for their defense without us, even though we still have an obligation under the treaty to protect them.

Over and over, you see the world moving on as they watch this massive withdrawal of America from the world. The President said at a rally in Alabama a few months ago that the world is starting to respect the United States of America again. That could not be further from the truth. The Pew organization charts other countries' opinions of the United States. It also charts whether other countries believe the United States is going to act in the best interests of the world. The numbers are, frankly, startling.

Of the 37 countries they surveyed, only two of them have higher confidence in the United States under Trump than they did under Obama. One is a rather statistically significant increase, that being Russia, which by 42 percentage points is more confident that the United States is going to act in that country's best interests. South Korea had 88 percent confidence under Obama and has 17 percent confidence

under Trump. Canada had 83 percent confidence under Obama and has 22 percent confidence under Trump. Germany is 86 to 11. They have come to this belief because, as my colleagues have mentioned, the Trump administration had signaled its unwillingness to try to set a moral tone for the world in the way that it budgets. The budget they presented to us reduces accounts dedicated to countering Russian aggression around its periphery by 63 percent. It is a clear telegraph to Europe that they are on their own, that countries that are trying to fight back against a country that wants to reestablish a new version of the Soviet Empire will have no help from the United States.

In this budget, the National Endowment for Democracy is cut by \$100 million. It is no secret that countries like Hungary and Poland are starting to slip away from traditional democratic norms. Countries like the Philippines are doing the same because there is not a moral force here in the United States committing to bring them closer to the ideals of participatory democracy.

There is a \$1.6 billion cut in humanitarian aid, telling the rest of the world: If you want to solve these enormous problems of humanitarian catastrophe—famine and refugee displacement—you can't look to us anymore. You are on your own again.

There is a 35-percent cut in overall international narcotics and law enforcement funding, just at a time when record amounts of fentanyl are finding their way into the United States.

The moment of panic is over for the world. They have watched this administration walk away from its traditional obligations to try to stand up for the rule of law, to try to promote democracy and human rights, and to try to protect America's interests and our allies. They are simply making other plans. I hope the next administration will be able to correct that, but those plans are hard to break once they are made.

I hope Republicans and Democrats will stand up to make sure that America does not become any weaker in the world than it already is today, 15 months into this administration. We are less safe as a nation because of this wholesale withdrawal from the global stage. It is not too late to try to turn it around.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I join my colleagues on the floor this afternoon to address the mounting concerns we have with the foreign policy of the Trump administration. I want to thank my colleague, Senator MENENDEZ of New Jersey, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and comment at the outset on two things that have been widely said that I don't think are true.

First is that Democrats are bottling up the President's vitally needed nominees for senior ambassadorial positions

or senior Department of State nominations and that we are holding key nominees.

Frankly, nothing could be further from the truth. Earlier today, in a business meeting, our Foreign Relations Committee, which works well on a bipartisan basis, voted out a whole series of Ambassadors, treaties, and Assistant Secretaries of State.

Second, I heard it said by some pundits that Democrats wish President Trump ill, that we are working to do everything we can to hold him back and prevent him from being successful.

Let me start by saying that I think all of us know that we are strongest when we stand together and work together. All of us have at some point heard the old adage that politics should stop at the water's edge, and nothing would make me happier than to see our foreign policy, our military, and our diplomatic efforts succeed around the world.

I do not wish our President ill or our State Department a lack of success, but I think it deserves mentioning for the few minutes I am taking on the floor today that President Trump, who promised as a candidate to be unpredictable and nontraditional, has overperformed in that category. His foreign policy has been defined by inconsistency, volatility, unpredictability, and at times, a failure to advance our values. This comes exactly at a time, as my colleague from Connecticut was just reciting, when our allies and partners crave stability and leadership and when the threats to our democratic way of life from Russia and China are on the rise.

Trump's "shock and awe" style of governing was demonstrated recently by his abrupt firing of the Secretary of State in a tweet and his further humiliation of the Secretary of State in stories that dribbled out about exactly how and when and where he was fired. We should not be conducting foreign policy in the same way that one might host a reality TV show like "The Apprentice."

In just a year, as I have attended a variety of conferences and meetings around the world, I have been struck by the number of ways in which the President has undermined alliances and friendships that have taken decades to build. Let me briefly review a few of the ways our European and Asian allies have been puzzled or confounded—by our withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership; by imposing a travel plan on citizens from majority Muslim countries; by withdrawing from the Paris climate accord; by imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum, including against our close North American and European allies; by questioning our commitments to NATO; and by denigrating an entire continent when discussing the value of potential immigrants from Africa.

Real and consistent leadership around the world that reflects American values is needed now more than

ever. In the dozen countries I have visited for regional security conferences in the past year, I have heard the same from our vital allies. Senator MCCAIN and I traveled to Halifax in Canada and to Singapore in Southeast Asia for a series of bilateral meetings of representatives of close and trusted allies. Senator FLAKE and I have traveled to Africa. Senator GRAHAM and I have traveled to the Middle East. In all of these trips, what I have heard is that our allies are concerned, that they need reassurance about how and where we stand, and that in many cases, yes, they are beginning to move on past us and to reach accommodations with China or Russia, having concluded that we are not committed to engagement with the world.

Every time I go on a visit to a foreign embassy—an embassy of the United States overseas—I sit down with our Foreign Service officers and I ask about their work and service, and I am overwhelmingly impressed with the professionalism and dedication of our career development professionals and our diplomats. Yet, overwhelmingly, the big number of vacancies at the State Department and a budget that proposes a more than 30-percent cut in the State Department and USAID have had a significant, demoralizing impact on these people whom we count on to advance America's interest and values around the world.

Let me also say briefly that on the continent of Africa, where I have spent a great deal of my time on the Foreign Relations Committee, we are missing Ambassadors to some of the biggest and most important countries—South Africa and Tanzania being just two, for example. It is a continent where China's pervasive presence is not being countered by an America that is robustly engaged. Why does this matter? Because in this century, Africa will become the fastest growing and largest market for our goods and should be the continent in which we have the closest alliances and partnership. But instead of building partnerships and helping to extend markets here at home, the Trump administration is squandering the current momentum and watching from the sidelines as democratic norms deteriorate.

As a member of both the Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees, I was gravely concerned that for a second year in a row, the Trump administration budget proposed deep cuts in diplomacy and development. We must recognize that while these investments serve a humanitarian purpose, they also make us stronger by spreading American values, safer by building coalitions, less susceptible to terrorism by creating a more stable world, and more prosperous by creating stronger export markets for our goods. If we want to remain a global leader, we need a strong State Department and USAID that are sufficiently funded.

Let me turn to the matter of Russia before I conclude. Throughout his ad-

ministration, President Trump has not only turned away from some of our critical allies and weakened our commitments to international coalitions but has also refused to head-on, clearly address the real and multifaceted threats we face from Russia.

Russia's activities, as has been testified to by senior administration officials over many hearings, now are directly interfering with our democracy—our last election and likely our next election, as well as those of our closest allies throughout the world. Rather than sending a clear and forceful signal to Russia that our political affairs are not to be meddled with, President Trump has instead at times turned aside from this challenge and failed to address it.

Let me conclude by simply saying that now more than ever, the United States must lead in the world, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee on a bipartisan basis to advance our interests.

Thank you, Mr. President.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time because I think this issue is an extremely important issue. I am talking about the authority of the Congress of the United States versus the President on the introduction of our troops into war or hostilities. This has been a struggle we have been debating for a long time. Congress passed the War Powers Act over the objections of the President because we recognize that the Constitution gives us the power to introduce troops into harm's way.

The resolution says very clearly that the introduction of the U.S. Armed Forces into hostilities will allow Congress to have an expedited process if the administration has not gotten the authorization for the use of that military force. The Supreme Court decision made it very difficult for us to enforce that, causing us to pass, in the State Department authorization, a process in which a joint resolution could be filed in order for Congress to express itself if the President has not sought the authorization for the use of military force.

We now have a circumstance where the United States, in my view—the President has introduced American troops into hostilities by assisting the Saudis in refueling missions in regard to the campaign in Yemen. To me, that is introducing troops. Whether it is right or wrong, Congress has a responsibility to respond to this. I say that knowing that our Presiding Officer has been very articulate about the need for us to pass an authorization for the use of military force in regard to our campaign against ISIS.

Here is the challenge we have. The administration and previous administrations have interpreted hostilities in such a narrow way, it would take away

from Congress our ability to have the authorization for the introduction of American troops into hostile circumstances. Yet compare that with this administration's and previous administrations' interpretations of the 2001 authorization for use of military force, which we passed after the attack on our country on 9/11. They would have you believe that authorization, which was limited to those who planned the attack against us in 9/11, applies to our military campaign against ISIS in Syria or ISIS in Yemen or wherever we may find ISIS anywhere in the world. I think that is an absurd interpretation.

Yes, I know the distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is on the floor. I think our committee needs to take up this issue. We need to take up what is happening in Yemen with our support of the Saudis and what is happening in regard to the authorization for the use of military force. But this campaign has been going on for a long time. Congress needs to weigh in whether we are for or against it. We need to exert our jurisdiction, and we haven't done that. It is very frustrating that those of us who believe very deeply in our constitutional responsibilities, assume that responsibility—and I have a lot of confidence in the distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but I question whether we are going to get more time in the future to debate this issue. I know the chairman will give us time in committee, but will we have time on the floor of the Senate to debate this issue? I think we need to debate it and vote up or down whether American troops should be assisting in this mission.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I stand to urge a "no" vote on the motion to table. We are involved as cobelligerents in hostilities in someone else's war—in a civil war in Yemen.

It is very difficult to dispute the contention that there is no decision made by a government that is more severe, more serious, that carries with it more dire consequences than sending brave young men and women sworn to protect us into harm's way, into battle, into hostilities.

We have been faced with the debate here about what amounts to hostilities. We have the executive branch of government that understandably has defined that term narrowly but in this case so narrowly as to obliterate any meaning behind that word, basically suggesting that we are not in hostilities unless we have people on the ground firing upon an enemy and being fired upon. That is not always the way modern warfare is conducted and hasn't been for some time.

The fact is that we have our uniformed military personnel who are engaged in things like midair refueling

on combat missions, refueling the combat aircraft of another country when those combat aircraft are in route to a battlefield, to a theater of warfare. If those aren't hostilities, I don't know what is.

We have been told that we need to do this in regular order. Let's talk about regular order for a minute because, as I mentioned a moment ago, there is nothing more serious than sending our uniformed military personnel into hostilities. We have in this body adopted laws and procedures making it possible for us to receive fast-track consideration of measures that indicate that the executive branch of government has overstepped its power.

We are in our third year involved in this civil war in Yemen—3 years—and yet this hasn't come up for a vote; 3 years and we haven't had anything come out of committee and voted on the Senate floor. Three years ought to be long enough. In fact, the War Powers Resolution gives us expedited consideration. It gives the committee 10 days to consider that. The committee has now had more than twice that time to consider that, and the committee has not put anything out. This is why we are well within our rights, well within the boundaries of what is appropriate, in fact, and well within what the Constitution already grants us, which is the power to declare war. That power, with good reason, was not vested in the executive branch of government. It was vested only in Congress—that branch of government most accountable to the people at the most regular intervals.

The reason this is so important is that before we send our young people into a place where they could die, we want to make sure that an open, honest debate is held in public view, not behind closed doors at the Pentagon or at some other government office building, but right here on the Senate floor and in the House of Representatives. We cannot exercise that power capably, we cannot claim to be mindful, and we cannot be deemed faithful to our oath to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States if we don't look out for our authorities and if we don't make sure that someone else isn't exercising authority that was granted to this body. That authority belongs not to any one person; it belongs to the people.

If we refuse to take this vote today, if we choose instead to table this measure rather than to allow it to come up for a vote on the Senate floor, we are choosing not to decide, and we will still have made a choice—a choice to abdicate our responsibility. If we make that decision today, then shame on us. It is our prerogative as a coequal branch of government to make sure that we do our job, to do that which only Congress can do.

This is, in fact, a war. There are, in fact, grave humanitarian concerns presented by that war, and that makes it all the more important, not less impor-

tant, for us to debate this and for us to discuss this under the light of day, in public, and on the Senate floor.

I urge my colleagues in the strongest terms I am capable of communicating to vote against the motion to table.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I have enjoyed hearing the discussion about the item before us. I must say that I would feel a whole lot better about this debate if it were focused on our refueling French jets going into Mali—the same exact debate. I assume these individuals would consider those to be hostilities, but, somehow or another, that doesn't rise to congressional approval.

This one, I think, is politically tinged. Saudi Arabia certainly has issues. They have conducted themselves in manners that we wish were better. The Crown Prince was here today, and all of us who met with him "demarched" him, if you will, on the conduct relative to Yemen. Yet, at the same time, we know that because American folks are involved in refueling and because we are helping, to a degree, with intelligence, we know that less civilians are being killed there. We know that. We know that our being there has affected their conduct.

I wish to talk about process here. The sponsors of the resolution, who I have great respect for, have used a very entrepreneurial method to bring this to the floor, and I don't say that to be pejorative. They have reached into the War Powers Act and pulled out something that was unintended for this purpose. I think everyone understands that, and I think everyone understands that if we don't table this, we will be setting a precedent here. It will be a situation of first impression where from now on, when our Air Force is refueling jets in the air, we are involved in hostilities. I don't think that is a standard that we wish to set.

I want to argue this on a different level. It is hard for me to believe that we would take up an issue of this serious nature and not allow the committee of jurisdiction to work its will. We had a hearing last week that Senator MCCONNELL set up for all Senators to come in and be briefed on Yemen. His stated reason for doing that was that most people in the Senate don't know much about what is happening in Yemen. People on the Foreign Relations Committee do, and the people on Intel do, and the people in Armed Services do. But most of the Senate has not really been involved recently in that issue.

Typically, the way we work around here is that the committee does its work. It does its recommendation. It works with the administration, and you come forth with a piece of legislation. Can we imagine, for instance, with tax reform, if we just had some kind of entrepreneurial way of bringing tax reform to the floor without the Finance Committee working, or bringing

FISA to the floor without Intel working? That is not the way we are supposed to do things here.

So we have a bill that is being generated right now—it is a bipartisan bill—by JEANNE SHAHEEN and TODD YOUNG. It may not be the bill we deal with on Yemen, but it is just now being developed.

By the way, I skipped a beat here. I want to refresh people's memory as to what we are voting on. We are not voting on anything but a decision to discharge the Yemen issue from the committee without the committee taking any action, without the committee having any hearings. This is a vote to say that we are going to skip the Foreign Relations Committee and we are going to set precedent here on the floor in this entrepreneurial way and that we have reached into the War Powers Act to find a clause to bring it to the floor, which was never intended for this purpose.

So what I would say to people is that a better way of handling this would be to table this motion, to let the Foreign Relations Committee do the work that you have assigned the Foreign Relations Committee to do. We are going to have a hearing on Yemen. We have a piece of legislation that is being developed in a bipartisan way, with the Republicans and Democrats, to deal with this issue. Let us work our will in the appropriate way—by the way, in a way that actually will generate an outcome.

In addition, I know there are Members on the floor who have been frustrated, as someone referenced earlier, that the 2001–2002 AUMF is still being used. The Presiding Officer has been very involved in trying to develop a new AUMF that would supersede those two AUMFs and give the Senate and the House the ability to weigh in every 4 years on these types of actions. We are going to have a markup on a bill that our Presiding Officer, Senator KAINE from Virginia, Senator YOUNG from Indiana, and many people have been involved in. That markup is going to take place on April 19.

So, hopefully, the Senate will not only have an ability to deal with a real bill on Yemen that actually will generate a real outcome coming through committee but also will have the ability to deal with an AUMF that will set aside the fact that for years the Congress has not weighed in on this issue. To me, that is a much better outcome.

I urge everyone in this body, instead of following this unique process that is not going to generate an outcome regardless, to allow the Foreign Relations Committee to do its work and to bring a bill to the floor that will generate an outcome. I am going to make a motion in a moment to table it, but I realize there may be one more speaker before I do so.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a brief moment?

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I appreciate the leadership of the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and I agree with his proposed outcome on this vote. That is not to diminish the importance of the issues raised by the Senator from Utah and the Senator from Vermont, but I do agree with him that it is the preferred, careful, cautious way of dealing with competing interests in a complex world.

I just ask the Senator further to that point whether he can confirm my understanding that actually using this unique process—is it his understanding, as it is mine—that there would actually be a vote-arama; that is, we would end up voting on multiple different proposals, not just this one proposal, and create perhaps some confusion and some more chaos in what is admittedly a complex and sensitive foreign relations and national security matter?

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, that is correct.

So, in closing, I would just ask—just like every other committee here in the Senate that hopefully takes its work seriously and does work especially on important matters like this that affect people's lives—that this body would think that a better recommendation would be to table this effort to have this wild West debate on the floor over the course of the next several hours and, instead of doing it in that manner, to give the committee of jurisdiction the ability to work its will with Yemen through hearings, through a process on the committee that would actually bring a bill to the floor that has been thought through and where we had worked with other bodies of government to get it in a place where then it could be amended and dealt with in a more methodical and appropriate way.

I would like to remind people one more time that we also plan to mark up an AUMF on April 19 to deal with the lingering issue of having an open situation where we are still dealing with ISIS and al-Qaida and others based on something that was authorized to be done in Afghanistan years ago.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the resolution that we will soon be voting on is really very simple. It has two basic points. Point No. 1, I and the 14 other cosponsors of this resolution believe that under the definitions laid out in the 1973 War Powers Resolution, U.S. forces have been introduced into the Saudi-led war in Yemen, a war which is causing a humanitarian disaster.

I would say to my good friend Senator CORKER, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, that this war has been going on for 3 years. Some 10,000 civilians in Yemen are dead and 40,000 have been wounded. A million are dealing with cholera right now, and millions have been displaced.

You come tonight on the floor and you say: We are going to hold a hearing. That is good, but it is 3 years too late.

The issue that we are dealing with right now is whether or not the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Congress accepts its constitutional responsibility on the issues of war. This is not a complicated issue, and I don't think anybody here disagrees. Article I, section 8, of the Constitution says not that the President can make war and send our young people into harm's way. It is the Congress of the United States that should make war.

Our role now in Yemen working with the Saudi-led intervention there is one of hostilities under the War Powers Resolution of the United States. It is not just my view on this. As many may know here—as I suspect the chairman of the committee knows—last November, by a vote of 366 to 30, the U.S. House of Representatives agreed with the essence of what Senator LEE and I are trying to do, and the House passed a nonbinding resolution stating that U.S. involvement in the Yemen civil war is unauthorized. Every Member of the Democratic leadership voted for that, as did the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE.

An editorial in the New York Times today states:

The United States initially deployed forces to combat Al Qaeda in Yemen under post-Sept. 11 congressional authorization measures. But Congress never specifically approved military involvement in the Saudi-Houthi war even though the Constitution and the 1973 War Powers Act give lawmakers a role.

The New York Times:

For too long, Congress has abdicated its role as America prolonged its stay in some wars and expanded into others. And presidents have been too reluctant to share these crucial decisions with lawmakers. Resolutions like this—

The one we are debating—

can and must force serious debate and accountability.

I say this to my friend the chairman: I think now of the two major foreign policy disasters that have taken place in our lifetime—No. 1, the war in Vietnam. In that war—a Democratic administration under an otherwise very good President, Lyndon Johnson—he and the Secretary of Defense misled and lied to the American people with regard to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. That is now established fact as a result of declassified information. The United States got sucked into that war, and my generation—the young men of my generation—suffered so terribly. Over 60,000 died, and many others came home wounded in body and in spirit. The U.S. Congress abdicated its responsibility at that point in 1964.

Fifteen years ago—oddly enough, on this day—there was the war in Iraq, under a Republican administration, and the administration lied to the American people again. Where was Congress getting the facts? We had the

Vice President of the United States: Oh, Saddam Hussein is building weapons of mass destruction. There is a connection between Saddam Hussein and Iraq and the 9/11 perpetrators.

It was a lie. It was a lie. Mistakenly, Congress voted to approve the war based on false information.

So what I say today is that it is time for the Congress to accept its constitutional responsibility. I don't know how well we will do. Maybe we will screw it up as well. It is very possible. But that is what the Founding Fathers suggested, and I think they were right. We are closer to the people—the House and the Senate—than is the White House, this White House or any other White House.

So there are two issues today. Do we accept our constitutional responsibility to vote on matters of war? I would suggest that every Member of the Senate vote yes. Don't duck your responsibility. Don't abdicate your responsibility. Second of all, this war in Yemen, in my view, has been a humanitarian disaster as a result of Saudi intervention. But the most important vote is, do we actually have a vote on whether American troops are involved in the war in Yemen?

I hope very much we will vote against Senator CORKER's motion to table, and I hope that after we do that, we will vote for the resolution that says it is time for the United States to get out of Yemen.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, very briefly, I just want to set the record straight. The House of Representatives voted to say that the war in Yemen is not covered by the 2001–2002 AUMF, and I think this body would agree. They did not do as was just mentioned by the Senator from Vermont. As a matter of fact, they decided not to take up this measure that we are taking up today because they thought it was not a good measure to take up.

I don't want anybody in this body to think that the House has already supported this effort. The House not only didn't support it, they wouldn't take it up because they thought it was damaging to our country's foreign policy.

I hope that today people will join me in voting to table this motion and to let the committee do its work as it is supposed to do. Let's bring something to the floor that will actually have an outcome, and then let's have a debate down the road on the AUMF—the 2001 and 2002 AUMF—which I hope will be given floor time.

With that, I think all time has expired.

Mr. President, I move to table the Sanders motion to discharge S.J. Res. 54, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote 58 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Reed
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeben	Sasse
Coons	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Jones	Thune
Cotton	Kennedy	Tillis
Crapo	Lankford	Toomey
Cruz	Manchin	Whitehouse
Donnelly	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Menendez	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Nelson	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Harris	Paul
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Lee	Tester
Collins	Markey	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkeley	Warner
Durbin	Moran	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The motion was agreed to.

ALLOW STATES AND VICTIMS TO FIGHT ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, last night I came to the floor to talk about legislation we are debating in the Senate this week that has to do with combating human trafficking, an issue that every Senator in the Chamber cares about. Last night, I talked about some of the women and children who have been exploited online, their stories—some of the heartbreaking stories.

This opportunity we have before us is to pass legislation that addresses that very directly because we are seeing in this country, in this century, unbelievably, an increase in trafficking right now. The experts all say it is for one primary reason; that is, because the trafficking is moved online.

The ruthless efficiency of the internet, the dark side of the internet—Mr. President, you have been involved with this issue in our committee. As you know, we spent a couple of years coming to this point, an 18-month investigation of what is happening online,

why it is happening, and then coming up with a legislative solution. The reports of human trafficking to one of the major anti-trafficking groups in the country, called Polaris, through their hotline and through their text line, have increased 842 percent over the past 10 years. This is consistent across the board in talking to other experts. There is this increase. When they look at it, where they see it is happening is online. Victims have told me, have told you and other Members, this has now moved from the street to the smartphone, from the street corner to the internet.

According to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, nearly 75 percent of the child trafficking reports it receives from the public involve one single website; that is, backpage. That is why we spend a lot of time looking into backpage, why this was happening, and how we could address it.

According to Shared Hope International—another advocacy group—the number is even higher than 75 percent. We researched this through a process that many in this body were involved with. CLAIRE McCASKILL was the ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee On Investigations. We investigated that. I see she is on the floor now. She and I, along with our subcommittee, along with you, Mr. President, and other members of the full committee, looked into this issue. What we found was even more shocking than we expected. We knew people were being trafficked online by this website. We knew they had to be complicit with some of this. What we didn't know was they were actually taking ads and altering the ads, editing the ads to try to hide the fact that people were selling underaged girls online. As they put it, they were cleaning the ads for illegal transactions and then covering up the evidence of these crimes in order to increase their profits.

Last night, I talked about three brave mothers who shared the tragic stories of their daughters who were exploited and sold for sex on backpage.com. Their daughters were between the ages of 14 and 16 when they were trafficked. Kubiiki Pride was one of the women we talked about. She is also part of a documentary called “I am Jane Doe.” It tells the stories of her family and other families. It is a powerful, powerful presentation, and it is powerful in that you can feel their frustration, feel their pain. It is not easy to see, but it is important to see, and I recommend it. You can go on Netflix and find “I am Jane Doe.”

Unfortunately, for those mothers and countless others, backpage has gotten away with this. It is not because people haven't tried to sue them, prosecutors haven't tried to go after them; it is because the courts have consistently said they are shielded from prosecution, they are shielded from these lawsuits. They are shielded by a Federal law, one we passed in this Chamber 21 years ago.

It is called the Communications Decency Act. It was a well-intended law. In 1996, the focus was, when the internet was in its infancy, trying to ensure there could be freedom of the internet.

Ironically, part of the original intention of the Communications Decency Act was to protect children from indecent material on the internet by letting websites remove and block some of that explicit material. Now that same law is being used as a shield by online sex traffickers who promote and engage in this with immunity. This Federal law is being used by websites to get away with something that would be illegal, criminal if they were to do it on the street corner.

Congress did not intend this broad immunity, but numerous courts across the country have made it clear their hands are tied because of the illegal precedents that have been set the way the courts have interpreted this law. As the lawmaking branch of the Federal Government, it is up to us to fix this injustice. No one else can do it.

One of the Federal courts said this cannot be fixed by litigation; it has to be fixed by legislation. That is why America's district attorneys, 50 of the State attorneys general in this country, judges all over the country, and many others have called on Congress to amend the Communications Decency Act and fix this injustice.

In one of the most direct calls for congressional action yet, in August of last year, a Sacramento judge cited the broad Communications Decency Act in dismissing pimping charges against backpage.com. The court opinion stated: "If and until Congress sees fit to amend the immunity law, the broad reach of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act even applies to those alleged to support the exploitation of others by human trafficking."

This judge issued an invitation to Congress to act. Others have as well. Websites that knowingly sell vulnerable women and children for sex are profiting and getting away with sex trafficking because of a Federal law. It is up to Congress to do the right thing, to fix this loophole. That is why my co-author, RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, who is on the floor this evening, and I introduced the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, or SESTA, alongside a bipartisan group of four other original cosponsors: Senator JOHN MCCAIN, Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, Senator JOHN CORNYN, and Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP. Soon, others joined us. In that first day, we had 24 cosponsors, bipartisan. Soon, we had a majority of Republicans and majority of Democrats cosponsoring this legislation. I want to thank those five original cosponsors because they helped us put together legislation that was targeted, focused, and actually fixes the problem.

SESTA will provide justice for victims of online sex trafficking and hold accountable the websites that knowingly facilitate these crimes by making two very narrowly focused changes to

Federal law. First, it allows victims to get the justice they deserve by removing the Communications Decency Act's broad liability protections for a narrow set of bad actors, specifically for websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking crimes. Second, it will allow State prosecutors and State attorneys general to prosecute these websites that violate Federal trafficking laws.

SESTA says if you are violating sex trafficking laws and you are doing it knowingly, you are facilitating it, then you have to be held to account. That is common sense. This bill includes legislation from the House side that creates new criminal penalties. It creates a new Federal crime for websites that have the intent to promote or facilitate illegal prostitution.

All of these changes will help to hold bad actors accountable while doing nothing to impair the free internet. In fact, SESTA will protect websites that do not actively and knowingly engage in online sex trafficking. We do that by preserving the Communications Decency Act's Good Samaritan provision, which protects good actors who proactively block, and screen for, offensive material, thus shielding them from frivolous lawsuits.

SESTA's fair, commonsense approach is why this bill has an extraordinary coalition of support. National law enforcement organizations, including the Fraternal Order of Police, faith-based groups, the civil rights community, major businesses, even including a number of tech companies, support this legislation. Most importantly, anti-trafficking advocates and trafficking survivors are the ones who support SESTA. They are the ones we listened to when we drafted this legislation. They are the folks back in Ohio, back in Connecticut—back in our States—who came to us and talked to us about this issue. They are the ones we not just listened to but actually worked with to help draft something that would work to close this loophole.

This bill makes all the sense in the world, and it will do its part in helping to close this gap, in helping to deal, in this century, in this country with the amazing ability that people have to exploit someone online criminally and not be held liable.

I thank Leader MITCH MCCONNELL for his leadership, for his commitment to combat sex trafficking, and for putting this bill on the floor for a vote.

I thank Senator JOHN THUNE, who chairs the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, and BILL NELSON, who is the ranking member. They held a hearing on this bill and marked it up, and it addressed some of the concerns that had been expressed by the tech community.

Here in the Senate, we now have over 60 cosponsors. This has not been an issue of politics or partisanship. It has been an issue of the heart. It is about preventing exploitation. It is about providing justice. There are some in

this Chamber who will want to change this legislation over the next couple of days as we debate it.

I have a great deal of respect for my colleague from Oregon, Senator RON WYDEN. I talked about him last night on the floor. I talked about the work he has done to combat human trafficking. I talked about the legislation I did with him to provide better data for sex trafficking, which was his legislation. He was also a leader in passing the Communications Decency Act, which we are amending through this legislation. I understand he is passionate about that bill that passed 21 years ago.

We took a very targeted approach here, which is why the Internet Association, which represents much of the tech community—not all but much of it—actually endorses our efforts. This is the Senate's immediate opportunity to help stop online sex trafficking while protecting a free and open internet. It is the right balance. It has already passed the House of Representatives. The White House has shown a commitment to it and is willing to sign the legislation. Now it is the Senate's turn to act.

So let me tell you where I stand. I stand with law enforcement officials all around the country and with prosecutors all around the country who have asked us to pass this legislation to give them the tools they need to stop this exploitation. I stand with Kubiiki Pride, whom I talked about earlier, Nacole S., Yvonne Ambrose, and the mothers across the country who have had their children exploited at the hands of online sex traffickers. I stand with the young women and children I have met in Dayton and Columbus and Akron and Toledo and Cincinnati and Cleveland—all over Ohio—who are sex trafficking survivors, who are victims who want justice.

I know that, together, we will all stand on the right side of history when the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act is voted on, has passed this Chamber, and eventually becomes law so as to immediately help provide justice for these victims. Justice cannot be seen, but its absence is felt. Those who have been trafficked online, who see the websites that have knowingly facilitated in this prosper and escape legal consequences, are the ones who have experienced real injustice. They have felt that injustice. We can right this wrong. Let's pass the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act to provide these victims the justice they deserve.

I notice again, as I mentioned earlier, the coauthor of this legislation—my colleague—is on the floor. He is a former Federal prosecutor. He has dealt with these issues both as a prosecutor and as a legislator. We are the cochairs and cofounders of the Caucus to End Human Trafficking, which we started 6 or 7 years ago. I thank him for his work on this important legislation.

I yield my time to Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, at the very start, I am grateful, and I praise my cosponsor, Senator PORTMAN, who has helped to lead in the championing of this measure. He has really been steadfast in the face of a lot of challenges. It was a difficult bill to draft and then to redraft and change again in response to suggestions that we received from friends and adversaries, but Senator PORTMAN has been really stalwart throughout it.

I join him in thanking our partners, Senator MCCASKILL, Senator MCCAIN, Senator HEITKAMP, Senator CORNYN, and, of course, Senator THUNE, who is the chairman of the committee, and Ranking Member NELSON.

This road began for me more than 10 years ago when I was the State attorney general in Connecticut, and I wanted to pursue legal remedies against the websites. Back then, it was Craigslist or MySpace that promoted sex trafficking and prostitution as well as pornography. My staff informed me that there was a provision of Federal law—section 230 of the Communications Decency Act—that would stop me in my tracks. Indeed, it has stopped others, most recently some of the survivors of sex trafficking who were told by a Federal court of appeals, in effect, that what happened to you is outrageous, and there should be a remedy for you, but section 230 of the Communications Decency Act blocks your day in court. It closes the courthouse doors to you in your seeking a legal remedy.

Along the way, there were many who said to Senator PORTMAN and to me that we could never pass this legislation because it would hold trafficking websites accountable. They said the opponents of this change were too powerful, too big, too entrenched. They said the victims and survivors were too powerless, too invisible.

We have met them. We know their stories. They are heartbreaking. They are children—some younger than the pages in this Chamber today—who have endured torture that is unspeakable and unthinkable for anyone of any age, and they deserve their day in court, rights, and remedies—real remedies that make the rights real.

So I thank Senator PORTMAN, and I thank, as he has also done, those survivors who have come forward and been the faces and voices of our cause. Their courage and strength and that of their family members have enabled us to reach this point.

I emphasize that this measure is very carefully and narrowly written to address a specific harm, and I want to take a couple of minutes to correct any misunderstanding that there may be in this Chamber.

First, some of the legislation's critics have claimed it will impose liability on the so-called Good Samaritan. In reality, this bill explicitly preserves subsection 230(c)(2)(A) of the Communications Decency Act, commonly called

the Good Samaritan provision. This provision ensures that websites cannot be held liable on account of actions taken in good faith to restrict objectionable material. SESTA is crystal clear on this point. A website operator's good deeds cannot be used against him.

This measure is also technology neutral. It imposes no requirement that website operators use a particular technology to screen their sites for objectionable content. They are free to use whatever technology they wish. That is why the Internet Association and its member companies support this legislation. They know that if technology companies work to prevent human trafficking and not to profit from it, they have nothing to fear from this measure.

I understand that an amendment has been offered to restate SESTA's Good Samaritan provision. Even if the amendment only protected Good Samaritans, it would be unnecessary and potentially confusing to the courts. I emphasize that point. It would obfuscate and confuse the good intent of the Good Samaritan provision. It would also derail this widely popular legislation by sending it back to the House, where special interests will have another chance to kill it. Unfortunately, this proposed amendment—perhaps unintentionally—would not simply protect Good Samaritans; it would also protect websites that operate in bad faith. It would also protect websites that identify sex trafficking ads and then leave them up in order to continue profiting from them.

I will briefly talk about one other amendment that has been offered—again, while being well-intentioned—that threatens to derail this legislation.

The amendment would provide additional money to Attorney General Sessions to investigate and prosecute websites that criminally facilitate human trafficking. I believe law enforcement ought to have additional resources. I firmly support more funding to investigate and prosecute this criminal activity, but this bill is not the means by which to do it.

In fact, law enforcement and the community against human trafficking are strongly against these amendments. Let me repeat. These law enforcement groups include the Fraternal Order of Police, the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies, the FBI Agents Association, and I could go down the list. In fact, there is no need to.

I ask unanimous consent that the letters from these groups be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, March 19, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MCCONNELL AND SCHUMER: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 1865, the "Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act," which includes language from S. 1693, the "Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act," which the FOP also supports.

This legislation will allow law enforcement to investigate and prosecute individuals and businesses that advertise or facilitate sex trafficking more effectively. The bill will create a new Federal offense prohibiting the use or operation of an in-state facility, like a website, that promotes or facilitates illegal prostitution.

The FOP is opposed to the two pending amendments because they may have the unintended consequence of derailing this important legislation. Amendments to this bill will only continue to deprive the survivors and victims of sex trafficking of getting justice.

On behalf of the more than 335,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, we urge you both to pass this legislation without any amendments on the Senate floor. If we can be of any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Senior Advisor, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

MARCH 19, 2018.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Democratic Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: We, the undersigned organizations, representing prosecutors, chiefs of police, sheriffs, rank and file officers and chief executives of state investigative agencies at the federal, state, and local level, write to urge a clean vote this week in the Senate on the House-passed FOSTA/SESTA package so that victims and federal and state law enforcement can better seek to hold all responsible parties accountable for the facilitation of sex trafficking. At the same time, we urge you to reject the proposed amendment that would create a shield for companies vaguely attempting to filter content on their websites and the proposed amendment that would provide additional funding through the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute website operators that criminally facilitate sex trafficking. Simply put, the amendment to create a liability shield is bad public policy and the funding amendment is a poison pill that is dead on arrival if sent back to the House.

As membership organizations charged with protecting our communities, we can't afford to sacrifice the opportunity to pass good public policy to hold facilitators of sex trafficking accountable. Through extensive discussions over the past couple of years, a delicate balance has been struck among a wide variety of stakeholders to achieve the legislation pending before the Senate. The House passed version, which included language from the Senate SESTA version, was a carefully crafted piece of legislation to help state and local law enforcement bring more of these sex trafficking cases forward and we

encourage you to provide us with the tools needed to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies;
 FBI Agents Association;
 Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association;
 International Association of Chiefs of Police;
 Major Cities Chiefs Association;
 Major County Sheriffs of America;
 National Association of Police Organizations;
 National District Attorneys Association;
 National Fusion Center Association;
 National Sheriffs' Association.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, my colleagues should take heed of what these groups are saying because they see through the potentially derailing impact of these amendments.

I close by again thanking my friend and partner, Senator PORTMAN, as well as Senator MCCASKILL, Senator HEITKAMP, Senator CORNYN, and Senator MCCAIN.

This measure is truly bipartisan, as it should be. There is nothing partisan about sex trafficking. There is nothing excusable or tolerable about it. I hope the Senate will do its job tomorrow and send this legislation to the President's desk.

I yield the floor to my partner, Senator PORTMAN, with my thanks.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I know there are other Members who are interested in speaking.

Let me just say, Senator BLUMENTHAL's role as a prosecutor has informed him; therefore, the legislation is better for it.

We just heard what Senator BLUMENTHAL said. He understands this bill inside and out and the fact that there are well-meaning amendments that are being offered that would derail this legislation, which is something we want to avoid. We want to get this to the President's desk for his signature and begin to save people.

I notice my other colleague, Senator MCCASKILL, whom I mentioned earlier a couple of times, is on the floor. She was the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee that investigated this issue of looking at the websites and that came up with not just how it was happening and why it was happening but a legislative response.

I yield a few minutes to Senator MCCASKILL.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I thank Senator PORTMAN, Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and my other colleagues for allowing me to jump in here for a couple of minutes.

This body—this entire body—is really responsible for where we are right now because it was during the investigation package that we realized that section 230 was being used as a shield for the bad guys. All of the attorneys general around the country and various law enforcement agencies and individuals who were trying to sue backpage were met every time with a 230 defense. They were not even able to penetrate

to get the documents from backpage in order to learn about what backpage was really up to. It was an investigation by which backpage thought it would be able to win again in court and deny us our opportunity to look at the documents and to look at the underlying evidence that one should always look at in an investigation.

Frankly, our getting the contempt-of-the-Senate resolution through this body almost unanimously—I think it was unanimously, wasn't it, I ask Senator PORTMAN?

Mr. PORTMAN. Yes.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. And then our going all the way to the Supreme Court and winning was finally the first time backpage had to turn over the dirty evidence of its knowingly facilitating sex trafficking on its page. That is why this language is “knowingly facilitate”—just to make sure that in going forward, no bad guys can hide behind section 230.

The other part of this bill that, I think, is very important and that, I think, a lot of people forget—and with all due respect to my friends who are in this Chamber who were U.S. attorneys—is that over 90 percent of the crime that is prosecuted in this country is prosecuted by local prosecutors, State prosecutors, who are called prosecutors or district attorneys, depending on the State's term that is used. They have been handcuffed in terms of being able to bring these kinds of cases. This legislation not only opens up the courthouse doors to victims who have been victimized by this but also so that the full force of American law enforcement can be brought to bear on this problem, not just the limited jurisdiction that was available around the problem of sex trafficking.

This is so important to getting to the bottom of it because many U.S. attorneys don't have the time, and, frankly, many attorneys general don't have the time or the jurisdiction to get after crime, but the local prosecutors don't get to decide which cases to go after. If there is a 9-1-1 call, they have it. The Feds can come in later and say: We have it, and we are going to take it. But they are the ones who day after day are in the trenches of sex crimes, and they are the ones who now have the ability to go after these cases in a way that will be very meaningful.

I am proud of the bipartisan nature of this. I am proud of the partnership we have, Senator PORTMAN, on the Subcommittee on Investigations. I know we will get a big vote on this. I think people see through these amendments as ways to slow this bill down or possibly kill it, and I hope we will all can join together and take this to the finish line tomorrow.

I thank my colleagues for giving me a few minutes.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank Senator MCCASKILL, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and the other Members who came to speak. We will continue this dialogue tomorrow on the floor before passage.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank Senator PORTMAN and Senator BLUMENTHAL for their work on this. Senator PORTMAN and I have spent untold hours, and he has been a leader on this. I thank him for his leadership, in Toledo and Cincinnati, but especially in Toledo, where the sheriff, the community, Celia Williamson, and so many others have been so important in combating this terrible affliction in our society. I thank them.

WALL STREET AND AMERICAN WORKERS

Mr. President, last week, the House passed another giveaway to Wall Street, siding with special interests and rolling back accountability on some of the biggest banks at the expense of taxpayers. It comes on the heels of last year's tax giveaway that will benefit those same megabanks. This Congress bends over backward to help Wall Street while working families continue to struggle.

It is not just that we are helping Wall Street with tax breaks, we are helping Wall Street with rolling back regulations. Let me outline what exactly all that means.

In a series over several months, I am laying out the case for how Wall Street undermines America's workers and some of the changes we need to make in this country to grow our middle class and make work pay off.

Remember, one of the points I made was that American Airlines announced that they were going to increase workers' wages, as did Chipotle, and Wall Street hit them with a lower stock price as a result.

In each installment of this series, we have talked about these issues. I want to talk specifically this time about what Wall Street's war on workers does to employment. You can follow each installment on my medium page at www.medium.com/@SenatorBrown.

Last time, I talked about workers' paychecks. Today, I want to talk about layoffs.

Wall Street's singular focus on padding their own pockets is bad enough, but worse, it comes at the direct expense of American workers. Corporations focus almost exclusively on their quarterly performance on the stock market. That is how a CEO's performance is evaluated. They are compensated in large part with company shares. They do better when their stock price goes up. They do things to make their stock price go up, and then they do even better because they are compensated in large part with company shares.

Wall Street analysts like it when corporations minimize their cost to boost their short-term profits; hence the stock price goes up even when the company is already profitable, and that leads directly to layoffs. Corporations lay off workers to show they are serious about cutting expenses, and their stock prices often rise as a result. Wall

Street's war on workers means not only smaller paychecks but also pink slips for those workers.

How did we get to a point where stock prices are more important than workers? It didn't happen overnight.

I was talking with Senator WHITEHOUSE about this, and whether it is Cranston, RI, or Mansfield, OH, companies used to consider their employees, their customers, and even the people in the town they did business in, as stakeholders. They cared about their community, they cared about their workers, and they cared about their customers. They felt a duty to fulfill obligations to a broader community, not just their own corporate board members and their own corporate executives.

I grew up in Mansfield, OH, a city of about 50,000 in North Central Ohio halfway between our State's two largest cities, Cleveland and Columbus. I remember that there were so many companies in our town. I didn't know those company presidents—they were the big people in town, and I was a kid—but I do remember what those companies did. They sponsored Little League teams. They were involved in local Kiwanis clubs. They cared about workers, and they cared about the community. They cared about their customers. They weren't always interested in shareholders; they were interested in stakeholders, in all of us as a community. All the workers, all the customers, and all of the community were stakeholders. But now the focus has narrowed to just shareholders.

As Wall Street's influence has grown, corporate priorities have shifted from shareholders kind of writ large, and the way success is measured has changed fundamentally to stockholders. Businesses have become beholden to those quarterly earnings reports. They have left employees, communities, and customers behind in many ways. They do everything possible, including laying off workers, to make sure their balance sheets and profit margins look as good as they can—the impact on the workers and the long-term health of the company be damned.

In the 1980s, investors began to pursue hostile takeovers of companies that failed to maximize profits. Executives at other companies began to fear takeovers if they didn't keep profits and stock prices high. The pay packages of top management became greater and greater and became more and more closely tied to short-term stock performance.

Wall Street's and Main Street's interests began to diverge. Folks in the corporate boardroom were no longer forced to consider what was in the long-term interests of their workers and of their small-time investors. For top corporate executives, workers became nothing more than a line item in the budget, a cost to be minimized.

By the 1990s, even profitable companies started laying off workers to boost profits even further. Look at what hap-

pened to Xerox, an iconic American company that had never had a major layoff in its history. In 1993, the company announced plans to cut 10,000 workers despite being profitable. The company was doing fine. It wasn't a case of an industry moving south, facing an agonizing decision with bad options, but the CEO justified the job cuts as necessary “to compete effectively” and to have a “lean and flexible organization.” He also said he expected to see higher profits because of the layoffs the following year.

Xerox wasn't alone. In the first 10 months of 1998, when the economy was booming, corporations laid off over half a million U.S. workers—200,000 more than were laid off the year before. This is the definition of profits before people, and things have gotten worse and worse since the late 1990s.

In 2015, Sysco announced a 3-year plan that included reducing its workforce—corporate-speak for laying off workers. It might have made sense if the company had experienced a year of sluggish sales, but guess what—the opposite was true. Their sales had increased. They generated \$1 billion in cash flow, and they were able to pay \$700 million in dividends to the company shareholders. If the large dividend payout the year before wasn't generous enough, the CEO said that one of the goals of the 3-year plan and its layoffs was to “maximize shareholder returns”—not stakeholders, not employees, not the communities, not the customers, but shareholder returns.

The next year, 2016, Tyson Foods announced layoffs despite having a good quarter in beef sales. The following year, the company's president touted “exceptional financial results.” What was the reason for those results? Cost-cutting. It is always cost-cutting—more corporate-speak for laying off workers. Do you know what else he cited as the company's good health? Not great sales, not new products or investments in more workers, but the ability of the company to buy back billions of dollars of its own stock. So an accounting trick that funnels money to executives is what the company cited as a measure of its success. Buying back means executive compensation goes up. That is the key to what it was doing with cost-cutting. The company buys up shares of its own stock to drive up the price and increase the value for shareholders and the compensation for executives whose pay is tied to stock performance. Sounds familiar.

It is no coincidence that since the biggest corporations reaped their tax windfalls in September, they have announced billions of dollars in buybacks. It is always about the executives—about the executives' tax cuts, about the executives' compensation, about the executives' buybacks. Again and again, we see Wall Street consider workers as simply a cost to be cut but executive pay as essential to a company.

Last year, Humana announced that it was eliminating 2,700 jobs despite \$13

billion in revenue. In the same call that the CEO announced the layoffs, he also announced an increase in executive pay. Workers lose their jobs to pay for more money for corporate executives. Sound familiar again and again and again? And the cherry on top? A month later, Humana announced \$3 billion in stock buybacks. Again, what is that about? Higher executive compensation.

Of course, cost-cutting measures typically include workers losing their jobs. Cost-cutting measures almost never include pay cuts for corporate executives. In each of these examples, the company cited cost cuts that were so necessary, they had to fire workers, upend thousands of employees. I wonder how many of those executives and how many of those corporate leaders actually brought some of those workers into their offices and looked them in the eye and told them they were laying them off. My guess is that they had a much lower paid employee make that announcement and face the media and, more importantly, face the employees who lost their jobs.

How many of these executives actually listened to the story of an employee who loses her job, loses her house, whose total life is upended? How many of them ever listened to the stories of what happened to their workers who got fired? The company cited cost cuts that were so necessary, they had to fire those workers.

The shortsighted approach to running a company may work for top executives who can squeeze as much value out of the company in the short term without considering the business's long-term value. It is not just bad for the employees and communities, it is usually bad for the long-term health of the company. Making short-term decisions pays off if you are already well paid, but it doesn't work for those employees. Mainstream investors and workers only make a profit when a company's stock value continues to rise over time, but the corporate executives are no longer forced to consider what is in the long-term interest of workers and small-time investors. As long as Wall Street's analysis of one-size-fits-all measure of corporate success continues to be cost-cutting, workers are at constant risk of losing their jobs. As long as CEOs get paid based on stock prices instead of the company's long-term success, workers will keep getting fired from hostile companies.

We need to break this cycle of greed between Wall Street and CEOs. In the end, companies can't be profitable without good workers. We need policies that restructure our economy so workers share in the profits they create and Wall Street doesn't determine when workers keep their jobs or how much is in their paycheck.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we are more aware than ever of the accelerating pace of climate change and of the serious threat that rising seas, higher temperatures, and changing weather poses. I suppose I don't need to lecture the Presiding Officer from Florida on the threat of rising seas.

The real-time effects of climate change are becoming clearer and clearer every year. Here is a telling example unfolding right now in the Arctic.

In this graphic, we see the mean area of Arctic sea ice over the last several decades. The maximum yearly extent of the ice, which occurs around this time of year, continues to shrink each decade.

This line tracks the sea ice in the Arctic in millions of square kilometers, running from February through to May. This is the track of the sea ice extent during the 1980s. If you take all the years in the 1980s and you average them together and you run through the calendar, it is like a clock going this way through these months. You would see the sea ice growing and fading away as spring came to the Arctic.

That is where the ice was when averaging the 1980s. This green line is the exact same thing; it is just for the 1990s. So we can see how much sea ice has been lost averaged decade over decade.

The blue line here is for 2000. Once again, we see a loss of sea ice—a considerable loss from the levels back as recently as the 1980s.

The purple line right here is the average of the years in this decade so far, from 2010 to 2017—that is the average of those 7 years. This dot is the high, the maximum ice extent recorded in 2016. This lower dot is the lower high of the ice recorded in 2017. So you can see that even though this is the average, the trend remains downward.

This red line is what we have measured so far in 2018. Here we are right now in March of 2018, and it is well below. Decade after decade, we see the ice melting away.

As these facts and so many others relentlessly pile up, it has become harder and harder for the fossil fuel industry and the web of front groups and the Trump administration officials who do its bidding to claim that there is nothing to see here: Folks, move along; it is all just a big hoax.

The University of Alaska is our closest university to the Arctic. The University of Alaska actually has a climate science center where they are studying and teaching the science of climate change. The University of Alaska also actually has the Ocean Acidification Research Center. As I have pointed out in these speeches over the years, one of the most obvious and pernicious consequences of climate change is that when you ramp the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere, the oceans, which cover 70 percent of the surface of the world, absorb not only

excess heat, but they actually chemically absorb the carbon dioxide. When that happens, they become more acidic. In the wee hours of a morning months and months ago, I actually did the experiment right here, where I blew the carbon dioxide from my breath through an aquarium bubbler into a glass of water that had pH-sensitive dye in it, and you could see, in the moment that it took for me to exhale that carbon-dioxide-rich breath through the water, how the color changed, and you could measure it against the color chart for pH and see how just that one breath changed the acidity of the water and made it more acid.

That is happening across the planet, and it affects creatures like terrapods, which are a very important species for salmon, which is, in turn, a very important industry for Alaska. That is why Alaska has the Ocean Acidification Research Center—some hoax.

For this, my 201st “Time to Wake Up” speech, I wish to get into some of the reasons why I remain optimistic even in the face of relentless attacks on the environment, both from the fossil fuel industry and from the Trump administration. There are success stories, including bipartisan wins in Congress and major advances outside of Congress. We are still making progress on climate and energy policy, even under political siege by the fossil fuel industry.

First, there is an explosion in renewable energy. In 2017, renewables provided nearly 20 percent of electricity generation in the United States. Wind and solar energy costs fell, and utilities across the country, even in red States, invested heavily. The renewable energy industry in America hit 3.3 million jobs—more than all fossil fuel jobs combined. The private sector is leading renewables purchases. One example is AT&T. AT&T recently signed onto the World Wildlife Fund's Corporate Renewable Energy Buyers' Principles, a criteria to help energy producers meet the needs of large customers like AT&T. As part of that commitment with the World Wildlife Fund, AT&T has signed two agreements with NextEra Energy for wind power—220 megawatts from an Oklahoma wind farm and 300 megawatts from a Texas wind farm. It is one of the largest corporate renewable energy purchases in history. I congratulate my Texas and Oklahoma colleagues for these new, home-State, renewable energy jobs, and I congratulate AT&T for its foresight and leadership.

Another business breakthrough came when the massive asset manager BlackRock helped break Exxon's and Occidental Petroleum's resistance and forced through shareholder resolutions requiring those oil producers to report their climate risk to their shareholders, to their investors. I, for one, don't think those shareholders are yet getting the full story.

The multinational insurance firm, AXA, announced that it would divest

from its tar sands holdings and it would stop providing insurance for pipelines that transport tar sands oil.

Credit rating agency Moody's announced that it will consider climate risk in rating coastal communities' municipal bonds. So our coastal municipalities in Rhode Island, the Presiding Officer's coastal communities in Florida, and coastal communities across the country are now going to have to take into account the climate risk, what infrastructure and what hazards they face from sea level rise and increased storm activity, and all of the things we associate with climate change. It is going to be part of how the rating agencies value their municipal bonds. That is going to change behavior, and it doesn't matter whether you are a red State or a blue State.

Companies like Microsoft and Unilever have baked into their own internal accounting their own internal carbon prices to help them reduce the carbon intensity of their operations. And, of course, virtually every Republican who has thought the climate change problem through to a solution has come to a price on carbon as being the market-based solution to that problem.

When the President announced that he would withdraw the United States from the historic Paris Agreement, leaving us as the pariah nation—the only one in the world to reject this global pledge—many American companies pledged that, as to that Paris Agreement, they are still in.

The corruption of the Trump administration by fossil fuel interests has not affected many State and local officials. In Colorado, for instance, the Colorado State Public Utility Commission is working with Xcel Energy to build out a cleaner energy mix and retire older fossil fuel units. Specifically, Colorado is looking to retire 660 megawatts of coal-fired generation—close it down—and replace it with renewables. Their recent request for bids brought a flood of new renewable energy proposals at costs that came in beating out existing coal and natural gas facilities. New-built renewables on price beat out existing fossil fuel. The market is speaking, and it is saying that fossil fuel, even with all its scandalous and well-defended subsidies, can't compete. Fossil can't compete.

On the Paris Agreement, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Washington State and—I am proud to say—Rhode Island all declared that they, too, are still in. They will meet their goals. Alaska announced that it would meet its Paris Agreement goals. What is more, California and Washington State have combined with Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico in a plan to put a price on carbon that would reach up and down virtually the entire Pacific coast of the Americas—from Canada all the way down through Chile.

One problem for the fossil fuel folks' political influence, which is so deadly

effective here in Congress, is that it doesn't do so well in government agencies where the rule of law, not politics, prevails. So the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, a Federal administrative agency bound by rule of law, more or less blew off a preposterous proposal by fossil fuel flunkies at the Department of Energy to subsidize coal even more. Instead, FERC recently finalized a rule for energy storage in America's electric grids. This will not only expand energy storage, but it will also accelerate renewables like wind and solar. A recent study predicted that the rule could spur—hold on—50,000 megawatts of additional energy storage across the United States, enough to power roughly 35 million homes. This estimate could turn out to be conservative, if renewables prices keep heading in their current trajectories. That FERC rule, by the way, was unanimous and bipartisan.

FERC oversees the system operators, like ISO-New England, which are steadily improving the role of renewables in regional markets, removing the obstacles that had kept renewables from competing fairly in capacity auctions and dispatch decisions. With wind power being such a large part of Iowa's energy mix, for example, its midwestern ISO figured out the algorithms to treat wind as reliable, baseload power. FERC's storage rule will give these system operators a new avenue for further progress on clean, renewable energy.

Believe it or not, even Congress has acted. Just last month, Congress passed a bipartisan budget agreement that included legislation I cosponsored with Senators HETTKAMP, CAPITO, and BARRASSO to spur investment and innovation in next-generation carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies. Our bill attracted what I would call an unlikely coalition of energy, industrial, agricultural, and technology companies, as well as environment and labor groups.

This bill puts a positive price on carbon reduction through a tax credit for projects that capture and utilize or store carbon dioxide emissions. Without that price signal, there was little incentive to innovate how to turn carbon pollution from powerplants and industrial facilities into something safe or even useful. The bill even incentivizes technologies to pull carbon pollution directly from the atmosphere. The key is that Congress, for the first time, put a dollar value on reducing carbon pollution.

The Senate also just passed a nuclear innovation bill written by Senator CRAPO and me to increase collaboration between private industry, universities, and national laboratories in advanced nuclear technologies. Our bill was also cosponsored by Senators BOOKER, MURKOWSKI, RISCH, HATCH, and DURBIN. It would put private innovators together with our National Labs, with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and with the Energy De-

partment—all working together on safe, new nuclear technologies.

My goal here is not only to help bring new carbon-free technologies forward, ultimately to a carbon-free power grid, but also to explore technologies that just may allow us to turn our present hazardous nuclear waste stockpiles to productive use—to generate clean energy, to move those waste stockpiles from the liability to the asset column on our Nation's books. What an achievement that would be.

Although Congress may be blockaded still by fossil fuel interests, it is nevertheless the law of the land that administrative agencies must take into account the social cost of carbon—the cost that fossil fuels carbon pollution imposes on society—in making energy-related decisions. That test will remain, and lawsuits are slowly closing in on the moment of discovery, when lawyers finally get access to the fossil fuel industry's files, and decades of lies, denial, and political manipulation are exposed for all to see.

The well-funded climate denial machine, with its front groups and trick-pony scientists and political muscle operation, can only keep the denial castle propped up for so long. But until that battlement of lies collapses—and it will—until it collapses, nevertheless, progress still continues all around us.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are quickly turning to the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act legislation, coupled with the legislation that has come over from the House of Representatives, and I hope we will get a big bipartisan vote in support of that legislation when it is voted on, probably tomorrow.

Let me just say that for more than two decades, the commercial internet has been an undeniable force for good. It has delivered economic opportunity to people who would not otherwise have had it. It has empowered marginalized citizens around the world to fight back against oppressors. It has expanded educational opportunities and made news and information more accessible, and more. But like any tool, the internet can be used for evil as well as good, and right now, certain corners of the internet are being exploited to facilitate sex trafficking, including the widespread trafficking of children.

Each year, thousands of children are sexually trafficked within the United States. That is right. Thousands of children are trafficked each year in the United States—not in some faraway country but right here at home in our communities. More and more every day, this trafficking is being facilitated via the internet. Three out of four children who have been sexually trafficked in this country have been trafficked online.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported an 846-per-

cent increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking from 2010 to 2015. The increase, the national center reports, is “directly correlated to the increased use of the internet to sell children for sex.”

Obviously, dedicated prosecutors and law enforcement around the country are working every day to combat the proliferation of sex trafficking on the internet, but some of their efforts have been stymied by a provision of a 1996 law called the Communications Decency Act. The provision in question—section 230—was meant to protect websites from being held accountable for material people create and post on their sites. It is thanks in part to this provision that such popular sites as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have been able to flourish. But certain websites have used this provision to defend themselves in court cases dealing with criminal activity that they have knowingly allowed or participated in—specifically, sex trafficking.

Needless to say, Congress never intended this provision to be used to protect websites that knowingly and deliberately facilitate trafficking, but courts have generally held that this provision does not permit them to hold websites accountable for knowingly facilitating sex trafficking.

Courts have also made clear that if Congress wants to ensure that these trafficking accomplices can be prosecuted, it needs to provide some more clarity on this provision. That is what we are here to do today.

Senator ROB PORTMAN of Ohio has been a leading voice in the Senate in the fight against human trafficking, and the legislation before us today includes his legislation, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, which will prevent section 230 from being used as a defense by those who are knowingly cooperating with sex traffickers. Under this Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, State law enforcement officials will be able to prosecute websites that knowingly assist in or facilitate sex trafficking, and victims will be allowed to sue websites that violate the Federal sex trafficking statute. State attorneys general will now also be allowed to file civil suits against websites that knowingly facilitate trafficking.

The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act is an outstanding bill and a great credit to Senator PORTMAN and the others he worked with to get it considered here on the Senate floor. It addresses a hole in our laws that is allowing sex traffickers to exploit the internet to facilitate their trafficking, but it ensures that only bad actors are targeted, and it maintains the key freedoms that have allowed the internet to flourish. Under this legislation, websites can only be prosecuted if they knowingly facilitate or support trafficking.

This bill is strongly supported by Members of both parties. In fact, 67 out of the 100 U.S. Senators are cosponsors of this bill. This bill is supported by

the White House. It is supported by law enforcement organizations. It is supported by organizations that fight sex trafficking. It is supported by faith-based organizations. It is also supported by a number of major technology companies. I was proud to help facilitate conversations with a number of technology companies that resulted in solid support for this bill among members of the technology community.

The process of getting this bill to the Senate floor today has been characterized by a wonderful degree of bipartisanship. I am hoping that continues as we debate this bill over the next couple of days, and I encourage my colleagues to reject any attempts to slow this bill down with amendments. We have a remarkable degree of consensus on the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, both within and without Congress, and we should not disturb this momentum. We need to get this bill over the finish line. Every day that we wait for this bill to be enacted into law is another day in which websites in the dark corners of the internet can facilitate the heinous practice of sexually exploiting vulnerable human beings.

During the Commerce Committee hearing that I chaired on this bill, we heard testimony from Yvonne Ambrose, whose daughter, Desiree Robinson, was sexually trafficked repeatedly before being murdered. Desiree was just 16, a bright and loving girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor in the Air Force. Instead, she was raped and murdered by a man twice her age who had sought her for sex after seeing her advertised on an internet site.

Every day across this country, there is another Desiree being trafficked. Some of these children are not yet teenagers. They should be going to basketball games and birthday parties. Instead, they are being taken to homes and hotels and being violated by strangers. Some, like Desiree, will die there.

Fighting trafficking has to be a priority for all of us.

I am proud to have helped draft two bills that became law earlier this year to address human trafficking in commercial vehicles. But while we have passed some good legislation over the past few years, there is a lot more work that needs to be done. There are many more Desirees out there in danger, and we have an obligation to do everything we can to protect them.

The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act will strike an important blow against this new wave of traffickers exploiting the internet to sell children, and the bill it is now part of, a bill that we are considering today—the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act—will further boost SESTA's impact by establishing new criminal penalties for facilitating sex trafficking.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill and to get it to the President as soon as possible. There are a lot of children out there who are waiting for our help.

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. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 735, 736, 737, 738, and 739.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The bill clerk read the nominations of William M. McSwain, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for the term of four years; Matthew D. Harris, of Utah, to be United States Marshal for the District of Utah for the term of four years; Johnny Lee Kuhlman, of Oklahoma, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Oklahoma for the term of four years; Joseph D. McClain, of Indiana, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Indiana for the term of four years; and David A. Weaver, of Colorado, to be United States Marshal for the District of Colorado for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the McSwain, Harris, Kuhlman, McClain, and Weaver nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a pe-

riod of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, this week I joined my colleague, the senior Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, in introducing the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act. This bill would update and reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, which have provided lifesaving services and housing for America's homeless youth for more than 40 years.

Homelessness is affecting youth in unprecedented numbers. According to a recent study by Voices of Youth Count, an initiative of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, approximately 4.2 million young people experience homelessness in the United States each year. Some of these youth may stay away from home for only 1 or 2 nights, and others have been living on the streets for years. Approximately 73 percent experienced a homelessness episode lasting more than 1 month. The study also found that homelessness is as prevalent in rural communities as it is in urban communities.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act would reauthorize and strengthen the programs that help homeless youth meet their immediate needs, and secure long-term residential services for those who, sadly, cannot be safely reunified with family. Three programs—the Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and Street Outreach Program—help community-based organizations reach these young people when they need the most support. These programs help runaway and homeless youth avoid the juvenile justice system, and early intervention helps these young people escape victimization.

As chairman of the Senate Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, working to end the scourge of homelessness—in both youth and adults—has been one of my top priorities. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, there has been a 27-percent drop in chronic homelessness since 2007. We must build on this success so that homeless youth have opportunities to succeed just as other youth. This bill is an important step in that direction.

The RHYA programs have produced powerful success stories. In 2015, the Housing Appropriations subcommittee held a hearing during which Brittany Dixon, a former homeless youth from Auburn, ME, testified about her personal experience as a homeless youth. After becoming homeless at age 18, she connected with New Beginnings, a service provider in Lewiston, ME, where

she received the help and support she needed to develop critical life skills and become self-sufficient. She went on to earn a college degree and obtain a full-time job as an education technician at an elementary school.

New Beginnings has used RHYA resources to connect with youth who need food, a safe place to sleep, health services, and education support. More than 135 young people were served at its 24-hour youth shelter in 2016, where they gained the support to return home safely, find independent living options, and deal with trauma, substance abuse, and mental health challenges. The Street Outreach Program, which would be reauthorized by our legislation, allows New Beginnings to operate an outreach drop-in center that reaches more than 500 youth annually.

Staff at Preble Street, a youth shelter in Portland, leveraged a grant from the Transitional Living Program, also reauthorized by our bill, to support First Place, a program that helps young people break out of homelessness and plan for independent living. They work with local landlords to secure affordable apartments for youth who cannot safely reunite with their families and help them develop the life skills they will need to achieve their goals.

For more than 25 years, Shaw House, in Bangor, has served Maine youth living in five rural counties. The Basic Center Program, BCP, reauthorized in our bill, helps Shaw House offer food, clothing, and other basic needs assistance, with the goal of increasing family reunification and reducing youth homelessness across Maine. In fiscal year 2014, 94 percent of the minors who entered BCP exited these programs safely and appropriately, and 69 percent were reunited with their families. One of the improvements in our bill would allow BCP grantees to serve youth for up to 30 days, instead of the current 21 days.

Teens run away and become homeless for many reasons. They are also at high risk of victimization, abuse, criminal activity, and death. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children estimates that, in 2017, 1 in 7 of nearly 25,000 youth reported to them as runaways were sex-trafficking victims. In Maine, recent reports show that, of the more than 10,000 reported human-trafficking cases last year, 26 percent involved minors. Several hundreds of these victims identified as runaway or homeless youth. This population is at greater risk of suicide, unintended pregnancy, and substance abuse. Many are unable to continue with school and are more likely to enter our juvenile justice system.

Our bill focuses on this tragic problem by supporting trauma-informed, wraparound services for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Congress has passed legislation in recent years to combat these horrific crimes and support survivors, and the policies and tools included in the Runaway and

Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act are important pieces of the Federal response to human trafficking.

Homeless young people need access to safe beds at night and oftentimes services during the day. A growing number of homeless youth identify as LGBT. According to the Voices of Youth Count report, LGBT young people are twice as likely to be homeless. Our bill would ensure that those seeking services through these Federal programs are not denied assistance based on their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act will support those young people who run away, are thrown out, or are disconnected from families. A caring and safe place to sleep, eat, grow, and develop is critical for all young people, and the programs reauthorized through this legislation help extend those basic services to the most vulnerable youth in our communities.

I thank Senator LEAHY for his leadership on this bill and urge my colleagues to support it.

NATIONAL STOP THE BLEED DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like to speak today about National Stop the Bleed Day.

Our country will recognize National Stop the Bleed Day on March 31, 2018. Stop the Bleed is a program offered by the American College of Surgeons to help educate the general public on techniques to assist victims suffering from uncontrolled bleeding using direct pressure, gauze and bandages, and tourniquets.

Each year, more than 180,000 people 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 arrive. 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.

I urge my colleagues to join me and rise in support of National Stop the Bleed Day and help to end the loss of life from uncontrolled bleeding by getting trained to "Stop the Bleed."

HONORING LIEUTENANT THOMAS M. CONWAY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of a World War II hero: Lt. Rev. Thomas M. Conway, born April 5, 1908, in Waterbury, CT. Father Conway, who was born 110 years ago next month, was an American hero who, after the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*, went from lifeboat to lifeboat in shark-infested

waters to care for his fellow sailors in a manner far above the call of duty.

The courage of the brave men who served on the USS *Indianapolis*, who delivered critical parts to the first atomic bomb used in combat, helped bring about the end of World War II. After their mission was complete, they were intercepted on their way to join with the rest of the Pacific fleet for the invasion of mainland Japan. Two torpedoes from a Japanese submarine struck the *Indianapolis* on July 30, 1945, sinking the battleship and immediately killing 300 of the 1,196 sailors aboard. The remaining 900 sailors were left to fend for their lives in the shark-infested Pacific, spending 3 days with few lifeboats or supplies and no way to notify the Navy of their peril.

Father Conway, as chaplain, disregarded his own safety by swimming back and forth among the men, administering aid, helping to gather those who had drifted from the mass of survivors, and continuing to minister and organize group prayers. His heroism gave comfort to the dying and helped save the lives of the 321 sailors who were rescued from the sea. Father Conway's acts of bravery took a physical toll, and he succumbed to the elements shortly before rescuers arrived. As one surviving sailor said of Father Conway, "He was the most visible person keeping the men together, giving them hope and sacrificing himself to keep his fellow sailors united, calm, and alert."

The legacy of Father Conway continues to inspire his family, fellow sailors, and the people of Connecticut. That is why next month, in recognition of his birthday, we pause to reflect upon and celebrate his courageous actions. His selflessness and bravery are the epitome of an American hero.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHARCILLEA "CHARCY" SCHAEFER

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to LTC Charcillea "Charcy" Schaefer for her exemplary dedication to duty and service as an Army congressional fellow and congressional budget liaison for the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Financial Management and Comptroller. Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer is transitioning from her present assignment to serve as a battalion commander for the 19th Military Police Battalion of the 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, HI.

Born in Ipswich, England, into an Air Force family, Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer was commissioned as a military police officer after her graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point with a bachelor of science degree. She then went on to earn a master's degree in administration with a focus in leadership from Central Michigan University and another in legislative affairs from the George Washington University.

Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer has served in a broad range of assignments during her 15-year Army career. Her assignments took her across the country including Fort Bliss, TX; Fort Leonard Wood, MO; Fort Bragg, NC; and Fort Campbell, KY. She has four combat deployments encompassing over 45 months in theater, with 23 months advising host nation forces in policing and Army tactics and operations. Three of Charcy's deployments were to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the fourth was to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

I had the privilege of working with Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer in my office in 2016 during her year as an Army congressional fellow, as well as during her subsequent assignment as a congressional budget liaison for the U.S. Army. Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer worked tirelessly with Members of Congress and their staff to accurately articulate the Army's budget positions to the Appropriations Committees. Her professionalism, diligence, and commitment to the mission are unmatched, and her work both as a fellow and as a liaison exemplify the best of the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense to the U.S. Congress.

The foundation of Charcy's military success is her family. Her parents, Parks and Mary Schaefer of New Bern, NC, provided the base of selfless service evident in all that she and her siblings, Chas and MaryLynne, do. Charcy is a devoted wife to Rachel Brant, an accomplished attorney and herself a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate Corps. Rachel anxiously awaits their family's reunion, to include dogs Rocco and Stevie, in Honolulu. Their attitude of service and care for others permeates in each organization and activity they participate in, and they are both truly examples of extraordinary leaders in the Army and the communities they serve.

Throughout her career, Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer has positively impacted the soldiers, peers, and superiors around her. Our country has benefited tremendously from her extraordinary leadership, judgment, and passion. I join my colleagues today in honoring her dedication to our Nation and invaluable service to the U.S. Congress as an Army congressional liaison.

It has been a genuine pleasure to have worked with Lieutenant Colonel Schaefer over the last 2½ years. On behalf of a grateful nation, I proudly recognize and commend Charcy for her service to our country and wish her all the best as she continues her service in the U.S. Army.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONOR FLIGHT NORTHERN COLORADO'S 20TH FLIGHT TO DC

• Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the veterans of

Honor Flight Northern Colorado who have made their 20th trip to Washington, DC, to visit memorials that stand in their honor. This group consists of veterans from various wars and generations, but all are linked by their service to our country.

Founded in 2005, the Honor Flight program was originally formed to honor veterans that had served in World War II. The program has expanded and now welcomes veterans from across the country to fly to Washington, DC, free of charge, so that they can visit the national memorials dedicated to their service. These veterans have preserved our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Few words sufficiently express the gratitude and respect we all have for these brave men and women. Of the 123 veterans on the most recent Honor Flight, 9 served in World War II, 25 served in Korea, and 89 served in Vietnam.

Please join me in honoring Carl Curtis, Eugene Doty, Ben Gutfelder, Fred Heinze, James Ingram, Elwood Johnsen, George Kunz, Stuart Mundt, Merwin Waterman, John Anderson, Ralph Ashton, William Bohn, Gerald Briggs, Joseph Carney, Dale Doty, Ernest Garcia, Charles Gustafson, Fred Hagen, Richard Hornung, Phillip Kaspar, Dixon King, George Lanes, John Lark, Don Moritz, August Roemer, Melvin Salter, Paul Salvador, Arlen Sarian, Walter Slocum Jr, Arthur Smith, Willard Unrein, Robert Wallen, William Webster, Reginald Willcox, Edward Aitken, Charles Ashbaugh, Harry Ashbaugh, Frank Atwood, Thomas Barker, Lanny Benninger, Eldredge Blain, William Bjorlin, Leslie Burns, Joel Champion, James Chopp, Willis Corcoran, William Damewood, Anson Derby, Clarence Dye, Clifford Echols, Roy Echols, David Fanning, Wesley Feeney Jr, Budd Finch Jr, Errol Ford, Michael Gail, Alonzo Garza, Dennis Gordon, Eldon Harrell, Larry Hartman, Allan Havens, John Hendrickson, Nicholas Herrera, Donald Hull, Raymond Johnson, John Kask, Paul Kornmueller, Charles Klutsch, Joseph Long, Michael Long, Edward Longhini, Joseph Maes, Loren Maes, Gary Malara, David Mathis, Michael McClure, Jerry McDaniel, Mark McKinley, Oscar Metzgar, Steven Moskowitz, Allan Nelson, Robert Nelson, Russell Ness, Paul Nobles, Sven Nylander, Max Oesterle, Dale Olson, David Painter, Thomas Parker, Raymond Patch, Rudolf Peralez, Robert Perlenfien, John Perrine, Wayne Peterson, Louis Price, Jerry Purdy, Ernie Pyle, Ronald Ramirez, Richard Reininger, Frank Ross, Joe Roybal, John Ryan, Genaro Salazar, Raymond Sautter, Robert Schawo, Rudy Schenk, Larry Schwindt, Robert Shaeffer, Dan Shaffer, Roger Smith, Daniel Sorensen, Andrew Stephenson, Marjorie Stephenson, Walter Stolpa Jr, Dwight Strandberg, Barton Thompson, Norman Toman, Richard Tompkins, Samuel Trujillo, Terrence Urista, Myron Wagner, James Wetzler, and Charles Winkleman.●

TRIBUTE TO HAROLD BLATTIE

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Harold Blattie, the outgoing executive director of the Montana Association of Counties, for his longtime commitment to public service in the State of Montana.

Mr. Blattie has dedicated his life to helping preserve our Montana way of life through countless public works projects.

He has served as the executive director of MACo for over a decade, providing strong leadership for Montana's counties and facilitating cooperation between local, State, and Federal leaders to deliver for the residents of Big Sky Country.

Throughout his respected career, he has secured critical resources for citizens from Libby to Baker and Dillon to Plentywood. The residents of our great State owe him a debt of gratitude, and I rise today with a small token of our appreciation.

Mr. Blattie has built his life around building stronger communities.

He is a role model for all Americans, and Montana is a better place because of his work.

I rise today to thank him for all he has done for the Treasure State and wish him all the best of luck in whatever comes next.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT RELATIVE TO EXTENDING TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES FOR THREE YEARS—PM 32

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

Today, I am requesting that the Congress extend trade authorities procedures for 3 years. As required under section 103(c)(2) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (Trade Priorities Act), I have attached to this message the report describing the progress

that has been made in trade negotiations by my Administration and the reasons why the extension is necessary.

As noted in the 2018 Trade Policy Agenda, my Administration has launched a new era in American trade policy, driven by a determination to use the leverage available to us as the world's largest economy to open foreign markets, and to obtain more efficient global markets and fairer treatment for American workers. One of the major pillars supporting my trade policy is the pursuit of better trade deals.

As you know, my Administration is pursuing the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement—something many have promised but have failed to deliver. In addition, my Administration is exploring potential trade agreement partners, including in Africa and Southeast Asia.

I hope my Administration can continue to work with the Congress to pursue new and better trade deals for America's workers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses. Extension of trade authorities procedures is essential to fulfill that task and to demonstrate to our trading partners that my Administration and the Congress share a common goal when it comes to trade.

DONALD J. TRUMP,
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 20, 2018.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:15 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. 2030. An act to deem the compliance date for amended energy conservation standards for ceiling fan light kits to be January 21, 2020, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 835. An act to update the map of, and modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

H.R. 4176. An act to strengthen air cargo security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4851. An act to establish the Kennedy-King National Commemorative Site in the State of Indiana, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5074. An act to authorize cyber incident response teams at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5079. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Department of Homeland Security to develop an engagement strategy with fusion centers, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5099. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a fusion center technical assistance program.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 788. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable Louise McIntosh Slaughter, a Representative from the State of New York.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:25 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:

H.R. 2154. An act to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center.

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

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 835. An act to update the map of, and modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4176. An act to strengthen air cargo security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 5074. An act to authorize cyber incident response teams at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5079. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Department of Homeland Security to develop an engagement strategy with fusion centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5099. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a fusion center technical assistance program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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-4619. A communication from the Director of Defense Pricing and Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Amendment to Mentor-Protege Program" ((RIN0750-AJ05) (DFARS Case 2016-D011)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4620. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William C. Mayville, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4621. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting legislative proposals relative to the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4622. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the National Security Education Program for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4623. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursu-

ant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4624. A communication from the Deputy White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, eighteen (18) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Education, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4625. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Encouraging Vaccine Innovation: Promoting the Development of Vaccines that Minimize the Burden of Infectious Diseases in the 21st Century"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4626. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on mining activities as required by the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4627. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the use of the exemption from the antitrust laws provided by the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4628. A communication from the Secretary to the Board, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2017 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4629. A communication from the Chairperson of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission, transmitting, pursuant to D.C. Code 1-204.34(d) (1), the nomination of Rahkel Bouchet to be an Associate Judge for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4630. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Ohio River, Letart, WV" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2018-0075)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4631. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Monte Foundation Snowfest Fireworks, Tahoe City, Lake Tahoe, CA" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2018-0117)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4632. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; St. Francis Yacht Club Fireworks, San Francisco, CA" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2018-0119)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4633. A communication from the Attorney Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Wando Terminal Crane Movement; Charleston, SC" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2018-0074)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4634. A communication from the Attorney, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Black River, Port Huron, MI" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2017-1047)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4635. A communication from the Attorney, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Sturgeon Bay, Sturgeon Bay, WI" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2017-0050)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2018; 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-186. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts urging the United States Department of the Interior to limit the proposed expansion of the national outer continental shelf oil and gas leasing program and to protect the waters off the coasts of the Commonwealth and New England; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

RESOLUTIONS

Whereas, on January 4, 2018, the United States Department of the Interior announced the publication of a Draft Proposed Program in support of its National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, and

Whereas, as evidenced in Executive Order 13795, issued by the President of the United States on April 28, 2017, and Order 3350 issued by Secretary Ryan Zinke of the United States Department of the Interior on May 1, 2017, publication of the Draft Proposed Program is a critically important step in an effort by the Federal Government to open up offshore oil drilling in most coastal waters of the United States; and

Whereas, to gauge public reaction and receive substantive input, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will conduct a public hearing in the city of Boston; and

Whereas, the Draft Proposed Program purports to open up approximately 1.5 billion acres of territory to oil drilling and exploration, including important areas off the coast of Massachusetts and New England, and would approve as many as 47 drilling leases, which would be the largest number of such leases, offered in the history of the United States; and

Whereas, the administration's actions threaten to jeopardize the environmental well being of the Commonwealth and, more particularly, its coastal communities and waters; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth supports Energy Diversity, but the environmental and economic importance of the waters off the coast of the Commonwealth must be weighed against the benefits claimed for speculative offshore drilling, and

Whereas, offshore drilling could threaten the enjoyment of recreational fishing and the vitality of the Commonwealth's Fishing Industry, which provides income and employment for commercial fishermen, vessel manufacturers, restaurants and other businesses throughout Massachusetts; and

Whereas, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Massachusetts Fishing Industry generates 83,000 jobs and approximately \$1.9 billion in income annually; and

Whereas, there is the potential for irreversible damage to areas such as Stellwagen Bank, Georges Bank and Jeffreys Ledge, which are among the richest fishing grounds in the world and are home to a diverse array of Marine Life; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth possesses a pristine and biodiverse coastal zone, which is an essential driver of tourism for the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth's economy is reliant on tourism, which is its third largest economic sector and responsible for more than 100,000 jobs; and

Whereas, inhabitants of, and visitors to, our coastal communities support many important business sectors ranging from boat manufacturing and repair to tourism activities such as whale and bird watching; and

Whereas, the risk posed by speculative oil exploration initiatives to all of these economic and other existing and known benefits is not justifiable; and

Whereas, on January 9, 2018, the United States Department of the Interior announced that the State of Florida would be exempted from the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, and

Whereas, the Massachusetts Senate opposes the United States Department of the Interior's Draft Proposed Program to vastly expand offshore drilling in America's coastal waters off New England; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Massachusetts Senate hereby memorializes the United States Department of the Interior to take all possible action to protect the waters off the coast of the Commonwealth and New England, in particular Georges Bank, Stellwagen Bank, and Jeffreys Ledge, and exempt these areas from oil exploration initiatives; and be it further

Resolved, that copies of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the Clerk of the Senate to Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, Charles Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth and to the Members of Congress from the Commonwealth.

POM-187. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of California relative to a new 5-year National Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program on the Outer Continental Shelf; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 73

Whereas, California's iconic coastal and marine waters are one of our state's most precious resources, and it is our duty to protect our coast and ensure the long-term viability of California's wildlife and fisheries resources, as well as the multibillion dollar commercial and recreational fishing and tourism industries; and

Whereas, Hundreds of millions of California residents and visitors enjoy the state's ocean and coast for recreation, exploration, and relaxation; and tourism and recreation comprise the largest sector of the state's \$44.5 billion ocean economy; and

Whereas, 500,000 jobs rely on a clean California coast, including California's \$7 billion commercial fishing industry; and

Whereas, There have been no new offshore oil and gas leases in California since the 1969 blowout of a well in federal waters; and

Whereas, Beginning in 1921, and many times since, the California Legislature has enacted laws that withdrew certain offshore areas from oil and gas leasing, and by 1989 the state's offshore oil and gas leasing moratorium was in place; and

Whereas, In 1994, the California Legislature made findings in Assembly Bill 2444 (Chapter 970 of the Statutes of 1994) that offshore oil and gas production in certain areas of the state's waters poses an unacceptably high risk of damage and disruption to the marine environment; and

Whereas, In the same bill, the Legislature created the California Coastal Sanctuary Act, which included all of the state's unleased waters subject to tidal influence and prohibited new oil and gas leases in the sanctuary, unless the President of the United States has found a severe energy supply interruption and has ordered distribution of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the Governor finds that the energy resources of the sanctuary will contribute significantly to alleviating that interruption, and the Legislature subsequently amends Chapter 970 of the Statutes of 1994 to allow that extraction; and

Whereas, Section 18 of the federal Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. Sec. 1331 et seq.) requires the preparation of a nationwide offshore oil and gas leasing program that sets a five-year schedule of lease sales implemented by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management within the United States Department of the Interior; and

Whereas, Consistent with the principles of Section 18 and the resulting regionally tailored leasing strategy, the current exclusion of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf from new oil and gas development is consistent with the longstanding interests of the Pacific coast states, as framed in the 2006 West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health adopted by the Governors of California, Washington, and Oregon; and

Whereas, In November 2016, the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released a final 2017-22 leasing program that continues the moratorium on oil and gas leasing in the undeveloped areas of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf; and

Whereas, Governor Brown, in December 2016, requested that then President Obama permanently withdraw California's Outer Continental Shelf from new oil and gas leasing, and along with previous California Governors, has united with the Governors of Oregon and Washington in an effort to commit to developing robust renewable energy sources to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel and help us reach our carbon emission goals; and

Whereas, The California Legislature has led the nation with its landmark climate change legislation, requiring ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions of a 40-percent emissions reduction below 1990 levels by 2030, and achieving a renewables portfolio standard of 50 percent by 2030. California must lead the nation in fostering the transition away from offshore fossil fuel production to protect both our climate and oceans from the damaging impacts of climate change, which will affect all life on earth for generations to come; and

Whereas, A Field/IGS (Institute of Governmental Studies) poll in 2016 found 90 percent of Californians believe that protecting the coastline is important and a Public Policy Institute of California 2017 survey found support for drilling here at an all-time low of 25 percent; and

Whereas, President Donald Trump's proposed five-year National Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program represents a renewed call for opening offshore areas for drilling and for lifting moratoriums on energy production in federal areas, that could lead to

more oil spills, increased dependence on fossil fuel, and more damaging impact from climate change; and

Whereas, The California Legislature considers new oil and gas development offshore of the Pacific coast to be a threat to the nation's economy and national security, and to the state's ambitious renewable energy goals; and

Whereas, The California State Senate has previously adopted Senate Resolutions 35, 44, and 51 in 2017, which support the current federal prohibition on new oil or gas drilling in federal waters offshore California, oppose attempts to modify the prohibition, and defend the National Marine Sanctuaries of the United States; and

Whereas, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced plans on January 4, 2018, for a Draft Proposed Program that would include nearly the entire U.S. Outer Continental Shelf for potential oil and gas lease sales pursuant to President Trump's executive order on American energy that was issued on April 28, 2017; and

Whereas, The proposed program would open up 6 leases off the coast of California, which would be the first sale in the Pacific Region since 1984; and

Whereas, Despite the Trump administration's assertion of support for the program from state and local governments, the States of Washington, Oregon, and California have been consistently united in their opposition to any new oil and gas activities off their coasts, which has resulted in the exclusion of the Pacific coast's Outer Continental Shelf from any National Outer Continental Shelf Program since the 1989-92 program; and

Whereas, Republican and Democratic Governors alike are opposed to the expansion of lease sales off the coast of the United States; and

Whereas, The Trump administration announced on January 9, 2018, that it retracted its plan to expand offshore oil leases off the coast of Florida after receiving feedback from Florida Republican Governor Rick Scott, and the Senate believes California should receive this same exemption; and

Whereas, The Trump administration has taken the position that state and local input is an important part of the leasing process; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate strongly urges the President and the Congress of the United States to permanently safeguard and protect the Pacific coast's Outer Continental Shelf from new oil and gas leasing, and declares the Senate's unequivocal support for the current federal prohibition on new oil or gas drilling in federal waters offshore of the Pacific coast, its opposition to the proposed 5-year National Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program on the Outer Continental Shelf or any attempts to modify that prohibition, and its determination to consider any appropriate actions to maintain the current prohibition; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the National Program Manager of the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as the public comment of the Legislature in opposition to the proposed new 5-year National Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program on the Outer Continental Shelf; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States, to the Governor of California, to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Sec-

retary of the United States Department of the Interior, to the Director of the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and to each member of the California State Senate and Assembly.

POM-188. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Maine urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to exclude the State of Maine from offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.P. 1279

Whereas, the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program has already been released and the programmatic environmental impact statement could be released as early as May 2018; and

Whereas, over 46,319 jobs and more than \$2,300,000,000 of the State's gross domestic product depend on clean, oil-free water and beaches and abundant fish and wildlife; and

Whereas, over 65% of the State's ocean-derived income stems from our tourism and recreation sector, contributing over \$1,200,000,000 to the State's economy, and this economic sector benefits from and depends upon a healthy ocean and coast; and

Whereas, offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration activities place coastal communities at economic and ecological risk from oil spills and the pollution brought by routine drilling operations and onshore industrialization, threatening the quality of life and livelihoods of the State's citizens and important industries, such as tourism and recreation and commercial and recreational fishing, and small businesses that rely on a clean and healthy ocean and beaches; and

Whereas, the State recognizes that our communities and industries depend on a healthy coastal environment for the benefit of current and future residents, property owners and visitors; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: That We, your Memorialists, believe that offshore oil and gas drilling and exploration risks our economic and ecological health and therefore oppose any plan or legislation that encourages oil and gas exploration offshore that would negatively affect the citizens of the State; and be it further

Resolved: That We, your Memorialists, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to respectfully request that the President of the United States and the United States Congress direct the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to exclude the State and its offshore areas from the 2019-2024 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program; and be it further

Resolved: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, to National Oil and Gas Leasing Program Development and Coordination Branch Chief Kelly Hammerle, to the President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and to each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.

POM-189. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan memorializing their support for the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and opposing any reduction in its boundaries; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 222

Whereas, The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is one of fourteen U.S. ma-

rine protected areas and the only one located in the Great Lakes. The 4,300-square-mile sanctuary holds nearly 100 known shipwrecks—covering more than 150 years of Great Lakes commerce—remarkably preserved in Lake Huron's cold, fresh waters; and

Whereas, Jointly managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the state of Michigan, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary plays an important role in preserving our nation's marine heritage and providing opportunities for future discovery, research, and education. In addition to shipwrecks, the sanctuary encompasses other important cultural and natural features related to maritime heritage including lifesaving stations, lighthouses, historic boats and ships, commercial fishing camps, and working ports. Geological evidence suggests undiscovered prehistoric archaeological sites may also exist; and

Whereas, The United States Secretary of Commerce is currently conducting a review of all designations and expansions of national marine sanctuaries within the last 10 years. Under Executive Order 13795, Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy, the President of the United States directed the review of the budgetary impacts of the costs of managing the sanctuary, the adequacy of consultations with affected state and tribal governments prior to designation, and opportunity costs associated with potential energy and mineral exploration; and

Whereas, Nearly 3,900 square miles of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary could be impacted by the federal review. Just 448 square miles when initially designated in 2000, the sanctuary was expanded in 2014 to cover 4,300 square miles. The expansion increased the number of protected shipwrecks and opened up new opportunities to study shipwreck sites and maritime history in America; and

Whereas, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary attracts shipwreck divers and tourists and provides an economic boost to charter boat businesses, dive shops, bike rentals, outfitters, and travel and tourism companies. In past years, recreational activity associated with the sanctuary has provided \$92 million in annual sales, \$35.8 million in personal income to residents of coastal cities located near the sanctuary, and 1,704 jobs. In 2015, over 95,000 people visited the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center which is associated with the sanctuary; and

Whereas, Energy and mineral exploration is not appropriate within the sanctuary. Michigan has banned offshore drilling of oil in the Great Lakes since 1982. Congress enacted a temporary ban on offshore drilling in the Great Lakes in 2001 and made the federal ban permanent in 2005. The oil and gas drilling ban is necessary to protect this unique natural resource that provides drinking water and recreational opportunities and supports food production, business, and transportation for all U.S. citizens; and

Whereas, Maintaining the current boundaries of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary supports the rural coastal communities of northeast Michigan as well as protects the health and safety of millions of people who call the Great Lakes Basin home; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the House of Representatives, That we support the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and oppose any reduction in its boundaries; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2325. A bill to incentivize the hiring of United States workers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-214).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 85. A resolution calling on the Government of Iran to fulfill repeated promises of assistance in the case of Robert Levinson, the longest held United States civilian in our Nation's history.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 432. A resolution congratulating the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the 100th anniversary of their declarations of independence.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Robert Frank Pence, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland.

Nominee: Robert Frank Pence.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Finland.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: \$5,000.00, 3/19/2013, Heartland Values PAC (Senator Thune); \$2,500.00, 5/13/2013, Ryan For Congress; \$1,000.00, 6/19/2013, Rounds For Senate; \$1,000.00, 9/17/2013, Rounds For Senate; \$2,600.00, 9/18/2013, Capito For West Virginia; \$20,000.00, 9/23/2013, Republican National Committee; \$1,000.00, 9/26/2013, Friends Of Barbara Comstock*; \$2,600.00, 10/16/2013, Texans For Senator John Cornyn Inc.; \$2,600.00, 10/23/2013, McConnell Senate Committee '14; \$2,500.00, 11/26/2013, Tom Cotton For Senate; \$1,000.00, 12/12/2013, Friends Of Randy Forbes; \$2,600.00, 3/05/2014, Texans For Senator John Cornyn Inc.; \$1,000.00, 3/26/2014, Suzanne Scholte For Congress; \$1,000.00, 3/27/2014, Rob Wittman For Congress; \$2,600.00, 3/28/2014, Ed Gillespie For Senate; \$2,600.00, 6/13/2014, Tom Cotton For Senate; \$1,000.00, 6/19/2014, Forbes For Congress; \$2,600.00, 6/30/2014, Comstock For Congress; \$2,600.00, 6/30/2014, Ed Gillespie For Senate; \$2,600.00, 7/10/2014, Terri Lynn Land For Senate; \$2,600.00, 9/05/2014, Rob Wittman; \$2,600.00, 9/08/2014, McConnell Senate Committee*; \$1,000.00, 9/29/2014, Cory Gardner For Senate; \$32,400.00, 9/30/2014, NRSC; \$5,200.00, 9/30/2014, Ernst For US Senate*; \$2,000.00, 9/30/2014, Sullivan For US Senate; \$1,000.00, 9/30/2014, Sasse For US Senate; \$2,000.00, 9/30/2014, Scott Brown; \$1,000.00, 10/03/2014, Bill Cassidy For US Senate; \$1,000.00, 10/10/2014, Perdue For US Senate; \$2,500.00, 10/24/2014, Heartland Values PAC (Senator Thune); \$-2,700.00, 8/04/2015, Marco Rubio For President (error); \$2,700.00, 8/04/2015, Marco Rubio For President (error); \$5,400.00, 8/04/2015, Marco Rubio For President; \$33,400.00, 10/01/2015, Republican

National Committee; \$1,600.00, 10/01/2015, Republican National Committee; \$5,400.00, 11/10/2015, Ryan Zinke For Congress; \$2,700.00, 2/29/2016, Scott Walker, Inc.; \$50,000.00, 2/23/2016, Marco Rubio-Cons. Sol. PAC; \$50,000.00, 2/26/2016, Marco Rubio-Cons. Sol. PAC; \$50,000.00, 3/02/2016, Marco Rubio-Cons. Sol. PAC; \$2,700.00, 3/15/2016, Portman For Congress; \$2,700.00, 3/15/2016, Portman For Congress; \$-2,700.00, 3/18/2016, Johnson For Senate (error); \$2,700.00, 3/18/2016, Johnson For Senate (error); \$5,400.00, 3/18/2016, Johnson For Senate; \$2,700.00, 3/21/2016, Royce For Congress; \$2,700.00, 3/21/2016, Royce For Congress; \$5,400.00, 3/23/2016, Roy Blunt****; \$-2,700.00, 3/23/2016, Roy Blunt****; \$2,700.00, 3/23/2016, Roy Blunt****; \$5,400.00, 3/30/2016, Friends Of Joe Heck; \$2,700.00, 3/30/2016, Friends Of Joe Heck (error); \$-2,700.00, 3/30/2016, Friends Of Joe Heck (error); \$2,700.00, 3/31/2016, Friends Of Kelly Ayotte; \$2,700.00, 3/31/2016, Friends Of Kelly Ayotte; \$5,000.00, 4/22/2016, Rand Paul 2016; \$-2,300.00, 4/23/2016, Rand Paul 2016 (error); \$2,300.00, 4/23/2016, Rand Paul 2016 (error); \$-2,700.00, 5/13/2016, Marco Rubio For President; \$2,500.00, 5/27/2016, Carlos Lopez-Cantera For Senate check; \$2,700.00, 6/10/2016, Charles Grassley; \$2,700.00, 6/06/2016, Charles Grassley (error, repeated); \$2,700.00, 6/07/2016, Goodlatte For Congress; \$2,700.00, 6/08/2016, Randy Forbes; \$5,400.00, 6/13/2016, Todd Young*; \$5,000.00, 6/27/2016, Team Ryan; \$2,300.00, 6/27/2016, Paul Ryan For Congress (error); \$2,300.00, 6/27/2016, Paul Ryan For Congress (error); \$10,800.00, 6/30/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate; \$10,800.00, 6/30/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate (error, repeat); \$1,600.00, 6/30/2016, NRSC; \$33,400.00, 6/30/2016, NRSC; \$2,700.00, 6/30/2016, Rob Wittman For Congress; \$-5,400.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate; \$2,700.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate (error); \$-2,700.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate (error); \$25,000.00, 9/14/2016, Trump Victory; \$22,300.00, 9/14/2016, RN C****; \$2,700.00, 9/14/2016, Donald Trump for President****; \$5,400.00, 9/22/2016, Friends Of John McCain; \$2,700.00, 9/28/2016, Friends Of Patrick Toomey; \$5,000.00, 10/06/2016, John Bolton Super Pac; \$2,700.00, 10/14/2016, Richard Burr Committee; \$15,000.00, 11/03/2016, NRSC; \$2,700.00, 11/10/2016, John Kennedy For US; \$2,700.00, 11/10/2016, John Kennedy For US (error, repeat); \$5,000.00, 12/05/2016, Republican Majority Fund ****.

Spouse: Susan Sarbacher Pence; \$2,500.00, 5/13/2013, Ryan For Congress; \$2,600.00, 10/16/2013, Texans For Senator John Cornyn Inc.; \$2,600.00, 10/23/2013, McConnell Senate Committee; \$2,600.00, 12/23/2013, Texans For Senator John Cornyn Inc.; \$2,600.00, 3/28/2014, Ed Gillespie For Senate; \$2,600.00, 6/30/2014, Comstock For Congress; \$2,600.00, 6/30/2014, Ed Gillespie For Senate; \$2,600.00, 9/08/2014, McConnell Senate Committee; \$2,600.00, 9/30/2014, Cotton For US Senate; \$32,400.00, 9/30/2014, NRSC*; \$2,000.00, 10/02/2014, Brown For US Senate; \$1,000.00, 6/28/2015, Carly For President; \$5,400.00, 6/30/2015, Marco Rubio For President; \$-2,700.00, 6/30/2015, Marco Rubio For President (error); \$2,700.00, 6/30/2015, Marco Rubio For President (error); \$5,400.00, 8/04/2015, Rubio For President (error) \$1,700.00, 8/12/2015, Carly For President (C.A.R.L.Y.PAC); \$2,700.00, 2/29/2016, Scott Walker, Inc.; \$5,400.00, 3/15/2016, Rob Portman*; \$-2,700.00, 3/18/2016, Ron Johnson (error); \$2,700.00, 3/18/2016, Ron Johnson (error); \$5,400.00, 3/18/2016, Ron Johnson; \$-5,400.00, 3/23/2016, Friends Of Roy Blunt****; \$-2,700.00, 3/23/2016, Friends Of Roy Blunt****; \$2,700.00, 3/23/2016, Friends Of Ray Blunt****; \$10,800.00, 3/23/2016, Friends Of Roy Blunt****; \$2,700.00, 3/21/2016, Ed Royce Campaign Committee; \$2,700.00, 3/21/2016, Ed Royce Campaign Committee; \$2,700.00, 3/31/2016, Kelly Ayotte; \$2,700.00, 3/31/2016, Kelly Ayotte; \$-2,300.00, 4/22/2016, Rand Paul For US Senate (error); \$2,300.00, 4/22/

2016, Rand Paul For US Senate (error); \$5,000.00, 4/22/2016, Rand Paul For US Senate; \$-2,700.00, 5/13/2016, Marco Rubio For President; \$2,700.00, 6/30/2016, Rob Wittman For Congress; \$-2,700.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate; \$2,700.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate**; \$5,400.00, 8/24/2016, Marco Rubio For Senate***; \$5,400.00, 9/15/2016, Young Victory Committee; \$35,000.00, 10/10/2016, NRSC***; \$2,700.00, 10/14/2016, Richard Burr Committee; \$5,000.00, 12/05/2016, Republican Majority Fund****.

Note: With respect to the various contributions and credits to the Rubio Senatorial campaign by Robert Pence, the second \$10,800.00 contribution shown on 6/30/2016 was not made, it is a repeat of the entry that precedes it. With respect to the various contributions and credits to the Rubio Presidential campaign by Susan Pence, the \$5,400.00 contribution shown on 8/04/2015 was not made. The true net result of all of the contributions shown to the Rubio campaigns is that Robert and Susan Pence each gave \$2,700.00 to each of the Presidential primary campaign, the Senate primary campaign, and the Senate general campaign. These numbers were confirmed with the Rubio campaigns on 12/6/2017.

*This contribution was not included on the FEC report.

**The FEC report erroneously repeats these three contributions (it shows the same reference number, 201610170200, except that the "-2,700.00" is turned into a positive "2,700.00"). The three repeated entries are not shown on this form.

***FEC report incorrectly shows only \$1,600.00 but uses the same reference number as the 8/24/16 Rubio contributions/credit.

****This is posted erroneously to Susan Pence in the FEC report.

*****I do not understand this accounting but the result is the same: \$5,400 (net) to Roy Blunt from Robert Pence and \$5,400.00 from Susan Pence. Both were contributed via one (1) credit card charge of \$10,800.00 on 3/21/16.

*****I believe these entries reflect a double counting of 9/14/16 Trump Victory contribution.

3. Children and Spouses: Stephen P. Pence: \$2,600.00, 6/30/2016, Rob Wittman For Congress; \$2,700.00, 7/10/2017, Rob Wittman For Congress; Joelle Pence: None; Geoffrey W. Pence: \$12,000.00, 9/26/2016, NRSC; \$2,700.00, 7/07/2017, Rob Wittman For Congress; Stacy P. Pence: None; Brian F. Pence: \$2,600.00, 6/30/2016, Rob Wittman For Congress; \$2,700.00, 7/07/2017, Rob Wittman For Congress; Leigh Pence: \$12,000.00, 9/26/2016, NRSC.

4. Parents: Frank W. Pence—Deceased; Estella A. Pence—Deceased.

5. Grandparents: Frank M. Pence—Deceased; Bess W. Pence—Deceased; Edna Baker—Deceased; (Unknown) Boyer—Deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Richard O. Pence—Deceased; Ronald E. Pence—None.

7. Sisters and Spouses—None.

*Edward Charles Prado, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Argentine Republic.

Nominee: Edward Charles Prado.

Post: United States Ambassador to Argentina.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: 0;
2. Spouse: 0;
3. Children and Spouses: 0;

- 4. Parents: 0;
- 5. Grandparents: 0;
- 6. Brothers and Spouses: 0;
- 7. Sisters and Spouses: 0.

*Trevor D. Traina, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Austria.

Nominee: Trevor Traina.

Post: U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.¹)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self:

Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts \$500, 8/11/14, Unlocking Potential PAC; \$50,000, 3/31/15, Right to Rise USA.

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees \$1,000, 4/24/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTPAC); \$1,000, 6/18/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTPAC); \$600, 6/24/14, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$32,400, 6/27/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 8/22/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTPAC); \$400, 8/26/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTPAC); \$2,600, 10/1/14, Gardner, Cory via Cory Gardner for Senate; \$4,800, 10/9/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTPAC); \$1,000, 10/11/14, DeMaio, Carl via Carl DeMaio for Congress; \$250, 11/6/14, NRSC; \$5,000, 2/24/15, Right to Rise PAC, Inc; \$2,700, 6/26/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$1,500, 11/11/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 12/31/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc; \$2,300, 1/11/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 1/11/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 2/10/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$500, 3/11/16, Johnson, Ronald Harold via Ron Johnson for Senate Inc; \$2,700, 6/26/16, Portman, Rob the Honora via Portman for Senate Committee; \$2,700, 7/19/16, Portman, Rob, via Rob Portman for US Senate; \$25,000, 9/19/16, Republican National Committee; \$50,000, 10/10/16, Republican National Committee; \$5,000, 1/1/17, Trump Transition; \$1,100, 3/1/17, Republican National Committee; \$33,900, 3/1/17, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 5/15/17, Handel, Karen Christine via Handel for Congress, Inc.

Joint Fundraising Contributions \$25,000, 3/31/14, Boehner for Speaker; \$5,200, 9/3/14, Rubio Victory Committee; \$5,000, 10/24/16, Young Victory Committee; \$5,000, 11/3/16, Young Victory Committee; \$100,000, 2/23/17, Team Ryan.

Recipient of Joint Fundraiser Contributions \$19,800, 3/31/14, NRCC; \$2,600, 3/31/14, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$2,600, 3/31/14, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$2,080, 9/31/14, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$3,120, 9/3/14, Reclaim America PAC; \$2,700, 10/24/16, Young, Todd Christopher via Friends of Todd Young, Inc; \$2,300, 11/2/16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc, \$5,000, 12/23/

16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc; \$5,000, 2/23/17, Prosperity Action, Inc; \$2,700, 2/23/17, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 2/23/17, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$33,900, 2/23/17, NRCC.

2. Spouse: Alexis Traina

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees \$2,700, 6/26/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$25,000, 9/19/16, Republican National Committee.

3. Children: Johnny Traina: None. Delphina Traina: None.

4. Mother: Diane B. Wilsey

Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts \$250,000, 1/14/14, Republican Governors Association; \$25,000, 8/14/14, John Bolton Super PAC; \$25,000, 8/25/14, Unlocking Potential PAC; \$100,000, 1/14/15, Right to Rise USA; \$5,000, 2/27/15, Leadership Matters for America PC, Inc.; \$25,000, 4/13/15, Conservative, Authentic, Responsive Leadership for You and America; \$11,824.15, 5/4/15, Right to Rise USA; \$30,000, 9/21/15, Growth Political Action Committee ("GROWTH PAC"); \$50,000, 3/27/17, Citizens Supporting Gavin Newson for Governor 2018; \$3,500, 11/8/17, Congressional Leadership Fund.

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees \$32,400, 1/22/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 2/11/14, Strickland, Anthony A via Strickland for Congress; \$32,400, 2/19/14, NRSC; \$2,600, 3/11/14, Condley, Kerri—For Congress 2014; \$2,500, 3/20/14, San Francisco Republican Party; \$1,000, 3/27/14, Hill, James French via French Hill for Arkansas; \$500, 3/31/14, Emily's List; \$5,200, 4/17/14, Ernst, Joni—For US Senate; \$32,400, 4/14/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 4/20/14, CAWG PAC; \$36, 4/22/14, National Republican Senatorial Committee—Sustaining Membership; \$2,600, 4/29/14, Issa Darrell, for Congress; \$2,600, 5/9/14, Gillespie, Edward W via Ed Gillespie for Senate; \$500, 5/27/14, DCCC; \$500, 6/1/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,100, 6/1/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$1,500, 6/19/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTT PAC); \$1,000, 6/9/14, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 8/28/14, California Democratic Party; \$300, 9/3/14, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$500, 9/5/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$500, 9/9/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTT PAC); \$2,600, 10/6/14, Scott, Timothy E via Tim Scott for Senate; \$500, 10/9/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$1,000, 10/15/14, DeMaio, Carl via Carl DeMaio for Congress; \$32,400, 1/20/15, Republican National Committee; \$500, 1/26/15, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$1,000, 3/23/15, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 3/31/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$5,400, 4/11/15, Boozman, John via Boozman for Arkansas; \$2,700, 6/30/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$2,700, 9/8/15, Ayotte, Kelly A via Friends of Kelly Ayotte Inc; \$1,000, 9/8/15, CAWG PAC; \$2,000, 9/14/15, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$1,000, 9/22/15, Lee, Mike via Friends of Mike Lee Inc; \$2,700, 9/23/15, Fiorina, Carly via Carly for President; \$2,700, 10/8/15, Kirk, Mark Steven via Illinois Lincoln PAC; \$2,700, 10/8/15, Kirk, Mark Steven via Illinois Lincoln PAC; \$1,300, 10/9/15, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,000, 10/23/15, Del Beccaro, Thomas

via Del Beccaro for Senate; \$1,000, 10/23/15, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 11/4/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc; \$11,000, 11/11/15, California Republican Party; \$2,700, 11/11/15, Christie, Chris for President, Inc; \$98,800, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$100,200, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$10,000, 11/18/15, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$2,700, 11/23/15, Scott, Timothy E via Tim Scott for Senate; \$2,700, 12/30/15, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$250,000, 2/8/16, Republican Governors Association (2015 Membership); \$33,400, 2/10/16, NRSC; \$1,300, 2/25/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,400, 2/25/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$4,400, 3/2/16, Portman, Rob the Honora via Portman for Senate Committee; \$1,000, 3/18/16, Condley, Kerri via Kerri Condley for Congress; \$2,700, 3/31/16, Kasich John R via Kasich for America, Inc; \$2,700, 4/28/16, Conlon, Greg via Greg Conlon for US Senate; \$1,000, 5/2/16, Toomey, Pat (Friends of Senator); \$5,400, 5/24/16, Johnson, Ronald Harold via Ron Johnson for Senate Inc; \$1,000, 5/25/16, CAWG PAC; \$300, 5/31/16, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$700, 5/31/16, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 6/13/16, Ayotte, Kelly A via Friends of Kelly Ayotte Inc; \$2,700, 6/14/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 6/22/16, College Republican National Committee; \$5,400, 8/10/16, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for Senate; \$50,000, 9/15/16, Committee on Jobs—Govt Reform Fund; \$5,000, 9/30/16, San Francisco Republican Party; \$1,400, 9/30/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$25,000, 9/30/16, Republican National Committee; \$5,000, 10/18/16, North Carolina Republican Party; \$1,000, 10/19/16, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$2,700, 10/21/16, Burr, Richard M via Richard Burr Committee; \$15,000, 10/24/16, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$500, 11/11/16, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$33,900, 2/15/17, NRSC; \$66,100, 2/15/17, NRSC; \$2,700, 2/17/17, King, Angus Stanley Jr via Angus King for US Senate Campaign; \$100,000, 2/21/17, Republican Governors Association; \$2,700, 3/23/17, Barrasso, John A via Friends of John Barrasso; \$3,400, 4/7/17, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$50,000, 4/18/17, Republican Attorneys General Association; \$2,700, 5/17/17, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,000, 6/13/17, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$11,000, 8/9/17, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$1,000, 8/24/17, Wicker for Senate (Scott Wicker); \$2,700, 9/13/17, Wicker for Senate (Scott Wicker); \$5,400, 11/10/17, I Like Luke (Luke Messer for Senate, Indiana); \$5,400, 11/15/17, Denham, Jeff for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Great America Committee; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Knight, Steve, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Rohrbacher, Dana, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Royce, Ed, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Walters, Mimi for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Valadao, David for Congress; \$10,000, 11/15/17, California Republican Party Federal Act.; \$200, 11/17/17, Thompson, Mike, for Congress; \$5,400, 12/13/17, Fagg, Russ, Senate Committee; \$5,400, 12/22/17, Mortensen, Michelle via Mortensen for Congress; \$33,900, 12/28/17, Republican National Committee (RNC); \$5,400, 1/16/18, Harkey, Diane, for Congress.

Joint Fundraising Contributions \$5,200, 3/24/14, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$42,600, 8/22/14, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$5,200, 9/3/14, Rubio Victory Committee; \$1,000, 9/4/14, MRP Victory; \$10,400, 9/24/14, Winning Woman for the US Senate; \$10,000, 10/28/14, Targeted State Victory; \$20,000, 10/31/14, Boehner for Speaker; \$100,200, 4/15/15, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$5,000, 2/18/15, Leadership Matters for America PAC; \$500, 9/2/15, Boehner for Speaker; \$10,000, 10/1/15, Kamala Harris Victory

¹In addition to my family members listed in this report, my former step-father (now deceased) had five children, by former wives, and my former step-mother had two children by former husbands. Of these seven children of my former step-parents, one is deceased and I do not know, and have not stayed in contact with, any of the others. I have not included these step-relatives in this report.

Fund; \$254,600, 3/21/16, Ryan-McCarthy Victory; \$200,000, 6/10/16, NRSC Targeted State Victory Committee; \$1,000, 10/19/16, Woman Making History Fund; \$43,800, 1/26/17, McCarthy Victory Fund; \$120,000, 2/13/17, Team Ryan; \$15,400, 3/31/17, Ernst Victory Iowa; \$50,000, 4/21/17, Iowa Values; \$5,400, 4/28/17, Sasse Leadership Committee; \$33,900, 6/13/17, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$10,800, 9/21/17, Team Graham; \$1,000, 11/10/17, Independent Women's Voice.

Recipient of Joint Fundraiser Contributions \$5,000, 3/24/14, Invest in a Strong and Secure America; \$10,400, 8/18/14, NRCC; \$32,200, 8/18/14, NRCC; \$2,080, 9/13/14, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Wehby, Monica via Dr Monica Wehby for US Senate; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Capito, Shelley Moore Ms. via Capito for West Virginia; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Land, Terri Lynn via Terri Lynn Land for Senate; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Land, Terri Lynn via Terri Lynn Land for Senate; \$3,333.33, 10/28/14, Republican Party of Iowa; \$10,000, 10/31/14, Ohio Republican Party State Central & Executive Committee; \$3,333.33, 10/31/14, North Carolina Republican Party; \$5,000, 10/31/14, Freedom Project; The; \$100,200, 4/15/15, NRCC; \$500, 9/2/15, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$10,000, 12/1/15, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 3/21/16, Majority Committee PAC—MC PAC; \$33,400, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$100,200, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$100,200, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$2,700, 3/21/16, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 3/21/16, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 3/21/16, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$2,700, 3/21/16, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania; \$50,000, 6/10/16, NRSC; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Arizona Republican Party; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Missouri Republican State Committee—Federal; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Nevada Republican Central Committee; \$10,000, 6/27/16, Oklahoma Leadership Council; \$10,000, 7/8/16, Republican Party of Florida; \$10,000, 8/26/16, New Hampshire Republican State Committee; \$10,000, 10/4/16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc; \$10,000, 10/25/16, Republican Party of Iowa; \$10,000, 10/26/16, Republican Party of Kentucky; \$10,000, 11/16/16, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 1/26/17, Majority Committee PAC—MC PAC; \$33,400, 1/26/17, NRCC; \$2,700, 1/26/17, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$2,700, 1/26/17, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$500, 2/13/17, NRCC; \$5,000, 2/13/17, Prosperity Action Inc; \$2,700, 2/13/17, Ryan, Paul D via Paul for Congress, Inc.; \$2,700, 2/13/17, Ryan, Paul D via Paul for Congress, Inc.; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Ernst, Joni K via Joni for Iowa; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Ernst, Joni K via Joni for Iowa; \$5,000, 3/31/17, Jobs Opportunity and New Ideas PAC; \$2,700, 4/7/17, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$5,000, 6/13/17, Invest in a Strong and Secure America; \$2,700, 6/13/17, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$26,200, 6/13/17, NRCC.

John A. Traina: Deceased.

5. Ruth H Buchanan: None; Wiley T Buchanan: Deceased; John A Traina: Deceased; Lea C Traina: Deceased.

6. John Todd Traina:

Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts \$20,000, 7/22/15, Growth Political Action Committee.

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees \$500, 7/3/14, Logue, Daniel via Friends of Dan Logue for Congress; \$500, 10/8/14, Gorell, Jeff via Gorell for Congress; \$500, 7/1/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 9/3/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc.; \$2,700, 9/29/15, Kefalas, Chrysovalantis P via Kefalas for Maryland Inc.; \$1,000, 5/18/16, Harris, Kamala via Kamala Harris for Senate.

Katie Orr Traina: None; Maximillian John Alexander Traina: None.

7. Samantha L Traina: None; Vanessa D Traina: None; Charles de Viel Castel (spouse): None; Victoria L Traina: None; Zara Traina: None.

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Name: Trevor Traina.

Position nominated for: U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this attachment is complete and accurate.¹)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Trevor Traina, Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts: \$500, 8/11/14, Unlocking Potential PAC; \$50,000, 3/31/15, Right to Rise USA.

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees: \$1,000, 4/24/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTAPAC); \$1,000, 6/18/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTAPAC); \$600, 6/24/14, California Republican Party Federal Acct.; \$32,400, 6/27/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 8/22/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTAPAC); \$400, 8/26/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTAPAC); \$2,600, 10/1/14, Gardner, Cory via Cory Gardner for Senate; \$4,800, 10/9/14 Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (SCOTTAPAC); \$1,000, 10/11/14, Demaio, Carl via Carl Demaio for Congress; \$250, 11/6/14, NRSC; \$5,000, 2/24/15, Right to Rise PAC, Inc; \$2,700, 6/26/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$1,500, 11/11/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 12/31/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc; \$2,300, 1/11/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 1/11/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 2/10/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$500, 3/11/16, Johnson, Ronald Harold via Ron Johnson for Senate Inc; \$2,700, 6/26/16, Portman, Rob the Honora via Portman for Senate Committee; \$2,700, 7/19/16, Portman, Rob via Rob Portman for US Senate; \$25,000, 9/19/16, Republican National Committee; \$50,000, 10/10/16, Republican National Committee; \$5,000, 1/1/17, Trump Transition; \$1,100, 3/1/17, Republican National Committee; \$33,900, 3/1/17, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 5/15/17, Handel, Karen Christine via Handel for Congress, Inc.

Joint Fundraising Contributions: \$25,000, 3/31/14, Boehner for Speaker; \$5,200, 9/3/14, Rubio Victory Committee; \$5,000, 10/24/16, Young Victory Committee; \$5,000, 11/3/16, Young Victory Committee; \$100,000, 2/23/17, Team Ryan.

Recipient of Joint Fundraiser Contributions: \$19,800, 3/31/14, NRCC; \$2,600, 3/31/14, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$2,600, 3/31/14, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$2,080, 9/3/14, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$3,120, 9/3/14, Reclaim America PAC; \$2,700, 10/24/16, Young, Todd Christopher via Friends of Todd Young, Inc; \$2,300, 11/2/16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc; \$5,000, 12/23/16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc; \$5,000, 2/23/17, Prosperity Action, Inc; \$2,700, 2/23/17, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 2/23/17, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$33,900, 2/23/17, NRCC.

State and Local Contributions: \$15,000, 2014, Brown Jr., Edmund, Governor of California; \$5,200, 2014, Martinez, Susana & Sanchez, John, Governor and Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico; \$3,500, 2014, Walker, Scott & Kleefisch, Rebecca Governor and

Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin; \$2,500, 2014, Harris, Kamala, Attorney General of California; \$1,000, 2014, Baker, Catharine, Assembly District in California; \$250, 2014, Raimondo, Gina, Governor of Rhode Island.

2. Alexis Traina, Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees: 2,700, 6/26/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$25,000, 9/19/16, Republican National Committee.

State and Local Contributions: \$3,800, 2013, Christie, Chris & Guadagno, Kim, Governor and Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey.

3. Johnny Traina: none; Delphina Traina: none.

4. Diane B. Wilsey, Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts: \$250,000, 1/14/14, Republican Governors Association; \$25,000, 8/14/14, John Bolton Super Pac; \$25,000, 8/25/14, Unlocking Potential Pac; \$100,000, 1/14/15, Right To Rise USA; \$5,000, 2/27/15, Leadership Matters for America PC, Inc; \$25,000, 4/13/15, Conservative, Authentic, Responsive Leadership for you and America; \$11,824.15, 5/4/15, Right to Rise USA; \$30,000, 9/21/15, Growth Political Action Committee ('Growth Pac); \$50,000, 3/27/17, Citizens Supporting Gavin Newson for Governor 2018; \$3,500, 11/8/17, Congressional Leadership Fund.

Contributions to All Other Political Committees Except Joint Fundraising Committees: \$32,400, 1/22/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 2/11/14, Strickland, Anthony A via Strickland for Congress; \$32,400, 2/19/14, NRSC; \$2,600, 3/11/14, Condlery, Kerri—for Congress 2014; \$2,500, 3/20/14, San Francisco Republican Party; \$1,000, 3/27/14, Hill, James French via French Hill for Arkansas; \$500, 3/31/14, Emily's List; \$5,200, 4/17/14, Ernst, Joni—for US Senate; \$32,400, 4/14/14, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 4/20/14, CAWG PAC; \$36, 4/22/14, National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Sustaining Membership: \$2,600, 4/29/14, Issa Darrell for Congress; \$2,600, 5/9/14, Gillespie, Edward W via Ed Gillespie for Senate; \$500, 5/27/14, DCCC; \$500, 6/1/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,100, 6/1/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$1,500, 6/19/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (Scott Pac); \$1,000, 6/9/14, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 8/28/14, California Democratic Party; \$300, 9/3/14, California Republican Party Federal Acct; \$500, 9/5/14, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for; \$500, 9/9/14, Brown, Scott via Strong Country for Today and Tomorrow (Scott Pac); \$2,600, 10/6/14, Scott, Timothy E via Tim Scott for Senate; \$500, 10/9/14, Thompson, Mike Mr via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$1,000, 10/15/14, Demaio, Carl via Carl Demaio for Congress; \$32,400, 1/20/15, Republican National Committee; \$500, 1/26/15, California Republican Party Federal Acct; \$1,000, 2/4/15, Portman, Rob the Honora via Portman for Senate Committee; \$33,400, 2/6/15, National Republican Senatorial Cmtee—Majority.

Makers: \$7,971.14, 3/10/15, Boehner, John; \$500, 3/12/15, California Republican Party Federal Acct; \$100, 3/20/15, NRCC; \$1,000, 3/23/15, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 3/31/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$5,400, 4/11/15, Boozman, John via Boozman for Arkansas; \$2,700, 6/30/15, Bush, Jeb via Jeb 2016, Inc; \$2,700, 9/8/15, Ayotte, Kelly A via Friends of Kelly Ayotte Inc; \$1,000, 9/8/15, CAWG PAC; \$2,000, 9/14/15, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$1,000, 9/22/15, Lee, Mike via Friends of Mike Lee Inc; \$2,700, 9/23/15, Fiorina, Carly via Carly for President; \$2,700, 10/8/15, Kirk, Mark Steven via Illinois Lincoln Pac; \$2,700, 10/8/15, Kirk, Mark Steven via Illinois Lincoln Pac; \$1,300, 10/9/15, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,000 10/23/15 Del Beccaro, Thomas via

Del Beccaro for Senate; \$1,000, 10/23/15, Thompson, Mike Mr via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 11/4/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc; \$11,000, 11/11/15, California Republican Party; \$2,700, 11/11/15, Christie, Chris, for President, Inc.; \$98,800, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$100,200, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$1,000, 11/12/15, Republican National Committee; \$10,000, 11/18/15, California Republican Party Federal Act; \$2,700, 11/23/15, Scott, Timothy E via Tim Scott for Senate; \$2,700, 12/30/15, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$250,000, 2/8/16, Republican Governors Association (2015 Membership); \$33,400, 2/10/16, NRSC; \$1,300, 2/25/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,400, 2/25/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$4,400, 3/2/16, Portman, Rob the Honora via Portman for Senate Committee; \$1,000, 3/18/16, Condley, Kerri via Kerri Condley for Congress; \$2,700, 3/31/16, Kasich John R via Kasich for America, Inc; \$2,700, 4/28/16, Conlon, Greg via Greg Conlon for US Senate; \$1,000, 5/2/16, Toomey, Pat (Friends of Senator); \$5,400, 5/24/16, Johnson, Ronald Harold via Ron Johnson for Senate Inc; \$1,000, 5/25/16, CAWG PAC; \$300, 5/31/16, Thompson, Mike Mr via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$700, 5/31/16, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$2,700, 6/13/16, Ayotte, Kelly A via Friends of Kelly Ayotte Inc; \$2,700, 6/14/16, Heck, Joe via Friends of Joe Heck; \$5,000, 6/22/16, College Republican National Committee; \$5,400, 8/10/16, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for Senate; \$50,000, 9/15/16, Committee on Jobs—Govt Reform Fund \$5,000, 9/30/16, San Francisco Republican Party; \$1,400, 9/30/16, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$25,000, 9/30/16, Republican National Committee; \$5,000, 10/18/16, North Carolina Republican Party; \$1,000, 10/19/16, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$2,700, 10/21/16, Burr, Richard M via Richard Burr Committee; \$10,000, 10/24/16, California Republican Party Federal Act; \$500, 11/11/16, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$33,900, 2/15/17, NRSC; \$66,100, 2/15/17, NRSC; \$2,700, 2/17/17, King, Angus Stanley Jr. via Angus King for US Senate Campaign; \$100,000, 2/21/17, Republican Governors Association; \$2,700, 3/23/17, Barrasso, John A via Friends of John Barrasso; \$3,400, 4/7/17, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$50,000, 4/18/17, Republican Attorneys General Association; \$2,700, 5/17/17, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$1,000, 6/13/17, Thompson, Mike Mr. via Mike Thompson for Congress; \$11,000, 8/9/17, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$1,000, 8/24/17, Wicker for Senate (Scott Wicker); \$2,700, 9/13/17, Wicker for Senate (Scott Wicker); \$5,400, 11/10/17, I Like Luke (Luke Messer for Senate, Indiana); \$5,400, 11/15/17, Denham, Jeff for Congress; \$5,000, 11/15/17, Great America Committee; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Knight, Steve, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Rohrbacher, Dana, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Royce, Ed, for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Walters, Mimi for Congress; \$5,400, 11/15/17, Valadao, David for Congress; \$10,000, 11/15/17, California Republican Party Federal Act; \$200, 11/17/17, Thompson, Mike, for Congress; \$5,400, 12/13/17, Fagg, Russ, Senate Committee; \$5,400, 12/22/17, Mortensen, Michelle via Mortensen for Congress; \$33,900, 12/28/17, Republican National Committee (RNC); \$5,400, 1/16/18, Harkey, Diane, for Congress.

Joint Fundraising Contributions \$5,200, 3/24/14, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$42,600, 8/22/14, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$5,200, 9/3/14, Rubio Victory Committee; \$1,000, 9/4/14, MRP Victory; \$10,400, 9/24/14, Winning Woman for The US Senate; \$10,000, 10/28/14, Targeted State Victory; \$20,000, 10/31/14, Boehner for Speaker; \$100,200, 4/15/15, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$5,000, 2/18/15, Leadership Matters for America PAC; \$500, 9/2/15, Boehner for Speaker; \$10,000, 10/1/15, Kamala Harris Victory

Fund; \$254,600, 3/21/16, Ryan-McCarthy Victory; \$200,000, 6/10/16, NRSC Targeted State Victory Committee; \$1,000, 10/19/16, Woman Making History Fund; \$43,800, 1/26/17, McCarthy Victory Fund; \$120,000, 2/13/17, Team Ryan; \$15,400, 3/31/17, Ernst Victory Iowa; \$50,000, 4/21/17, Iowa Values; \$5,400, 4/28/17, Sasse Leadership Committee; \$33,900, 6/13/17, Darrell Issa Victory Fund; \$10,800, 9/21/17, Team Graham; \$1,000, 11/10/17, Independent Women's Voice.

Recipient of Joint Fundraiser Contributions \$5,000, 3/24/14, Invest in a Strong and Secure America; \$10,400, 8/18/14, NRCC; \$32,200, 8/18/14, NRCC; \$2,080, 9/13/14, Rubio, Marco via Marco Rubio for President; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Wehby, Monica via Dr. Monica Wehby for US Senate; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Capito, Shelley Moore Ms. via Capito for West Virginia; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Land, Terri Lynn via Terri Lynn Land for Senate; \$2,600, 9/24/14, Land, Terri Lynn via Terri Lynn Land for Senate; \$3,333.33, 10/28/14, Republican Party of Iowa; \$10,000, 10/31/14, Ohio Republican Party State Central & Executive Committee; \$3,333.33, 10/31/14, North Carolina Republican Party; \$5,000, 10/31/14, Freedom Project; The; \$100,200, 4/15/15, NRCC; \$500, 9/2/15, Boehner, John A via Friends of John Boehner; \$10,000, 12/1/15, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 3/21/16, Majority Committee PAC—MC PAC; \$33,400, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$100,200, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$100,200, 3/21/16, NRCC; \$2,700, 3/21/16, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 3/21/16, Ryan, Paul D via Ryan for Congress, Inc; \$2,700, 3/21/16, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$2,700, 3/21/16, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Republican Federal Committee of Pennsylvania; \$50,000, 6/10/16, NRSC; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Republican Party of Wisconsin; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Arizona Republican Party; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Missouri Republican State Committee—Federal; \$10,000, 6/10/16, Nevada Republican Central Committee; \$10,000, 6/27/16, Oklahoma Leadership Council; \$10,000, 7/8/16, Republican Party of Florida; \$10,000, 8/26/16, New Hampshire Republican State Committee; \$10,000, 10/4/16, Indiana Republican State Committee, Inc; \$10,000, 10/25/16, Republican Party of Iowa; \$10,000, 10/26/16, Republican Party of Kentucky; \$10,000, 11/16/16, California Democratic Party; \$5,000, 1/26/17, Majority Committee PAC—MC PAC; \$33,400, 1/26/17, NRCC; \$2,700, 1/26/17, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$2,700, 1/26/17, McCarthy, Kevin via Kevin McCarthy for Congress; \$500, 2/13/17, NRCC; \$5,000, 2/13/17, Prosperity Action Inc.; \$2,700, 2/13/17, Ryan, Paul D via Paul for Congress, Inc.; \$2,700, 2/13/17, Ryan, Paul D via Paul for Congress, Inc.; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Ernst, Joni K via Joni for Iowa; \$2,700, 3/31/17, Ernst, Joni K via Joni for Iowa; \$5,000, 3/31/17, Jobs Opportunity And New Ideas PAC; \$2,700, 4/7/17, Feinstein, Dianne via Feinstein for Senate 2018; \$5,000, 6/13/17, Invest in a Strong and Secure America; \$2,700, 6/13/17, Issa, Darrell via Issa for Congress; \$26,200, 6/13/17, NRCC.

State and Local Contributions: \$100,000, 2016, Safety for All, Newsom Ballot Measure Committee; \$100,000, 2016, San Franciscans Against Wasteful Spending; \$75,000, 2016, Yes on Public Health & Safety Bond 2016, Yes on A; \$56,400 2015 Newsom, Gavin, Governor of California; \$50,000, 2016, SF Alliance for Jobs & Sustainable Growth PAC; \$25,000, 2016, Great Schools for All (Prop A); \$20,000, 2015, SF Housing Now; \$20,000, 2016, San Franciscan Against Wasteful Spending; \$20,000, 2016, Farrell, Mark, for SF DCCC; \$19,000, 2015, Committee for a Progressive and Affordable SF; \$15,000, 2014, Children and Family First Committee (Prop C), CA; \$15,000, 2014, Cmtee For Reliable Transport, & Better, Safer Streets (Prop A); \$15,000, 2016, SF Alliance for Jobs & Sustainable Growth PAC; \$14,600, 2017, Kounalakis, Eleni Lieutenant Governor

of California; \$14,600, 2017, Padilla, Alex Secretary of State of California; \$14,000, 2016, Ma, Fiona Treasurer for California; \$13,600, 2014, Newsom, Gavin Lieutenant Governor of California; \$10,400, 2014, Martinez, Susana & Sanchez, John Governor and Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico; \$10,000, 2014, CCAG (Concerned Citizens about Casino Gambling) RI; \$10,000, 2015, San Franciscans for Clean Power, Yes on H, No on G; \$10,000, 2016, Anderson, Kat, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Baraka, Keith, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Hsieh, Tom A., for SF DCCC; \$10,000, 2016, Jung, Mary, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, McNeil, Trevor, for SF DCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Murase, Emily, for SF DCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Philhour, Marian, for DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Pimentel, Leah, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Prozan, Rebecca, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Rosenthal, Alix, for SF DCCC 2016; \$10,000, 2016, Safety for All, Newsom Ballot Measure Committee; \$8,800, 2017, Wiener, Scott, for State Senate 2020; \$9,600, 2017, Cohen, Malla for State Board of Equalization 2018; \$8,400, 2015, Wiener, Scott California Senate; \$7,600, 2017, Yee, Betty Controller for California; \$7,000, 2015, Yee, Betty, for Controller 2018; \$6,100, 2016, McCrory, Patrick Governor of North Carolina; \$5,172.34, 2016, Breed, London, for DCCC 2016; \$5,000, 2016, Breed, London for DCCC 2016; \$5,000, 2017, Early, Eric, for Attorney General 2018; \$5,000, 2016, Breed, London for DCCC 2016; \$5,000, 2016, San Franciscans for the Arts & Ending Family Homelessness; \$5,000, 2017, Cohen, Malla, for State Board of Equalization 2018; \$4,400, 2017, Baker, Catherine, for Assembly 2018; \$4,200, 2016, Ting, Phil Assembly District in California; \$4,200, 2015, Wiener, Scott for State Senate; \$4,200, 2015, Wiener, Scott for State Senate; \$4,200, 2016, Baker, Catherine for Assembly 2016; \$4,300, 2015, Baker, Catherine, For Assembly; \$4,100, 2014, Ting, Phil Assembly District in California; \$4,000, 2017, Baker, Catherine, for Assembly 2018; \$3,500, 2014, Haley, Nikki Governor of South Carolina; \$3,400, 2014, Swearengin, Ashley Controller for California; \$3,100, 2014, Yee, Betty Controller for California; \$2,600, 2017, Bottoms, Keisha Lance, for Mayor; \$2,500, 2017, Breed, London, for DCCC; \$2,500, 2016, Pence, Mike Governor of Indiana; \$2,500, 2014, Baker-Polito Inaugural Committee; \$2,500, 2017, Pedroza, Alfredo, Friends of; \$2,000, 2017, Ting, Phil, for Assembly 2018; \$1,000, 2014, Rauner, Bruce & Sanguinetti Evelyn Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Illinois; \$1,000, 2014, Citizens for Rauner, IL; \$1,000, 2017, Safe Neighborhoods for All; \$1,000, 2014, Migden, Carole—for DCCC 2016; \$1,000, 2015, FarmPAC; \$1,000, 2015, Friends of Mark Luce for Supervisor 2016; \$1,000, 2015, Friends of Scott Walker; \$1,000, 2015, Migden, Carole—for DCCC 2016; \$1,000, 2016, Committee to Elect Shepp for Supervisor 2016; \$1,000, 2017, Walker, Scott, Friends of; \$1,000, 2018, Walker, Scott, Friends of; \$750, 2014, Dunn, Damon Mayor of Long Beach, California; \$600, 2014, Newsom, Gavin, Lieutenant Governor—2014; \$500, 2017, Josefowitz, Nick, for Supervisor 2018; \$500, 2014, Adachi, Jeff—For Public Defender; \$500, 2017, Sheehy, Jeff for Supervisor 2018; \$500, 2016, Hsieh, Tom A., for SF DCCC; \$500, 2016, Lee, David, for supervisor; \$500, 2014, The Baker Committee; \$500, 2017, Chu, Carmen—For Assessor-Recorder; \$500, 2014, The Polito Committee; \$500, 2014, Chu, Carmen—For Assessor-Recorder, CA; \$500, 2014, Lee, Ed for Mayor 2015; \$500, 2014, Yee, Betty—For Controller 2014; \$500, 2014, Breed, London, For Supervisor; \$500, 2015, Herrera, Dennis, for City Attorney 2015; \$500, 2018, Breed, London, for Mayor 2018; \$500, 2015, Philhour, Marjan, for Supervisor 2016; \$250, 2014, Ammiano, Tom—2014 Officer Holder;

John A. Traina: Deceased.

5. Ruth H Buchanan: None; Wiley T Buchanan: Deceased; John A Traina: Deceased; Lea C Traina: Deceased.

6. John Todd Traina: *Contributions to Super PACs, Hybrid PACs and Historical Soft Money Party Accounts*: \$20,000, 7/22/15, Growth Political Action Committee.

Contributions to All Other Political, Committees Except Joint, Fundraising Committees: \$500, 7/3/14, Logue, Daniel via Friends of Dan Logue for Congress; \$500, 10/8/14, Gorell, Jeff via Gorell for Congress; \$500, 7/1/15, Harris, Kamala D via Kamala Harris for Senate; \$2,700, 9/3/15, Christie, Christopher J via Chris Christie for President Inc; \$2,700, 9/29/15, Kefalas, Chrysovalantis P via Kefalas for Maryland Inc; \$1,000, 5/18/16, Harris, Kamala via Kamala Harris for Senate.

State and Local Contributions: \$1,500, 2014, Deramel, Guillaume Secretary of State of Rhode Island.

Katie Orr Traina: None; Maximillian John Alexander Traina: None;

7. Samantha L Traina: None; Vanessa D Traina: None; Charles de Viel Castel (spouse): None; Victoria L Traina: None; Zara Traina: None.

¹In addition to my family members listed in this attachment, my former step-father (now deceased) had five children, by former wives, and my former step-mother had two children by former husbands. Of these seven children of my former step-parents, one is deceased and I do not know, and have not stayed in contact with, any of the others I have not included these step-relatives in this attachment.

*Erik Bethel, of Florida, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years.

*Judy Lynn Shelton, of Virginia, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

*Andrea L. Thompson, of South Dakota, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

*Sean Cairncross, of Minnesota, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation.

*Kevin Edward Moley, of Arizona, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs).

*Josephine Olsen, of Maryland, to be Director of the Peace Corps.

*Marie Royce, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs).

By Mr. INHOFE for Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Hilty, to be Major General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Matthew J. Kohler, to be Vice Admiral.

Air Force nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Becklund and ending with Brig. Gen. Stephen C. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. James W. Bierman, Jr. and ending with Brig. Gen. Thomas D. Weidley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018. (minus 1 nominee: Brig. Gen. Norman L. Cooling)

Air Force nomination of Lt. Gen. Timothy M. Ray, to be General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. David D. Thompson, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Christopher W. Grady, to be Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Timothy J. White, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Capt. David A. Welch, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Scott A. Stearney, to be Vice Admiral.

Mr. INHOFE for Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Air Force nomination of Arthur W. Primas, Jr., to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Gregory J. Payne, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Michael J. Patterson, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Brad R. Matherne, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Jonathan A. Morris, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Rachel L. Adair and ending with D014124, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Rose Abido and ending with Joseph P. Wzorek II, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with John P. Kilbride and ending with John J. Neal, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Gregory J. Abide and ending with G010452, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Steven Abadia and ending with G010479, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Army nomination of Steven M. Hemmann, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Hayley R. Ashbaugh and ending with Jordan N. Yolles, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 6, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Jeffrey A. Anderson and ending with D012878, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 6, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Ahmad B. Alexander and ending with Steven D. Zumbun, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 6, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Ashley K. Aiton and ending with Tracy L. Zinn, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 6, 2018.

Army nomination of Wilson R. Ramos, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Curtis D. Bowe, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Carl E. Foster III, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Michael A. Fowles, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Andrew K. Sinden, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with D013264 and ending with D013298, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 6, 2018.

Army nomination of Christopher F. Ruder, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with John J. Morris and ending with Min S. Ro, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 12, 2018.

Army nominations beginning with Christopher M. Bell and ending with Adriana B. DeJulio, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 12, 2018.

Army nomination of Mikal L. Stoner, to be Colonel.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Eric G. Burns and ending with David P. Sheehan, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 8, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Thesolina D. Hubert and ending with Timothy W. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 18, 2018.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Benjamin S. Adams and ending with Carl L. Zeppegno, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 5, 2018.

Marine Corps nomination of Aaron J. King, to be Major.

Navy nomination of Jeffrey G. Bentson, to be Commander.

*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. CASEY (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. KAIN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. REED, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2572. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for herself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2573. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to reauthorize the appropriate technology transfer for rural areas program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2574. A bill to provide rental assistance to low-income tenants of certain multi-family rural housing projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. PAUL):

S. 2575. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for treatment of audiologists as physicians for purposes of furnishing audiology services under the Medicare program, to improve access to the audiology services available for coverage

under the Medicare program and to enable beneficiaries to have their choice of a qualified audiologist to provide such services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN:

S. 2576. A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to conduct a proceeding to determine whether certain activities by licensees of the Commission are undertakings under division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code, or major Federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2577. A bill to reauthorize programs authorized under the Debbie Smith Act of 2004; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2578. A bill to amend title 13, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Commerce to provide advanced notice to Congress before changing any questions on the decennial census, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2579. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and expand a program of surveillance and education, carried out by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, regarding infections associated with injection drug use; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2580. A bill to amend title 13, United States Code, to make clear that each decennial census, as required for the apportionment of Representatives in Congress among the several States, shall tabulate the total number of persons in each State, and to provide that no information regarding United States citizenship or immigration status may be elicited in any such census; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 440. A resolution designating April 2018 as "Second Chance Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 292

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 292, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 591

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New Hamp-

shire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 661

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 661, a bill to assist entrepreneurs, support development of the creative economy, and encourage international cultural exchange, and for other purposes.

S. 905

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 905, a bill to require a report on, and to authorize technical assistance for, accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria, and for other purposes.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1112

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1112, a bill to support States in their work to save and sustain the health of mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, and in the postpartum period, to eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes for pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths, to identify solutions to improve health care quality and health outcomes for mothers, and for other purposes.

S. 1917

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1917, a bill to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 1988

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1988, a bill to streamline broadband infrastructure permitting on established public rights-of-way, and for other purposes.

S. 2085

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2085, a bill to amend the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 to streamline applica-

tion processes and reduce the administrative burden for the commodity supplemental food program, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2244

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2244, a bill to create opportunities for women in the aviation industry.

S. 2278

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2278, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to improve health care in rural areas.

S. 2343

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2343, a bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

S. 2374

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2374, a bill to amend the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including making changes to the Do Not Pay Initiative, for improved detection, prevention, and recovery of improper payments to deceased individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 2387

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2387, a bill to provide better care and outcomes for Americans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and their caregivers while accelerating progress toward prevention strategies, disease modifying treatments, and, ultimately, a cure.

S. 2421

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2421, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to provide an exemption from certain notice requirements and penalties for releases of hazardous substances from animal waste at farms.

S. 2495

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Tennessee

(Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2495, a bill to reauthorize the grant program for school security in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

S. 2497

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2497, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriations of funds to Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 2500

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2500, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the women in the United States who joined the workforce during World War II, providing the vehicles, weaponry, and ammunition to win the war, that were referred to as "Rosie the Riveter", in recognition of their contributions to the United States and the inspiration they have provided to ensuing generations.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2502, a bill to address gun violence, improve the availability of records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, address mental illness in the criminal justice system, and end straw purchases and trafficking of illegal firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 2515

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2515, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian Tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 2563

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2563, a bill to improve the water supply and drought resilience of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2565

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2565, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide child care assistance to veterans receiving certain training or voca-

tional rehabilitation, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 54

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 54, a joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 61, a resolution calling on the Department of Defense, other elements of the Federal Government, and foreign governments to intensify efforts to investigate, recover, and identify all missing and unaccounted-for personnel of the United States.

S. RES. 224

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 224, a resolution recognizing the 5th anniversary of the death of Oswaldo Paya Sardinias, and commemorating his legacy and commitment to democratic values and principles.

S. RES. 376

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 376, a resolution urging the Governments of Burma and Bangladesh to ensure the safe, dignified, voluntary, and sustainable return of the Rohingya refugees who have been displaced by the campaign of ethnic cleansing conducted by the Burmese military.

S. RES. 407

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 407, a resolution recognizing the critical work of human rights defenders in promoting human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and good governance.

S. RES. 432

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 432, a resolution congratulating the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the 100th anniversary of their declarations of independence.

AMENDMENT NO. 2213

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2213 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1865, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify

that section 230 of such Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sexual exploitation of children or sex trafficking, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 2577. A bill to reauthorize programs authorized under the Debbie Smith Act of 2004; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2577

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 "Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 2 of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(3)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking "2014 through 2019" and inserting "2019 through 2024"; and

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking "2014 through 2019" and inserting "2019 through 2024"; and

(2) in subsection (j), by striking "2015 through 2019" and inserting "2019 through 2024".

SEC. 3. TRAINING AND EDUCATION.

Section 303(b) of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 (34 U.S.C. 40722(b)) is amended by striking "2015 through 2019" and inserting "2019 through 2024".

SEC. 4. SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAM GRANTS.

Section 304(d) of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 (34 U.S.C. 40723(d)) is amended by striking "2015 through 2019" and inserting "2019 through 2024".

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 440—DESIGNATING APRIL 2018 AS "SECOND CHANCE MONTH"

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 440

Whereas every individual is endowed with human dignity and value;

Whereas redemption and second chances are values of the United States;

Whereas millions of individuals in the United States have a criminal record;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals return to their communities from Federal and State prisons every year;

Whereas returning individuals have paid their debt after committing a crime but still

face significant legal and societal barriers (referred to in this preamble as “collateral consequences”);

Whereas collateral consequences are mandatory and take effect automatically, regardless of—

- (1) a nexus to public safety;
- (2) the seriousness of the offense;
- (3) the time passed since the offense; or
- (4) the efforts of the individual to make amends or earn back the trust of the public;

Whereas gaining meaningful employment is 1 of the most significant predictors of successful reentry and reducing future criminal activity;

Whereas many individuals who have previously been incarcerated struggle to find employment because of collateral consequences which are often not directly related to the offense committed or any proven public safety benefit;

Whereas many States have laws which prohibit an individual with a criminal record from working in certain industries or obtaining professional licenses;

Whereas education has also been shown to be a significant predictor of successful reentry;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record often has a lower level of educational attainment than the general population and has significant difficulty acquiring admission to and funding for educational programs;

Whereas an individual convicted of certain crimes is often barred from receiving the financial aid necessary to acquire additional skills and knowledge;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record also often faces collateral consequences in securing a place to live;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record is often barred from seeking access to public housing;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record also often faces other collateral consequences, such as an inability to regain voting rights, volunteer in the community, and secure identification documentation;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record may incur significant debt as a result of conviction and incarceration of the individual;

Whereas collateral consequences prevent millions of individuals in the United States from contributing fully to their families and communities;

Whereas collateral consequences can contribute to recidivism, which increases crime and victimization and decreases public safety;

Whereas the inability to find gainful employment and other collateral consequences of conviction inhibit the economic mobility of an individual with a criminal record, which can negatively impact the well-being of the children and the families of the individual for generations;

Whereas the President in the 2018 State of the Union address expressed that, “As America regains its strength, this opportunity must be extended to all citizens. That is why this year we will embark on reforming our prisons to help former inmates who have served their time get a second chance at life”;

Whereas April 9, 2018, marks the 10-year anniversary of the passage of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-199; 122 Stat. 657), which has provided reentry services to over 166,000 individuals in 49 States and the District of Columbia;

Whereas the anniversary of the death of Charles Colson, who used his second chance following his incarceration for a Watergate-related crime to found Prison Fellowship, the largest outreach program to prisoners,

former prisoners, and their families in the United States, falls on April 21; and

Whereas the designation of April as “Second Chance Month” can contribute to increased public awareness about the impact of collateral consequences, the need for closure for those who have paid their debt, and opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2018 as “Second Chance Month”;

(2) honors the work of communities, governmental institutions, nonprofit organizations, congregations, employers, and individuals to remove unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent an individual with a criminal record from becoming a productive member of society; and

(3) calls upon the people of the United States to observe Second Chance Month through actions and programs that promote awareness of those unnecessary legal and social barriers and provide closure for individuals with a criminal record who have paid their debt.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORKER. Mr President, I have 9 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 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 Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 10:10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: John J. Bartrum, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary, and Lynn A. Johnson, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Family Support, both of the Department of Health and Human Services.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “The Need to Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.”

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during

the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION, PRODUCT SAFETY, INSURANCE, AND DATA SECURITY

The Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Update on NHTSA and Automaker Efforts to Repair Defective Takata Air Bag Inflators.”

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on the nomination of John L. Ryder, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND ALUMNI TO THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 434 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 434) recognizing the contributions of AmeriCorps members and alumni to the lives of the people of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 434) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 14, 2018, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ENSURING THAT THE REQUIREMENTS THAT NEW FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WHO ARE VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES ARE PROVIDED LEAVE FOR PURPOSES OF UNDERGOING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR SUCH DISABILITIES APPLY TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 899 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 899) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the requirements that new Federal employees who are veterans with service-connected disabilities are provided leave for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disabilities apply to certain employees of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 899) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:
S. 899

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

SECTION 1. APPLICATION OF FEDERAL LEAVE POLICY FOR DISABLED VETERANS TO EMPLOYEES OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND RESTATEMENT OF EXISTING LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 7423 the following new section:

“§ 7423A. Personnel administration: leave

“(a) LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary shall establish a leave transfer program for the benefit of health-care professionals in positions listed in section 7401(1) of this title. The Secretary may also establish a leave bank program for the benefit of such health-care professionals.

“(2) To the maximum extent feasible—

“(A) the leave transfer program shall provide the same or similar requirements and conditions as are provided for the program established by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management under subchapter III of chapter 63 of title 5; and

“(B) any leave bank program established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be consistent with the requirements and conditions provided for agency leave bank programs in subchapter IV of such chapter.

“(3) Participation by a health-care professional in the leave transfer program established pursuant to paragraph (1), and in any leave bank program established pursuant to such paragraph, shall be voluntary. The Secretary may not require any health-care professional to participate in such a program.

“(4)(A) The Secretary and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management may enter into an agreement that permits health-care professionals referred to in paragraph (1) to participate in the leave transfer program established by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management under subchapter III of chapter 63 of title 5 or in any leave bank program established for other employees of the Department pursuant to subchapter IV of chapter 63 of title 5, or both.

“(B) Participation of such health-care professionals in a leave transfer program or a leave bank program pursuant to an agreement entered into under subparagraph (A) shall be subject to such requirements and conditions as may be prescribed in such agreement.

“(5) The Secretary is not required to establish a leave transfer program for any personnel permitted to participate in a leave transfer program pursuant to an agreement referred to in paragraph (4).

“(b) APPLICATION OF FEDERAL LEAVE POLICY FOR DISABLED VETERANS.—Section 6329 of title 5 shall apply to all health-care professionals in positions listed in section 7401(1) of this title.”.

(b) REPEAL OF TRANSFERRED AUTHORITY.—Section 7423 of such title is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (e); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (e).

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 74 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7423 the following new item:

“7423A. Personnel administration: leave.”.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Wednesday, March 21; 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. Finally, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1865, as under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 21, 2018, at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MIKE POMPEO, OF KANSAS, TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE, VICE REX W. TILLERSON.

STEPHEN AKARD, OF INDIANA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE GENTRY O. SMITH, RESIGNED.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

SHARON PAST GUSTAFSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE P. DAVID LOPEZ, RESIGNED.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER ARTICLE II, SECTION 2, CLAUSE 2, OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) RONNY L. JACKSON

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 20, 2018:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WILLIAM M. MCSWAIN, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

MATTHEW D. HARRIS, OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

JOHNNY LEE KUHLMAN, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

JOSEPH D. MCCLAIN, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

DAVID A. WEAVER, OF COLORADO, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

WITHDRAWALS

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on March 20, 2018 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nominations:

STEPHEN AKARD, OF INDIANA, TO BE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE, VICE ARNOLD A. CHACON, RESIGNED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 8, 2018.

JOHNATHAN MILLER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE LINDA I. ETIM, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 18, 2018.